

Springfields School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126557
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315586
Inspection dates	14–15 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Mike Kell

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	9–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	69
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	Trystan Williams
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2004
School address	Curzon Street Calne SN11 0DS
Telephone number	01249 814125
Fax number	01249 814125

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Springfields School offers a residential facility and so it admits pupils from throughout the county and from some neighbouring local authorities. Virtually all of the pupils are boarders. The very few non-residents are Key Stage 4 pupils who cannot cope with boarding and have problems with attendance, or they are pupils who are ready to reintegrate fully into home life. All of this group follow a personalised education programme that is taught on the Springfields site and elsewhere, such as home tuition. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs because of their severe social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and some have additional learning needs associated with especially low literacy skills. The vast majority of pupils are boys. A very small number of pupils are learning English as an additional language and a few are looked after children.

Springfields has had specialist status for sport for a little over two years. The school continues to manage a large vocational centre that it established in 1999. This is on the school campus and provides tuition in externally accredited vocational courses for pupils from Springfields and many local schools that purchase places. Up to 350 pupils benefit from this provision.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Springfields School does an exceptional job in transforming the lives of its pupils. The senior leadership team is highly successful in challenging staff to provide the highest quality of education and care and in challenging pupils to do as well as they possibly can. As a result, outstanding school and residential provision make powerful contributions to improving the pupils' life chances. During their time at Springfields, disaffected and disillusioned pupils develop into mature, confident and courteous young people with very positive attitudes to work and the future. The pupils recognise what the school does for them, with comments such as 'without this school, my future wouldn't be as bright'. Parents and carers are equally enthusiastic in their praise for the school and the parent who said 'Springfields is the best thing that has happened to my son' summed up their views.

The outstanding progress that the pupils make in their personal development puts them in a highly favourable position to learn. Their excellent attendance and outstanding behaviour enable them to make the most of everything that the school has to offer. These very impressive attitudes to learning flourish because of excellent teaching, an outstanding curriculum and a very high level of care, guidance and support. Because pupils' individual needs are met, their rate of learning accelerates rapidly. Consequently, all of them make outstanding progress and achieve exceptionally well, including those with additional difficulties or who are new to learning English or on a personalised education programme. Therefore, all pupils leave school with some externally validated accreditations that reflect their efforts and the school's high expectations. This culture of high expectation is testament to the very high quality of leadership and management that is evident throughout the school.

The school has improved considerably since the last inspection because of the clear vision that the school's leaders established. It has addressed its relative weakness, built on its successes and extended into new areas. The school has an excellent capacity to sustain this pace of development and change. The school exploits its specialist status very effectively. Sporting links take pupils out into the community, such as helping to coach games in local primary schools, and the local community is encouraged to use the school's facilities. The school has excellent links with all of its partners. Robust management systems provide leaders with detailed information about the school's work, especially pupils' academic achievements and personal development. However, the school does not gather data on pupils' academic achievements as efficiently as it collates information on their progress towards their behavioural targets. As a result, this makes the analysis of the academic data a time-consuming process.

Effectiveness of boarding provision

Grade: 1

Ofsted inspectors judged the residential provision as outstanding when they visited it in June 2007. The four units are arranged in a progressive way so that pupils move from one to another as their behaviour improves and they become more independent and able to develop positive relationships. This is a great incentive and pupils are very keen to make these moves as greater privileges go hand in hand with progression through the units. In addition to helping to transform pupils' attitudes, the residential facility makes a very significant contribution to other features of pupils' personal development. Pupils make excellent progress in developing an understanding of staying safe and in learning how they can contribute to the residential community by taking on more responsibilities. Residential life makes a strong contribution to pupils' awareness of

a healthy lifestyle and it contributes greatly to preparing them for leaving school. There is a well-established programme for promoting pupils' self-help and life skills and daily planned opportunities for care staff to consolidate pupils' classroom learning through structured homework sessions.

What the school should do to improve further

- streamline the procedures for collecting and collating data on pupils' academic achievements so that the information can be interrogated even more efficiently.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards are significantly below those expected of pupils of similar age because pupils have a history of disrupted education through exclusion and/or poor attendance.

The pupils' rate of learning is such that their achievements are excellent. The school enables all of its pupils to make such great strides because leaders have a very clear idea about what needs to be done to establish a platform for learning. Very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attendance, and vibrant, challenging teaching, encourage their participation in lessons and their enjoyment of learning. Some pupils need additional support before they can benefit fully and the school's commitment to equality of opportunity ensures that they get it. Pupils are assessed when they enter the school and as a result, many receive intensive literacy programmes. Through these programmes, they make rapid progress in acquiring higher reading and comprehension skills and this gives them the right tools for learning. As a result, they begin to thrive as they experience increasing success in all of their work. Individual targets in all subjects, which are shared with the pupils, and opportunities to attain academic and vocational qualifications provide extra challenge and further motivation. Consequently, all pupils make outstanding progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school's commitment to enhancing pupils' self-esteem, improving their social skills and enabling them to form positive relationships is evident in the expectations that staff have of all learners. The pupils make great strides in their personal development because they rise to these challenges. They develop a hunger for learning and a wish to make the most of the time that they spend in school. Consequently, they participate willingly and enthusiastically in lessons and other activities. In doing this, they acquire key skills at a rapid rate, gain vocational qualifications, learn to work with others and develop good habits, such as punctuality and a strong moral sense. This prepares them exceptionally well for leaving school and very many move into further training or education or directly into employment. Their excellent understanding of how they can remain healthy and stay safe further bolsters the pupils' preparedness for leaving school and moving successfully into adulthood. The school's specialist status gives its pupils very many opportunities to participate in a wide variety of physical activities, which they accept readily.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Pupils acquire new skills, knowledge and understanding as rapidly as they do because classrooms are calm. Teachers' explicit expectations of work and behaviour establish a highly effective climate for learning, and pupils respond positively. Teachers are able to maintain these expectations because of the excellent relationships that characterise all lessons. Pupils' efforts are recognised and celebrated, although praise is not used lightly. The pupils know what is expected of them and, therefore, if their behaviour does slip, they respond quickly when teachers and teaching assistants remind them. As a result, no time is lost and there is no disruption to other pupils' learning. Teachers are very confident about the subjects that they teach and instructors in the vocational centre bring in very useful practical experience. Staff have a very good understanding of what their pupils have achieved previously and so they present work that is pitched at just the right level of challenge.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Very effective management has produced a curriculum that is structured and planned creatively to meet the learning needs of all pupils. Innovative developments make the curriculum increasingly relevant to pupils' ages and interests. The weekly Active Enterprise day, for example, in Years 9 and 10 is a highly effective enrichment curriculum that very successfully focuses on developing pupils' personal qualities and skills. They follow short accredited courses resulting in nationally recognised awards in areas such as sports leadership, First Aid and lifesaving. The Key Stage 4 curriculum successfully balances academic study with work-related learning. Pupils follow a common curriculum of GCSE and Entry Level courses supplemented by two options, which may be GCSEs, BTEC or accredited vocational courses. Courses such as construction, and hospitality and catering take place in the vocational centre, but the school's very good partnerships enable pupils to follow courses such as horticulture and equine studies elsewhere. The school provides for the needs of pupils with additional learning difficulties extremely well. Learning support provision and personalised learning programmes enable these pupils to make the gains in key skills that they need in order to benefit from the wider curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The pupils' accelerated learning and excellent personal development owe much to the high quality of care, guidance and support that they receive. The mutual respect that exists between pupils and adults makes it possible for staff to set challenging personal and academic targets. Pupils know their targets and what they need to do to improve because they receive considerable academic and personal support. They know there is always someone with whom they can talk. Pupils with additional learning needs receive particularly good support and guidance. As a result, pupils who receive specialist learning support programmes and those with a personalised education package have the same opportunities as others to experience success. Pupils are supported very well in the transition for leaving school as they receive comprehensive advice about their future options. The school is a safe and very caring environment, with embedded, rigorous safeguarding procedures that fully comply with current requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school leaders' clarity of thought, vision and action has established a school within which all staff work towards a common purpose, that is, to give every pupil the opportunity to turn round their lives and to leave school with the skills to become informed and productive members of society. The school achieves this because leaders have established an ethos that all staff support: a consistent focus on the twin aims of raising standards and promoting pupils' personal development. Governors play their part well. They provide a high level of support and provide challenge to the headteacher, but not always as extensively as they might. Much of the school's success is due to its ability to direct its resources towards those areas of its work that will reap the greatest reward in producing better outcomes for pupils. It achieves this because its procedures for gathering information about how well it is doing are very effective in identifying priorities for action. It gathers a great deal of information about how well its pupils are progressing. Smooth processes enable information on their progress towards behavioural targets to be collected and acted upon easily, whereas data on their academic achievements is more widely dispersed and not as easily collated. Therefore, although the school examines this data carefully and always acts upon the information, the systems prevent it doing this as efficiently as it could. As a result, this makes the process of tracking pupils' progress more difficult and time-consuming.

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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 effectiveness of boarding provision	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well 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 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.

Annex A

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 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	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

16 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Springfields School, Calne, SN11 0DS

Thank you making us feel so welcome when we visited your school and for taking the time to speak with us. Many of you told us how much you enjoy school. You said that it was brilliant in the way that it helped you to change your behaviour and gave you the chance to take examinations. We agree with you. Springfields is an outstanding school with excellent boarding units. The school has very high expectations and you rise to the challenge very well. For instance, you attend school as often as you can and your behaviour and attitudes are very positive. As a result, you develop into polite, thoughtful and caring young people who know a great deal about living a safe and healthy life. Springfields does an excellent job in getting you ready for leaving school. It does this in lots of ways.

- Lessons are really good. You work hard and make extremely good progress with your learning.
- Teachers give you a wide and interesting variety of activities to do.
- You are given many opportunities to learn about the world of work and to take examinations that will give you more options when you leave school. It is good to see that many of you carry on with your education at college.
- It helps you to understand how each of you can contribute to the community, such as doing jobs in the boarding units.

The school's leaders and managers do an excellent job in making sure that the school runs smoothly and they are always trying to make it even better. We have given them an idea that will help them to do this:

- to develop a better way of collecting all the information that staff have about what you achieve in your work so that they can examine it more easily.

You can help too by continuing to behave so very well and by carrying on attending school as often as you can. We wish each of you the best of luck in the future.

Mike Kell Lead Inspector