

# Spring Park Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131464
<b>Local Authority</b>	Croydon
<b>Inspection number</b>	315810
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Thrussell

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	418
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr E Nash
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr P Larkey (Acting Headteacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 March 2002
<b>School address</b>	Bridle Road Shirley Croydon CR0 8HQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8777 2808
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8777 4880

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Spring Park is a much larger than average sized primary school, which serves an area with a very high level of social deprivation. Just over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with a high proportion having a home language other than English. More pupils than would normally be expected have joined or left the school beyond the starting year. Many of these are refugees or asylum seekers. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. There is an interim headteacher and most of the teachers have joined the school in recent years.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement and standards, the quality of teaching and learning, the Foundation Stage and leadership and management.

Since the last inspection when the school was judged to be effective, pupils' learning has been considerably disrupted by frequent changes in leadership and staffing. In consequence, although showing signs of improvement, teaching is inadequate, pupils are not making sufficient progress and standards are too low. The level of underachievement throughout the school, and its failure to bring about sustained improvement, demonstrate that leadership and management are inadequate. However, the recently appointed interim headteacher, well supported by the two assistant headteachers and the senior management team, has produced a plan for raising attainment and improving the provision in the Foundation Stage. This has started to impact on achievement and standards, demonstrating the school's capacity to improve.

The school's monitoring of achievement and standards has not been rigorous enough. Consequently, this has resulted in poor and inconsistent progress throughout the school and targets not being met. Standards by Year 2 are well below average in reading, writing and mathematics, although progress is accelerated in Year 2 through good teaching. By Year 6, standards are below average in mathematics, well below in science and exceptionally low in English. This is in spite of good teaching and additional support in Year 6, which helps pupils to make up some lost ground. Action taken to raise achievement and standards in mathematics has proved effective in Year 6, but has yet to be fully replicated throughout the school. Action currently being taken to raise writing standards is already proving effective, shown in the work of those pupils identified as underachieving and receiving additional support. The success of these initiatives demonstrates the school's capacity to make the necessary improvements.

Teachers have been given guidance for improving the quality of their performance, but this has not been monitored well enough to ensure that all teaching improves. The school has started to monitor pupils' progress and now has assessment data showing the levels at which pupils are working. Despite a growing understanding of these levels, the use of this data by teachers to plan appropriate and challenging work for all pupils remains weak and considerably slows the rate of pupils' progress. Pupils are set targets for improvement, based on assessment, but are not yet sufficiently involved in this process. Some are not fully aware of their targets, or of how they can help them to improve their work.

Rates of attendance are consistently very low and the school has yet to analyse whether pupils' progress is affected by this, or by other factors such as high mobility or the needs of particular groups. Although the school continues to take action to improve attendance, this has not been checked for its impact. Nevertheless, pupils enjoy school and 'meeting their friends in the playground'. They particularly enjoy enrichment afternoons and practical lessons where 'they get to make stuff'. However, they also feel that 'lessons are not always interesting; we have to listen to teachers for too long and we get fidgety'. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and are able to talk knowledgeably about what food is good for them and the need for exercise.

Given the success of recent actions to raise achievement in writing and mathematics, along with the growing determination of a more stable staff to improve things, the leadership and management have demonstrated that they have the capacity to improve.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 4**

During the last year, frequent changes in staffing have resulted in children making insufficient progress. More stable staffing and leadership is now in place and starting to lead to improvements in the provision. Whilst ensuring there is more consistency across the three classes and improving practice, there has not been time to see the impact of this on children's achievement, which remains inadequate. When children start school in the Nursery or Reception classes, their attainment is below that expected for their ages, and particularly low in communication, language and literacy, personal, social and emotional development and calculation skills. Children's personal development and language skills are given a high priority, but by the end of Reception, they have not met the expected goals in these areas. There are increasing numbers of children whose first language is not English and the school works hard to meet their needs with additional support. However, there are insufficient opportunities for children to broaden their language experiences through role-play. Adults often do too much for children, which stops them developing their independence. Outdoor areas have been developed since the last inspection, but their use could be improved further to maximise the benefits for the children. Staff are starting to make regular observations and assessments of what children can do, and to track their progress. However, these are not yet informing planning well enough. Efforts to improve links with parents are improving. They now bring their children into the classroom and have more opportunities to see where and how they learn.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that leadership and management fully implement and rigorously monitor its plans for school improvement.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning by making the fullest use of assessment information to plan appropriate and challenging work for all pupils, including children in the Foundation Stage.
- Check that the actions being taken to improve attendance are working effectively.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Overall standards by the end of Year 6 are well below average and achievement is inadequate. Progress throughout the school is variable. There have not been challenging targets for pupils to aim for and too many are not attaining the expected levels for their age. The support for pupils with English as an additional language, although improving for younger children, is variable, so that the progress made by these pupils is also inconsistent. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress due to the additional support they receive. An analysis of end-of-year test results in mathematics has helped the school to identify specifically weak areas. A focus on calculation strategies and problem solving, particularly in Year 6, has helped to raise standards. The school has identified those pupils who are underachieving in writing and is providing targeted support for them. An emphasis on sentence structure and the development of vocabulary, along with new resources with boys' interests in mind, is starting to raise levels of progress. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to talk about their

work, in order to develop their mathematical understanding and ideas and vocabulary for writing.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils are friendly, welcoming and happy to talk to visitors. Their attitudes to school are satisfactory although not reflected in the very low levels of attendance. Pupils show acceptable levels of care for each other. Most play well together, although a few pupils are less considerate, and can be somewhat boisterous and less caring of other pupils' safety. Pupils' spiritual moral social and cultural education is satisfactory. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and respond well to teachers' expectations, for instance in the well-ordered way they move around the building. They understand how to stay safe, feel free from intimidation and know how to get help when needed. Pupils say they would welcome more opportunities to take on responsibilities around the school. Behaviour in lessons is satisfactory, although some pupils 'switch off' if lessons are not sufficiently interesting or challenging. Pupils' weak basic skills, with their lack of opportunity to take on more responsibility and to work independently, are not preparing them well enough for their future life and learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

Teaching is not consistently good enough across the school to enable pupils to make the progress they should. Work often lacks excitement or opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves and learn in different ways. This is because teachers are not yet fully using assessment information to plan work that provides appropriate challenges for all. Teaching assistants are not always used fully and effectively enough. In Years 2 and 6, teaching ensures pupils are involved and excited by their learning and make good progress. Pupils' behaviour is generally satisfactory in lessons and teachers work hard to ensure that any inappropriate behaviour does not disrupt the learning of others. This is not always successful. Marking can be helpful, but is inconsistent. Often it does not show how pupils can improve their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory with sufficient emphasis on developing literacy, numeracy and computer skills alongside pupils' personal development and well-being. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or who are new to learning English, are identified and support is in place. This has been reviewed this term; provision for them has become more tightly focused to ensure more consistent progress. The opportunities in 'healthy week' contribute to the good provision for pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles. Visits from the police and fire brigade help to reinforce pupils' understanding of how to stay safe. Pupils particularly enjoy the enrichment afternoons, especially the practical opportunities to explore their skills in art, music, and design technology. Pupils enjoy attending the sports and dance clubs that are available after school, although these are limited in number.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare and safety are adequate. Due attention is paid to risk assessments, health and safety, and child protection. Learners at risk are identified early and support for their academic and personal needs, including the involvement of outside agencies, is satisfactory. Targets are set to show pupils how to improve their work. These are displayed in classrooms but not always written in a style that is easily understood by pupils, so that their progress is hindered. The involvement of parents in the care, guidance and support of their children is improving, particularly in the Foundation Stage.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 4

The leadership and management of the school have very recently been restructured and specific roles and responsibilities more clearly defined. There is now a more stable staff, but a permanent headteacher has yet to be appointed. During a time of considerable instability, the governing body has not been adequately aware of the weaknesses in achievement and standards and the relative inexperience of staff, when making interim arrangements for leadership and management. Consequently, the school has not taken effective action on the issues from the last inspection and has been very slow in starting to stem underachievement and low standards. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. School improvement planning has identified appropriate areas for development, but does not always set out to show how the success of its actions are to be clearly demonstrated in relation to raising achievement and standards. Nevertheless, recent improvements in some areas of the school's work, notably in writing, standards and achievement in mathematics and provision in the Foundation Stage, demonstrate that the school has the capacity to make the necessary improvements.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
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?	Yes

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Spring Park Primary School, Croydon, CR0 8HQ

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and telling us about your work.

We liked these things the most.

- You enjoy meeting your friends at school and most of you get on well together.
- You know the importance of eating the right things and taking regular exercise.
- You particularly enjoy practical lessons, such as art and design technology, and all the things you do during your enrichment afternoons.

By now, you have probably heard that we think your school needs some extra help. We have decided that it requires something called 'A Notice to Improve'. Although there are some good things about your school, overall it is not doing well enough and needs to improve quickly.

We have asked the school to work on these things.

- The school has plans to help the Nursery and Reception classes to do better and to raise standards across the school. It must check that these plans are carried out well. You can all help by working as hard as you can.
- Teachers must make sure that the work they give you to do in lessons is just right for each one of you. You must all be challenged to do as well as you possibly can in lessons, but also enjoy what you are doing.
- Some of you do not attend school regularly enough and this stops you making the progress you should. The school must check that it is doing all that it can to reduce these absences. You can help by coming to school every day unless you are sick.

Thank you again

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector