



Springfield First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125967
Local Authority West Sussex
Inspection number 293417
Inspection date 23 January 2007
Reporting inspector Eira Gill

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

Type of school	First	School address	Sackville Road
School category	Community		Worthing
Age range of pupils	4-8		BN14 8BQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01903 219243
Number on roll (school)	172	Fax number	01903 219102
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Tim Williams
		Headteacher	Valerie Lavender
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2002		

Age group 4-8	Inspection date 23 January 2007	Inspection number 293417
-------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is below average in size. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and all pupils are fluent English speakers. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. The number of pupils who have statements of special educational need is average. Children, overall, enter the school with skills and experiences which are generally below the levels expected for children of their age. The school serves an area where there are some challenging socio-economic features.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school which continues to give pupils a high quality of education. Parents are very supportive and a new parent said, 'I have been very impressed with the professionalism and the friendly, approachable attitudes of the staff'. From early morning when pupils arrive for Breakfast Club and Book Buddies, to the end of the day when after-school clubs begin, the school is alive with learning.

Pupils' achievement, including that of those with learning difficulties and disabilities, is outstanding. Children make a good start in Reception and continue into Year 1 with skills and abilities that are in line with those expected for their age, although a significant number still have writing difficulties. Children in Reception and pupils throughout the school are given highly effective support by all staff and this contributes to their excellent personal development and well-being. Pupils have a strong and effective role in how they contribute to the school. Junior governors, who act as the school council, organise reward assemblies as well as the management of the playground equipment. They have lunch with the headteacher weekly and meet with governors.

Pupils build on the good foundations laid down in the Reception year and make excellent progress through Years 1 to 3. This is because exemplary teaching and the very well-planned organisation of small teaching groups meets the specific needs of all pupils. This is one of the major reasons pupils' achievement is outstanding and is a distinctive feature of the school and its success. Well-qualified teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the high quality of learning. All pupils enjoy their lessons and reach their full potential. Pupils attain above-average standards at the end of Year 2 and these are maintained in Year 3. Pupils do particularly well in reading, where standards are exceptionally high. Standards in writing are above average but relatively lower than in reading and mathematics.

The school's academic success reflects the excellent curriculum. Creative aspects have been strengthened and now include piano and cello lessons as well as a strong emphasis on art, design and music. Pupils' knowledge of the arts contributes significantly to their personal qualities and spiritual development. The quality of care given to pupils is excellent and the emphasis given to their academic guidance results in all pupils knowing what they need to do next to reach their targets. Parents indicate their strong support of how well the school cares for their children. One parent said, 'My daughter has flourished at this school.' Strong links with other schools and providers help the school to provide a very wide choice of extra-curricular activities. Outstanding leadership and management drive the school forward. Leaders, including governors, make sure the school does not stand still. Robust self-evaluation processes ensure that potential weaknesses are spotted quickly and innovative plans drawn up to improve those areas. The school has an excellent capacity to improve even further. The two recent extensions used for family education and improving the accommodation for the Reception children is a prime example of the school's ability to be creative and forward thinking.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in writing to match those in reading and mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding because of consistently good and, often, excellent teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those pupils who are likely to attain at higher levels make exceptional progress overall because of the first-rate support and very sensitive guidance they receive.

Exemplary planning and well-designed support programmes enable children to make good progress in all areas of learning in the Reception classes. A significant number of pupils start school with lower-than-expected literacy skills and, although teaching is often outstanding, their writing skills are still below average when they enter Year 1. In all other areas of learning the children attain the expected levels. Progress is particularly good in their personal and social skills.

Progress increases rapidly as pupils move through Years 1 and 2 as a result of innovative teaching methods as well as carefully planned activities that meet all needs and abilities. Pupils' achievement is outstanding at the end of Year 2 and maintained in Year 3. Standards in reading are well above average and above average in writing and mathematics. In writing, although standards are above average, they are not quite as good as those in reading and mathematics, despite the persistent efforts of the school. The good literacy and numeracy skills the pupils have developed will equip them well for the future.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Their knowledge of multi-cultural Britain is enhanced by visitors and by visiting places of worship of different faiths. They are confident learners who work together very effectively. The pre-school Breakfast Club and Book Buddies arrangements set the tone for learning throughout the day.

Pupils in all groups become totally absorbed in the very wide range of activities in the classroom and around the school. In lessons, pupils discuss their learning together with animation and confidence and are proud to present their findings to the rest of the class. Their behaviour is exemplary and this reflects the example set by all adults who work in the school. Attendance is above the national average and is a natural offshoot of the pupils' great enjoyment of school.

Pupils live up to their various 'Healthy Schools' awards and pursuits. They can speak knowledgeably about safe lifestyles and make an excellent contribution to their own community. They can describe with enthusiasm how the Buddy Bus Stop works in the

playground if someone feels a bit lonely and how they can all help their friends. They are proud of the many awards the school has been given. The junior governors have a significant voice in the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding and is enhanced by the contribution of the skilled and well-trained teaching assistants. Strong relationships are evident and there is a real sense of enthusiasm in learning shared by pupils and staff. Teachers are extremely skilled at using the responses of all groups of pupils and, as a result, pupils' self-esteem is high and they are not afraid to 'have a go'. Teaching strategies are often innovative, for example, staging a drama-type environment for pupils to tell others the powerful language used to open their stories. Excellent resources, such as the interactive whiteboards and computers, are skilfully used to engage pupils. Pupils' listening skills are excellent and their responses are rapid. For example, pupils in all ability groups in a Year 3 lesson were able to explain their sharp thinking processes to spot a variety of mathematical patterns. Just very occasionally, younger pupils are expected to sit for too long on the carpet.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding curriculum that contributes very significantly to pupils' achievement and personal development. Links between subjects are included in planning. They enrich pupils' experience and make learning more relevant and enjoyable. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their creative, musical and sporting skills both during and after school. Pupils in Year 3 are very excited about the short residential visit planned for next term. Time is used exceptionally well, with opportunities for small group work organised throughout the day. The school has re-organised the writing curriculum further to ensure that boys are given better opportunities to succeed. Evidence shows this initiative is beginning to have the desired effect. The school is already planning improvements to the outdoor learning environment for the Reception class so that it can be used in all weathers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Leading teachers are very effective in liaising with other agencies in order to gain extra support for all groups of pupils. Every pupil is valued and cared for as an individual. The effective use of the community room for family education has resulted in a better partnership with parents and has had a knock-on effect on improving children's learning. Excellent procedures are in place for assessing pupils' progress and enable staff to identify potential problems as soon as possible. Marking of pupils' work is

thorough and clear targets are set for pupils. They know exactly what they need to learn next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher, together with the deputy and senior managers, is constantly searching for ways of improving provision for all pupils and provides very clear educational direction. Monitoring of lessons highlights the best teaching practice and leadership shares the outstanding aspects of teaching and learning with the whole school. The school is successful because of its exemplary approach to evaluating performance and its effectiveness in addressing any perceived weaknesses. The school is modest in judging leadership and management as good for it has a proven track record of bringing about further improvement to an already outstanding school. Governance is very well informed and is prepared to challenge strategic decisions to ensure they are being made in the best interests of pupils now and in the future. The school enjoys strong partnerships with parents, colleges and the community and these help to ensure pupils' learning is broad, interesting and challenging.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know, I spent a day at your school recently to find out how well you are getting on. Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming. I really enjoyed hearing about all the things that you think are good about your school. Springfield First is an outstanding school and I am pleased you are so happy to be there. These are some of the things I found:

- You all learn extremely well and reach above-average standards, particularly in reading, because you are taught very, very well.
- The school makes sure you are all taught in small groups and that is really good as you get more attention that way.
- You all behave exceedingly well, are very polite and act very sensibly in lessons.
- The junior governors have a lot of responsibility and do a good job.
- You are given interesting things to do in lessons and in other activities.
- I know you are looking forward to going on your residential visit later in the year. It sounds really exciting.
- Your school really cares about you and looks after you really well so that you lead healthy and safe lives.
- Your headteacher and the other adults in the school as well as governors make sure the school is run really well.
- It was good to hear that you can go to your teachers if you are worried about anything.

When we had our meeting, you couldn't think of anything that the school could do better. Nevertheless, your school knows exactly what needs to be done to improve. They want to improve your writing and this is what the school has been asked to do.

It was a pleasure to meet you and I wish everyone all the very best for the future.