



Springfield Christian School

Independent School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number	209/6362
Unique Reference Number	132110
Inspection number	301398
Inspection dates	6-7 February 2007
Reporting inspector	Ian Hartland HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

Age group 4 - 11	Published 2 March 2007	Reference no. 301398
---------------------	---------------------------	-------------------------

© 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.

Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Springfield Christian School is located in Catford in south east London. It is an independent coeducational day school for pupils aged between 4 and 11 years. It has a nursery attached and provides full day care and out of school care which were inspected in February 2006. The school opened in 1999 and moved to its current premises in 2003. It received its full registration in 2003. There are 103 pupils on roll.

A central school aim is the *'training of the child to have faith in God.'* Further aims include, *'encouraging the highest standards in academic and extra curricular pursuits within a friendly and supportive community.'* The school hopes to develop *'independent, confident and responsible pupils well prepared to meet the challenges of an ever changing world.'*

Evaluation of the school

In many respects Springfield Christian School fulfils its aim of nurturing an enjoyment of learning and in developing independent, confident and responsible pupils in an explicitly Christian context. The school provides a satisfactory education in a number of ways. The good teaching enables the pupils to make good progress in English and mathematics. Staff are caring and the pupils are happy and feel safe. Parents and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the school. However, the school falls short in meeting a significant number of the regulations, especially in relation to the policies required to promote pupils' welfare, health and safety.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory. Its prime focus is on developing basic skills in English and mathematics but includes science, information and communication technology (ICT), history, music, geography, physical education, French and religious education. However the curriculum lacks sufficient breadth with too little attention given to creative subjects such as art and design and technology. The time allocated to teaching in the school day is short. As a consequence, subjects other than English, mathematics and science do not all receive a reasonable allocation of time over the school year. This then means that pupils

make less progress in those subjects that receive less time. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good despite the lack of a timetabled slot.

There are particular strengths in the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities; they are assessed well to ensure their needs are identified and met. Good records on pupils with particular learning needs are kept and the communication with their parents has improved. The school provides support for more able pupils through extra activities, such as Mathematics Master Classes. The provision for ICT is much improved. The school prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. Homework is set regularly.

Teaching is good overall and exhibits a number of strengths. Lesson planning is of a good standard. The learning outcomes are shared with pupils but are sometimes statements about activities rather than what is to be learnt. By their patient and encouraging manner the teachers create a purposeful and respectful atmosphere in the classrooms. The whiteboards are used well to record ideas which emerge from class discussions. Pupils enjoy learning and achieve well because they are involved in their learning. The small classes allow teachers to provide good support for individuals. The pupils understand the school's marking scheme.

There are areas which are less strong. Marking is generally regular, especially for English and mathematics, but too often only ticks are given with a brief note of praise. Marking too rarely indicates to pupils what they need to do to improve and is weaker in the foundation subjects in the upper part of the school. The teachers' questioning does not always provide sufficient challenge for more able pupils. Some teachers also permit too much work to be completed in pencil.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory with good features, although cultural education is less strong. School assemblies are outstanding and form an important backbone to the school's Christian ethos. Pupils enjoy the act of worship which starts each school day. The singing is led by confident pupils and enthusiastic staff who use well loved and well known worship songs and hymns. The assembly themes encourage pupils to reflect on aspects of their lives such as taking responsibility and thinking about the consequences of their actions. Pupils absorb these messages and this is evident in their attitudes and conduct around the school and they are invariably courteous.

The pupils' behaviour is generally good in and out of lessons but is less good after the end of the school day where the sessions lack sufficient structure for the many pupils who stay, some until 6pm. The pupils develop a degree of

cultural awareness through the visits to museums and places of interest such as Biggin Hill. However, cultural themes are not included in teachers' planning for different subjects. Their awareness of the school community is good but their knowledge of the wider community is less well developed. The school does not yet have a formal PSHE policy to enable it effectively to explore aspects of citizenship. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They feel safe. One boy explained '*I feel safe because I know God looks after me*'.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school's provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. In practice, the school provides a safe, caring and a strongly nurturing environment for the pupils. However, there are shortcomings in the written policies and procedures which mean that the school does not meet a significant number of the regulations for this section. The school has failed to keep sufficiently up to date with legislation and national guidance.

The school has made the necessary provision for fire safety. The small scale of the school ensures that the staff know the pupils well and can supervise them effectively at all times. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 with plans to improve access and provision for those with disabilities.

There is a series of policy documents but many of them, including those on bullying, child protection, health and safety, including risk assessments related to the school and for visits, behaviour and first aid are incomplete and do not meet current requirements. Many policies offer too little guidance to staff to direct their actions and practice. In addition, not all staff are clear which senior member of staff carries a responsibility for these various areas. Although pupils report that there is no bullying, there is too little guidance on staff action if it occurs. All staff have not received the appropriate training in safeguarding children. The behaviour policy includes too little information about the range of sanctions to deal with incidents of inappropriate behaviour. There is a First Aid policy with staff qualified to administer it. The First Aid boxes are appropriately stocked and accidents are carefully recorded. However there is too little guidance for staff on actions to be taken when a child is injured. The admission register is kept in accordance with requirements. The attendance registers are not kept in accordance with requirements.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The headteacher and his wife are joint proprietors of the school. All staff have been subject to satisfactory clearance at an enhanced level with the Criminal Records Bureau although the school does not yet have a single central record in place for all current staff. Further appropriate checks are carried out.

Documents are appropriately updated to reflect any change in staff circumstances.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is located in the middle of a residential area. It consists of a detached house, with an attached single story wing. The owners have added a further two storey extension to the back of the house. The building contains classrooms, a library and ICT room, a kitchen, offices and a number of washrooms. The school's nursery is in a separate building at the back of the school. A small play area at the back of the school is used by both the nursery and the school at different times during the day but is too small for the number of pupils in the school and does not meet requirements. The school is aware of this and wisely staggers its use at break and lunchtimes. The school buildings and environment are maintained in a satisfactory condition. The classrooms are carpeted and well lit but very cramped. They are only just big enough for the number of pupils in each class. The furniture is fit for purpose. The school has only just enough washrooms for the number of pupils in the school.

The school knows that it does not have appropriate facilities for pupils who are unwell and that it has not yet received a visit, as required, from the local Environmental Health Officer to check the kitchen facilities.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Some information, although too little to meet all the regulations, is to be found in the brief prospectus for parents. There is no information provided for parents about the name of the headteacher or owner, or the school's policy and procedures for admissions, discipline and exclusions, or the provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language.

It is not made clear to parents that other pieces of information are available on request: those relating to the curriculum; bullying; child protection; health and safety; the promotion of good behaviour; rewards and sanctions; particulars of academic performance; the complaints procedures along with the number of complaints during the preceding school year and the number of staff employed at the school and their qualifications. The annual reports to parents are of a good quality and convey detailed information on the pupils' attainment in different subjects.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a brief written complaints policy which sets out the procedures the school will follow in the management of any complaint. However it contains too little information about the specific elements and processes required by the regulations, particularly with regards to formal complaints and panel hearings.

The school does not make it clear to parents that the complaints procedure is available on request.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- ensure the curriculum gives pupils of compulsory school age experience in the following areas of learning: linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative (paragraph 1(2)(a)(ii)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- prepare and implement a written policy to prevent bullying which has regard to the DfES guidance *Bullying: don't suffer in silence* (DfES 0064/2000) (paragraph 3(2)(a))
- prepare and implement written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school in compliance with DfES guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education* (2007) (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- prepare and implement a written policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school which has regard to DfES guidance *Health and safety of pupils on educational visits* (reference HSPV2) (paragraph 3(2)(c))
- prepare and implement a written policy to promote good behaviour amongst pupils which sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 3(2)(d))
- have regard to the DfES guidance *Health and safety: responsibilities and powers* (DfES 0803/2001) (paragraph 3(4))
- produce and implement a satisfactory written policy on first aid (paragraph 3(6))

- ensure the attendance registers are maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 3(9)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, ensure appropriate checks been carried out to confirm their identity, medical fitness, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references and ensure information is taken into account in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed (paragraph 4(c)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l))
- provide adequate facilities for the hygienic preparation, serving and consumption of food by ensuring the local environmental health officer inspects the school's facilities (paragraph 5(m))
- make appropriate arrangements for providing outside space for pupils to play safely (paragraph 5(t)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide the name of the headteacher (paragraph 6(2)(a))
- provide, where the proprietor is an individual, his full name, address for correspondence during both term time and holidays and a telephone number or numbers on which he may be contacted at all times (paragraph 6(2)(b))
- provide parents and prospective parents with particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e))
- provide parents and prospective parents with the particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements and pupils for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 6(2)(f))
- ensure that parents are aware they can request particulars of policies relating to:

-
- the curriculum offered by the school (paragraph 6(2)(g))
 - bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour and rewards and sanctions (paragraph 6(2)(h))
 - academic performance (paragraph 6(2)(i))
 - the complaints procedures and the number of complaints during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j))
 - the number of staff employed at the school including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of procedures for handling complaints (standard 7) and must:

- make it clear to parents that the complaints procedure is available on request (paragraph 7(b))
- set out clear timescales for the management of the complaint (paragraph 7(c))
- ensure the procedure provides for one person, where there is a panel hearing a complaint, who is independent of the management and running of the school (paragraph 7(g))
- ensure the procedure provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations which stipulate that the complainant, proprietors and headteacher and where relevant, the person complained about, are given a copy of any findings and recommendations (paragraph 7(i))
- ensure the procedure provides for written records to be kept of all complaints indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing (paragraph 7(j))
- ensure the procedure provides for correspondence, statements and records of complaints to be kept confidential (paragraph 7(k)).

School details

Name of school	Springfield Christian School
DfES number	209/6362
Unique reference number	132110
Type of school	Faith
Status	Independent
Date school opened	September 1999
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 56 Girls: 47 Total: 103
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 4350
Address of school	Springfield Christian School 145 Perry Hill Catford London SE6 4LP
Telephone number	020 829 14433
Fax number	020 831 44283
Email address	info@springfieldsch.co.uk
Headteacher	Mr B. Oludimu
Proprietor	Mr B. Oludimu and Mrs E Oludimu
Reporting inspector	Ian Hartland HMI
Dates of inspection	6-7 February 2007