



Springwell School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111785
LEA Hartlepool
Inspection number 278776
Inspection dates 7 February 2006 to 8 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Noreen Buckingham

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special	School address	Wiltshire Way
School category	Community		Hartlepool
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		TS26 0TB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01429 280600
Number on roll	53	Fax number	01429 230717
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Elizabeth Barraclough
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2000	Headteacher	Mr Karl Telfer

Age group 3 to 11	Inspection dates 7 February 2006 - 8 February 2006	Inspection number 278776
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

Springwell School is a primary day special school in Hartlepool for pupils who have severe and/or complex learning difficulties. An increasing number have autistic spectrum disorder. Pupils are admitted between the ages of 3 and 11, but currently only 4 are of reception age. Numbers have decreased in recent years. Pupils' standards on entry are below those expected for their age. All pupils have statements of special educational need and none is from a minority ethnic background. The local authority supports the admission of a small number of 'guest' pupils from local primary schools who attend part-time on a short term basis. In addition three pupils are dual-registered for longer term placements.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. The school has a more favourable view of its effectiveness than inspectors except in pupils' personal development and the care and support provided for pupils which are good. Pupils are happy coming to school and enjoy all that is offered. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Teaching and learning, and achievement are satisfactory. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve as well as others. Data analysis is at the early stages but the school has already identified areas for improvement. The curriculum is adequate but, because taught time is short, too little time is allocated to all subjects to enable pupils to make better progress. Pupils acquire some skills in information and communication technology (ICT) but have few opportunities to develop these in other subjects. Links with primary schools are effective and give pupils good opportunities for inclusion. Since appointed, the headteacher has worked very hard to move the school forward but some weaknesses remain. Improvement since the last inspection is therefore satisfactory. Assessment procedures to facilitate tracking pupils' progress over time are underdeveloped and subject coordinators are not involved enough in monitoring and improving their subjects. The clear vision and determination of the management team means that the capacity to improve is satisfactory. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievements through better assessment of how well pupils are doing and determining what is needed for them to make greater progress.
- Increase the length of the school day and develop the curriculum so that it meets pupils' needs more effectively.
- Increase pupils' opportunities to use their ICT skills in other subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by making subject coordinators more effective in monitoring and evaluating their subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The pupils' learning difficulties mean that their attainment on entry is low. All pupils, including those in the Foundation Stage, make satisfactory progress in relation to their capabilities. The higher attaining pupils with autistic spectrum disorder make good progress in literacy and numeracy, reaching standards in line with national expectations.

The school does not have sufficient data to accurately analyse pupils' progress over time. However, the introduction of regular monitoring of pupils' individual education plan targets means that a close eye is kept on how well pupils are achieving these. Day to day assessment is also new but is now giving staff regular information about the progress pupils are making in lessons.

Through their initial analysis of data, the school has correctly identified that pupils make the best progress in speaking and listening and in number. To improve the weaker areas, writing and shape, space and measure, the school has organised staff training. There is no evidence to suggest there is any significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls or between different groups of pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is good. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Pupils are friendly, polite and considerate to each other. They have good relationships with staff which results in a happy and positive atmosphere. The new school uniform is worn with pride and promotes a sense of belonging to a community.

The challenging behaviour of a minority of pupils is effectively managed, resulting in few incidents. Pupils see the reward system as a positive incentive to work hard; they are excited at being mentioned in assembly.

Working towards the Healthy School Award has given a clear focus to promoting a healthy lifestyle. This is supported by a good range of physical activities for which the school has achieved the Activemark award. Going shopping within the local community gives pupils real life opportunities to use money and raising money for charity involves them in helping others. There is a strong emphasis on personal development, especially personal care, so that pupils can be as independent as possible.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory with some good and occasionally outstanding features. Teamwork is a strong feature of all lessons and this makes a major contribution to pupils' learning. Very positive relationships help pupils do their best. Most lessons are well planned with activities that match individual abilities well. Teachers monitor individual lesson targets and assess pupils' success using a traffic light system which is understood by pupils, but systems to track pupils' progress over time are underdeveloped. Learning is most effective when teachers use imaginative resources which stimulate pupils' thinking and tasks which motivate them. An example of this was with pupils with profound and complex learning difficulties when all their senses were stimulated by a range of interesting and appropriate resources. They showed excitement and responded enthusiastically. Teaching and learning are also good when individual education plan targets are clearly linked to planning and pupils achieve well. Most teachers are good at involving all pupils in tasks. Pupils like practical activities; for example, they really enjoyed making pancakes. However, when activities are routine

and the pace is slack, or too much time is devoted to one pupil, others become distracted and lose interest. This limits their learning opportunities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with some good learning opportunities linked to mainstream primary schools. While there is breadth in the curriculum, time allocated to some subjects is limited, mainly due to the short taught day. The school is wisely reviewing the curriculum to ensure consistency and clear progression. Although teachers use their ICT skills well, pupils have fewer opportunities to develop their skills.

There is a good range of both lunchtime and after-school clubs. The curriculum is further enriched by visits with a scientific, historical, religious or geographical focus. Similarly, visitors bring a wealth of experiences to pupils, for example, storytellers, 'Kosmic Krew' and the local football club.

Pupils are well prepared to move on to the next stage of their education. Good links with primary schools mean that there are good opportunities for some pupils to attend mainstream schools on a part time basis. Similarly, with local authority backing, the school supports 11 'guest' pupils on part time placements from primary schools. This is a successful initiative.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree that pupils are well cared for and are given a good range of support. Strong emphasis is given to this aspect of pupils' education and the school has enlisted support from a range of external professional agencies to ensure that the best care, support and guidance are available. Because of the shortage of speech therapy, the school has recently employed an assistant whose training enables her to continue with pupils' programmes throughout the week. This has a positive effect on the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. All systems are securely in place to ensure the health and safety of pupils while they are in school. Staff are very careful to ensure pupils' personal dignity. Pupils' views are valued and respected.

Tracking pupils' progress is in the early stages of development and the systems in place need more time to become firmly embedded in daily practice to be effective in raising pupils' achievements. Lesson targets are written in pupils' books so that they know what to do improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. In a relatively short time the headteacher has created a positive school ethos based on teamwork and mutual respect. Supported strongly by an able deputy, he has successfully brought the school through a difficult time. His day-to-day management is good and he has the enthusiasm and

commitment to move the school forward. However, most of the new initiatives and assessment and monitoring systems are very reliant on him. A wider management team would share the load and give others a valuable overview of the school.

All staff are involved in the self-evaluation process and, although performance was rated higher than inspectors' judgement, the areas for improvement are accurate.

Management is now stable and the capacity to improve is satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory and in the short time from his appointment the headteacher has continued to tackle the issues from the previous inspection and introduce a number of necessary improvements. Despite some strengths in the middle management, notably numeracy coordination, the roles of subject coordinators are underdeveloped. Staff expertise is developing through professional training and they are being used increasingly in local primary schools as support for learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Many members of the governing body are new but they are well led by a very able, committed chairman and support the school well. New systems for governor monitoring are beginning to be effective and all have subject responsibilities. Written reports are shared developing a wider understanding of the work of the school.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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8 February 2006

Dear Children

Thank you very much for welcoming me to your school this week. I enjoyed talking to you and having my lunch with you. I found listening to you telling me about the things you like to do very interesting. The things I particularly noted were:

your attendance is good and you like coming to school

the way you join in all the activities with enthusiasm

the good way you are all looked after and cared for and the way you help each other

how smart you all looked in your uniform

how happy your parents are with what the school does for you

how all the adults try very hard to make school a happy place to be and have your best interests at heart.

I have asked your headteacher and the governors to make your school better by:

looking very closely at your work to see how you can do better

giving you more opportunities to use your computer skills in more lessons

getting teachers to take a closer look at how subjects are being taught so that they can be improved

taking a closer look at how the time you are in school is used.

Yours sincerely

Noreen Buckingham

Lead inspector