



# Springfield Community Special School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 124515  
**LEA** Staffordshire  
**Inspection number** 281737  
**Inspection dates** 28 September 2005 to 28 September 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Janet Thompson HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Springfield Road
<b>School category</b>	Community special		Leek
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 15		Staffordshire ST13 6LQ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01538 383558
<b>Number on roll</b>	51	<b>Fax number</b>	01538 383558
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20 October 2003	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Irene Corden

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 15	<b>Inspection dates</b> 28 September 2005 - 28 September 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 281737
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI).

## **Description of the school**

Springfield provides education for pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. An increasing number of pupils have autistic spectrum disorders as an additional need. The school has a unit specialising in teaching young people who require a very high level of adult support. The main school is based on a single site, with a separate class for post-16 pupils based at the nearby mainstream high school. The school is due to become a generic primary special school over the next few years.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Springfield provides education for pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. An increasing number of pupils have autistic spectrum disorders as an additional need. The school has a unit specialising in teaching young people who require a very high level of adult support. The main school is based on a single site, with a separate class for post-16 pupils based at the nearby mainstream high school. The school is due to become a generic primary special school over the next few years.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all teachers are confident in providing pupils with access to exciting activities within a highly structured environment.
- Improve accommodation by using the available space effectively and liaise with the local authority to improve the appropriateness of the accommodation now and in preparation for the school's changing role.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. The very good knowledge of individual needs helps teachers to ensure pupils make good progress. There is careful assessment and this, alongside information from parents and other professionals, helps teachers to develop individual targets. Many pupils have a clear understanding of what they want to improve and staff work hard to ensure that they understand how they can improve.

The school staff are conscientious in ensuring they judge achievement consistently across the school. As a result, all staff have a very good understanding of how well pupils are learning and progress against targets is carefully tracked. Staff quickly identify the need to increase the difficulty of work for pupils if necessary. The targets set are usually appropriate but a few pupils would benefit from more challenging targets in some subjects. The vast majority of pupils make good progress in all subjects and outstanding progress in personal social and health education (PSHE). PSHE is a core area for pupils in this school. Without this foundation, many pupils would not make the good progress identified in other subjects.

Although the school attempts to use the available space effectively, the small rooms and lack of specialist facilities can be a barrier to pupils making even greater progress. Post-16 students continue to make good progress and have made even more significant gains in recent weeks as a result of the wider range of opportunities available at the new age-appropriate unit which is part of Leek High School. Most pupils over the age of 14 gain relevant accreditation that equips them for the next stage in their learning and for life after school.

### Grade: 2

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. This is a central focus of the school's provision and has a very positive impact on all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They behave well and any challenging behaviour which occurs due to pupils' learning difficulties is managed appropriately to minimise disruption to others. This is particularly so for pupils exhibiting the most extreme behaviour, whose willingness to participate is often transformed as a result of the support they receive. Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with that of similar schools.

Pupils participate enthusiastically in lessons and are keen to show their work to each other and to visitors. They work well together in class, demonstrating increasing independence as they move through the school. Staff offer sensitive support for pupils while challenging them to become more independent. This enables pupils to participate in activities that without trust and effective communication would be confusing and threatening. High expectations of staff and their belief in the pupils' ability to achieve stretch all pupils to maximise their potential for a more independent future. Despite their difficulties, pupils are actively involved in making a contribution to the life of the school and are given increasing responsibility, for example in organising charitable or sporting events. The planned school council should enable pupils to have more of an influence upon school life.

The safety of children is given a very high priority and exemplary procedures have been put in place to ensure that children are protected. Pupils report that they feel safe and secure at school. Adopting a healthy lifestyle is strongly promoted and water is readily available throughout the school day. Healthy options are available at mealtimes, and although the pupils do not always make wise decisions, staff strongly encourage and guide them to make sensible choices. Through the good teaching, outstanding guidance and targeted support they receive, pupils are being effectively equipped with the skills they will require in their future lives.

Grade: 1

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning is good. Staff teams work effectively to provide for the individual needs of pupils. Effective strategies are used to help pupils learn independently as well as with an adult or in small groups. Making learning in all subjects relevant to the pupils' lives is a strong feature of many lessons. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is very strong. Students' needs are supported exceptionally well and any barriers to their achievement are recognised and removed.

Lessons are carefully planned and creative ways are used to teach the pupils. Teachers provide a good range of communication systems that help pupils to understand expectations and communicate their choices. These are used consistently throughout the school day. All lessons seen by the inspectors were at least satisfactory and most were of a high quality. Pupils were engaged in their learning and in many cases showed obvious delight in their achievements. In the best practice, staff had the confidence to combine carefully planned and exciting experiences within a highly structured learning environment. This encouraged pupils to use all their senses and improved learning. The good use of resources to gain pupils' interest and motivate them to concentrate also helped them to achieve well. The school acknowledges that some teaching could be improved further and is working hard to ensure all staff have the necessary skills and confidence to meet the standard of teaching in the best lessons.

Grade: 2

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 1**

The school's curriculum is outstanding. The Foundation Stage early learning goals guide the curriculum for the pupils in the youngest age groups. Older pupils follow programmes across the full range of National Curriculum subjects but within a structure which is meaningful for their needs and relevant to their lives. Literacy, numeracy and communication skills are developed well. The school's excellent personal, social and health education programme is reinforced across all subject areas and is an important feature of lesson planning. This has a very positive impact on pupils' progress.

The class for post-16 students offers particularly good learning opportunities within an age-appropriate setting. Through its links with Connexions, work experience placements relevant to pupils' needs, interests and future life are provided. Older pupils are also supported to join relevant college courses where this is possible.

All pupils have access to an extensive range of additional opportunities which enliven and enhance the curriculum. The school welcomes a variety of visiting artists and musicians and enables pupils to participate in performance where this is possible. The good range of enrichment activities and community visits helps to improve pupils' social and life skills, particularly the innovative visits to the health centre with the school nurse. These greatly contribute to improving children's self-confidence and enable them to access services with increased independence.

Grade: 1

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 1**

The school provides a very high level of care, guidance and support. Education, medical and care staff work closely to meet the needs of individual children, including those looked after by the local authority. Links with external agencies are very good. Detailed personal care plans are monitored regularly to ensure that pupils continue to be provided with the support they need to help them to learn.

Parents are very complimentary about the service the school provides for their children. The arrangements for child protection are very well managed. Staff have a good understanding of the procedures to follow to identify children who are potentially 'at risk'. They have a good understanding of the pupils and their needs and speak of how they act as custodians of the safety of the youngsters. Careers education and guidance for pupils provide good and relevant information. 'Taster' courses at local colleges enable pupils to sample vocational options. Well-planned work experience provides good opportunities to learn about the world of work.

Grade: 1

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. All leaders are focused on providing for the needs of each pupil. Senior staff act as strong advocates for pupils and are tireless in their pursuit of improving provision both within the school and from the appropriate multi-agency team. The school is flexible in providing for the needs of all pupils including those who have had considerable difficulty in accessing education in the past.

The headteacher and assistant headteachers work as an effective team. The thorough systems for recording progress in all areas, including attitudes and behaviour, ensure that they can easily identify and challenge the progress made by individuals. The range of information about pupil progress is becoming more detailed and helps to inform development priorities. Effective monitoring is in place and this has been used successfully in evaluating provision. The school knows itself well and has correctly identified where it needs to go.

The headteacher is working closely with the local authority to effectively manage the planned change for Springfield to become a generic primary special school. She has maintained a keen interest in developing the provision for all pupils at the school whilst also recognising the development needs to ensure the school is as effective in its future proposed role.

Governors provide effective challenge. They have been involved in evaluating progress to date and developing plans for the future of the school in the light of local authority reorganisation. Parents' views are sought and used to inform priorities for the future.

Grade: 2

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	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	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	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	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

Springfield Community Special School Springfield Lane Leek ST13 6LQ

28 September 2005

Dear Children and Young People

Thank you for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed meeting you and your teachers. We would especially like to thank those pupils who helped us at lunch time and those who told us about this school.

What we liked about your school:

You come to a good school which is a happy place to be.

You are helped to learn by all the adults in your class.

They know how you like to learn and help you to improve.

You have some very good teachers.

They take very good care of you, especially if you are upset or ill.

Young people in the sixth form class are making really good progress and enjoy mixing with other youngsters of their own age.

Rudyard class has helped many of you enjoy coming to school.

What we have asked your school to do now:

We think the buildings of your school could be better.

We have asked teachers to give you even more exciting things to do.

We hope you continue to enjoy your learning and make even better progress in the future.

Yours Sincerely

Janet Thompson and the inspection team.