

Spelthorne Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125095
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315149
Inspection date	12 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Kay Charlton

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	275
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Antony Rogers
Headteacher	Mrs Pamela Martin
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	Chertsey Road Ashford Common Ashford TW15 1SF
Telephone number	01784 253942
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Age group	3-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The Inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues, achievement and standards, teaching and learning, leadership and management, care, guidance and support and personal development and well-being, gathering evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and documents. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector 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

Spelthorne School caters for pupils aged three to seven. It has a Nursery with 81 children on roll who attend on a part-time basis. There is also a centre for ten pupils with speech and language impairment who work in the mainstream classes for part of each day. Pupils come from a very wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and a high percentage have special educational needs with a significant number of statements. Pupils are mainly of White British origin and very few speak English as an additional language. A Foundation Stage unit was created in September 2007 as a result of bringing the Nursery and Reception classes together. Building work has just started so that the school, along with two other local schools, will form a Children's Centre for the area.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Spelthorne is a good school with outstanding features, notably in the care, guidance and support pupils receive and in aspects of their personal development. The staff are highly successful in raising pupils' confidence and self-esteem and in helping them to achieve well. Strong links are forged with parents, a range of professionals and nearby businesses, and all of these play an important role in supporting pupils' achievements and in taking the school forward. Almost all parents praise the school and make comments such as, 'I have always been happy with everything about our school'. Pupils are also proud of Spelthorne and are very appreciative of all the extra activities they are offered.

The school's good provision ensures that pupils of different backgrounds and abilities, including those from the centre, achieve well. As a result of good teaching and learning, pupils make good progress from a below average starting point on entry. By the end of Year 2, standards are in line with those expected and pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Staff are enthusiastic, they plan carefully as a team with the support staff and make learning fun. The school has particular strengths in the teaching of speaking and listening and this benefits all pupils, including those from the centre. Throughout the school, staff use assessment very effectively to gauge pupils' understanding and make sure they know exactly what they need to do to achieve the next step in their learning. Generally, staff maintain a very good balance of teaching and learning approaches. This was seen in a Key Stage 1 literacy lesson where the teacher made particularly good use of the pupils' own ideas to extend the learning of all. However, this good practice is not consistent across the school and there are times, particularly in the Foundation Stage, where staff do not fully challenge all pupils.

All staff firmly believe that each pupil should be treated as an individual and this underpins pupils' personal development which is good with a number of outstanding features. Pupils respond exceptionally well to the school's clear values and their behaviour is exemplary. They are encouraged to explore their feelings. Their responses to issues raised, for example about friendship, are impressive. In assemblies all show a high degree of reverence for times of prayer and reflection. Overall, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils make significant gains in developing their social skills with a particularly good start being made in the Nursery. Pupils of all ages thoroughly enjoy school, have extremely positive attitudes and a noticeable feature is the pupils' sense of belonging and loyalty to the school. There are good systems in place to improve attendance and there is virtually no unauthorised absence. Pupils are aware that their views count and that staff will listen to them. They say that, 'We can talk to teachers if we have a problem'. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle and appreciate the importance of being safety conscious. They take on responsibilities well and make a good contribution to both the school and the wider community, for example through the work of the school council.

Throughout the school, the curriculum is flexible to ensure that extra support is available to individual pupils as needed. It caters especially well for those who have special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language. Many visits and special events are undertaken. Along with the theme weeks, such as the recent one about 'The Circus', these increase pupils' motivation to learn. Well focussed plans are in place to ensure a fully consistent approach to planning the provision in the newly formed Foundation Stage unit.

Staff say that 'the pupils come first' and the care, guidance and support given are outstanding. The impressive rapport established between pupils and staff and the respect shown to each pupil is the basis of the school's success. Pupils say that they feel 'happy and safe'. Both their personal and academic progress are monitored very systematically and clear improvement targets are set. These play a crucial part in helping pupils to achieve well and have been instrumental in ensuring that there has been good improvement in pupils' achievements since the last inspection. The school is very effective in involving parents as partners to support their child's learning. Staff in the centre give excellent guidance to parents to ensure their children make good progress.

Leaders at all levels, including the governing body, are continually looking for ways to improve the school even further. The headteacher is determined that every pupil should have the chance to achieve of their best. She has an open management style that cultivates teamwork and ensures that every adult in the school recognises that they have a vital part to play in developing pupils' learning. The staff team rises to this expectation and each member shoulders their responsibilities in a very positive way. Coordinators are developing their skills well so that they are making an increasingly active contribution to whole school reviews. Governors are effective in both supporting and challenging the school in its drive for improvement. Overall, the school's self-evaluation procedures are accurate and robust and ensure that staff are clear about what needs to be done for the school to improve. The school has rightly highlighted aspects of the newly established Foundation Stage as a key area in need of development. Staff are approaching this development very enthusiastically and improvements are already evident. The school is well placed to improve in future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is good overall. An especially important contribution is made by the work of the Nursery where staff are very experienced in working with children of this age and give very good support to their personal development. As a result, children quickly adapt to working and playing with others and make significant gains in developing their social skills. Staff use a wide range of approaches to ensure that children of all abilities achieve their best. In the Reception classes, staff build well on these early foundations and by the time children start in the main school, many attain levels which are on a par with those expected for their age in all six areas of learning. Occasionally, however, they miss opportunities to extend and challenge children's learning through activities that the children initiate for themselves, for example in role play. The Foundation Stage coordinator is working well with senior staff to ensure that the curriculum is developed further so that it is consistent across the key stage and makes best use of the extensive outdoor provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all teaching, particularly in the Foundation Stage, fully challenges all pupils.
- Implement the planned improvements to the Foundation Stage curriculum.

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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?	2
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

29 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Spelthorne Infant and Nursery School, Ashford, TW15 1SF

Thank you very much for the help you gave me when I visited your school on 12 February 2008. I agree with you that Spelthorne is a good school and there are some outstanding features. The staff care for you extremely well and you feel happy and safe and your behaviour is excellent. All staff plan your lessons very carefully and teaching is good. Everyone gives you very clear advice about how you might improve your work and, as a result, you make good progress.

I could see how much you enjoy school and especially some of the special activities such as the Circus Week. You have developed your understanding about healthy eating very well indeed and you all work and play together happily giving help to others as needed, for example at the Friendship Stop.

Everyone is working hard to improve your school even further. I have asked the staff to make sure that all of the activities that they ask you to do, particularly in the Foundation Stage, really make you think and, also, to put into action their plans for development of this part of the school. You can help by trying your hardest at all times.

Yours sincerely,

Kay Charlton

Lead Inspector