

Springdale First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113702
Local Authority	Poole
Inspection number	311342
Inspection date	4 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Alex Baxter

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	298
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	60
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Richard
Headteacher	Ruth Leach
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Springdale Road Broadstone BH18 9BW
Telephone number	01202 692700
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Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

Provision and children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

The degree to which teachers and their assistants are enriching pupils' progress by encouraging the development of independent learning skills. These include, for example, pupils' self-evaluation, self-chosen activity, investigation and problem-solving skills.

The school's efforts to provide a stimulating curriculum which promotes pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, assemblies and pupils at lunch and play. Teachers' assessment records and pupils' work were scrutinised. Discussions were held with pupils, staff, governors and parents. Parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire were analysed. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This first school is above average in size and mostly serves the needs of pupils in the local area. Children start school in one of two Reception classes, the last part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, but it varies from year to year. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and with English as an additional language is below average. The school has a number of awards reflecting its commitment to academic achievement, teamworking and healthy living. The school provides its own breakfast and after-school clubs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Springdale First School is an outstanding school. It is a very inclusive community where all pupils have an equal opportunity to develop in the broadest sense and to reach their full potential. Pupils' personal development and well-being is superb in all classes. Overall standards are very high and pupils' achievement is outstanding.

Several factors contribute to the school's success, not least outstanding leadership and management and the consistently high quality of the adult support provided. Many people associated with the school talk about the relatively new headteacher's 'seamless transition' in continuing a legacy of very effective leadership. Governors readily refer to the school's proven track record of strong and improving provision and say that, 'Springdale springs!' Almost all the parents who responded to the questionnaire expressed their very high regard for the school. Parents interviewed were quick to express appreciation of their very positive relationships with the staff. One parent warmly wrote, 'My son says he has two favourite things in life: his school and his bed', and continued, 'That should tell you all you need to know.'

The headteacher provides exemplary leadership. She empowers senior colleagues and governors to work as a team. Together, they make excellent contributions to the work of the school. Leaders and managers employ excellent systems for evaluating the school's performance and so have a very accurate view of its strengths and few relative weaknesses. Their skill in targeting the right priorities has enabled the school to sustain high standards since the last inspection. This has been a key instrument in helping the school to bring about continued improvements. These include, for example, using much improved information and communication technology (ICT) resources very effectively to lift pupils' ICT and independent learning skills. Staff also use ICT very successfully to manage data and set challenging targets to accelerate pupils' progress. As a result, the school's improvement since the last inspection and its capacity to continue this trend are outstanding.

Teaching and learning are excellent. By giving very effective academic guidance, teachers and their very capable assistants sustain an impressive progression in the pupils' developing academic and personal skills. In addition, all staff provide consistently high quality care, support and guidance. Support for pupils across the range of ability is consistently strong, including for those who find learning difficult. As a result, pupils become confident and capable independent learners.

From arrival in Reception and throughout the school, staff provide exemplary role models. They are also consistent in setting very clear and high expectations which strongly promote the pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning. The pupils' very good attendance reflects their great enjoyment of school and the high quality of relationships. One pupil reflected the views of others when saying, 'Wherever I am in school I know that I'll be safe.' Others said that, 'School is a happy place and learning is fun.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Qualities such as respect for differing beliefs and cultures and a willingness to celebrate each other's achievements were clearly demonstrated in assemblies. They were also strongly evident in the school's seasonal show 'A Christmas Recipe'. This performance also showed the pupils' musical prowess and, by the many parents present, the school's excellent partnership with parents, which underpins the pupils' respect for their school.

The children's skills on entry are mostly close to those expected for their age. However, their personal, social and emotional skills are higher than those usually found. Overall provision is

good in the Reception classes. In response to mostly effective teaching and excellent care, children achieve well in all areas of learning. By the end of Reception, many children attain at above average levels and a substantial number of children attain well above average levels, especially in personal, social and emotional development and in speaking and listening. At times, though, adults in Reception classes do not give enough support to activities chosen by the children themselves. This reduces the benefit from this type of learning activity.

Teaching and learning are outstanding in Years 1 to 4, where teachers really empower pupils to become independent, self-evaluative learners. The pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and others who are very able, make excellent progress as they move through these classes. The pupils' performance in assessments at the end of Years 2 and 4 has been consistently well above the national average in reading and writing and in mathematics and science for the past four years. Many pupils also become accomplished in using ICT and most are confident, very capable speakers by the time they leave the school. Consequently, all pupils are prepared exceedingly well for the next stage of their learning.

Across the school, the teachers' excellent use of assessment to understand and to target pupils' future learning needs typifies most teaching. The information gathered about each pupil enables staff to set consistently high expectations of all pupils, to match learning activities to the differing needs of pupils and, as a result, to develop new learning really well. Teachers also make sure that pupils are clear about what it is they are learning and what they need to do next to improve. This is evident, for example, in pupils' writing and science books where they respond very constructively to the guidance in teachers' marking.

The school provides an excellent curriculum. Teachers plan extremely well to sustain a strong focus on pupils learning enjoyably through practical activity. This includes making full use of the comprehensive indoor and outdoor facilities to enthuse the pupils. Teachers also make learning relevant to pupils' experiences. They accomplish this through topic studies that link subjects together and through an excellent range of clubs, including a popular breakfast club. Such activity promotes a warm, friendly ethos and develops the pupils' adoption of healthy, safe living very effectively. The school has established very good links with the community, both local and further afield, and these reflect its strong promotion of community cohesion. For example, a link with a Canadian school that has a broad ethnic mix of pupils significantly extends the pupils' cultural understanding.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is well led and managed. Adults safeguard the children's welfare in an exemplary way. Teaching and learning are good, because work is matched well to the children's needs. As a result, children of all abilities make good progress and attain at levels above those expected for their age in all areas of learning by the time they transfer to Year 1. Teachers and their assistants provide excellent care, guidance and support. They develop excellent links with parents and pre-school providers which underpin the children's confidence in school. Staff are particularly skilled in questioning children and in promoting their phonic understanding of words. In response, most children achieve extremely well in their personal, social and emotional development and excel in speaking and listening. These qualities are clearly seen in the children's very happy disposition, their great enjoyment of school and their warm relationships with each other and with adults. Generally, both indoors and outdoors, there is a suitable and improving balance of adult-led activity and those chosen by the children themselves. However, at times, adults are too focused on leading learning activities and do not spend enough time developing

and supporting new learning from the children's own choices and ideas. As a result, the benefits of children initiating learning for themselves, by building on their own interests, are constrained at times.

What the school should do to improve further

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- Enhance children's progress in the Reception classes by giving more adult support to children when they are undertaking learning activities chosen by themselves.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

5 December 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Springdale First School, Broadstone, BH18 9BW

Thank you for making us so very welcome. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and seeing some of your work. We were very impressed by many things, but especially by your excellent attitudes to school and the very kindly way that you treat each other. I am pleased to say that we have no hesitation in agreeing with you and with almost all your parents, who feel that Springdale is an outstanding school.

These are the other main things we found:

- You make excellent progress because the teachers plan very interesting lessons and make sure that your work is neither too easy nor too hard. As a result, standards are much better than those found in other schools.
- Your behaviour and the way you care for each other and respect and contribute to the local and wider communities are excellent.
- You really enjoy school and benefit from an excellent range of practical learning activities.
- You feel safe and live very healthily because you receive excellent care and support from all the adults who work in the school.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors run the school really successfully. They work very closely together and with your parents and other people to help you to achieve your best.

Even the best of schools can improve and so we have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to work together to improve just one thing:

- Ensure that adults in the Reception classes give more support to learning activities chosen by the children themselves.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection. We hope that you carry on enjoying your learning and helping each other as much as you do.

Good wishes for the future

Alex Baxter

Lead inspector