

Springfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132140
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	315935
Inspection dates	7–8 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Hazel Callaghan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	437
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lee Walker
Headteacher	Susan Powis
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	Dudley Road Rowley Regis B65 8JY
Telephone number	01215 591333
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Springfield is a large primary school that has its own Nursery. The vast majority of the pupils are of White British backgrounds. When children start in the Nursery, their range of knowledge and skills and experiences are below that expected for children of their age. A larger than average proportion of pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the school provides specialist provision for pupils on the autistic spectrum in the Focus Provision unit. The current headteacher has been in post for a year: at first as acting headteacher and then as substantive head from September 2007. The school has been part of an extensive building programme, which affected most parts of the accommodation. The new building was completed a year ago and now joins all parts of the school together, making communication and organisation easier.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Springfield Primary currently provides a satisfactory education for its pupils, but it is improving rapidly because of the good leadership of the headteacher and hard work of staff. The school has overcome many difficulties caused by extensive building work and staff absences, and it is now making good progress in many areas. Care, support and guidance for pupils are good. Pupils feel safe and secure and are confident about their work and how to improve. Relationships through the school are strong and pupils get on well with staff and with each other. They enjoy coming to school and want to do well. Pupils' personal development is good.

Standards are broadly in line with the national average and achievement overall is satisfactory. Good progress is made in the Foundation Stage and in the Focus Provision where teaching is good. There is a clear recognition of how pupils learn and the best way to meet their needs in both the Foundation Stage and in the Focus Provision that makes them strengths of the school. In Years 1 to 6, teaching is satisfactory. It is good in some classes and, although improving generally, it is inconsistent. A good range of strategies is used to motivate pupils' interest but not all teachers have a secure view of pupils' standards. As a result, they do not always provide activities that challenge individuals enough and build successfully on what pupils already know and can do. A good focus has been placed, however, on developing pupils' writing skills throughout the school. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and standards in writing are rising.

The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils satisfactorily. It is adapted well to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are given good levels of support in their work and in their personal development. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) was a weakness at the last inspection. It has improved, but the recent building work has limited the rate of improvement. For example, newly acquired equipment and resources have yet to be introduced and pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use ICT to support learning in other subjects.

A lot has been achieved in the last year because of the secure leadership and management provided by the senior leaders and the coordinators for English and mathematics, all of whom have a clear resolve and strong commitment to improvement. The school has rightly put its focus on raising standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT. However as a consequence, not enough time has been given to ensuring other subjects are monitored and managed effectively to ensure provision is sound and keeping pace with other areas of learning. This is recognised by the headteacher and there are plans ahead to address the concern. The recent progress made in improving pupils' attendance, in raising standards in writing and the improvement of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in both the Focus Provision and in mainstream classes is clear evidence of the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage because the provision is good with some outstanding features. Children enter Nursery with standards lower than those expected, particularly in communication, language and literacy and numeracy. Good quality teaching and learning ensure that all children progress well. Very well thought out routines ensure children

develop their personal and social skills effectively. A good mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities develop independent skills effectively. All adults relate exceptionally well to the children in their care. Puppets are used very effectively to develop children's listening skills. Occasionally, however, opportunities to develop speaking skills are not fully developed, for example during independent play in the outside area. Assessments and observations are used well to move children on to the next stage of learning. The outdoor play area is used very successfully to develop children's healthy lifestyles. Good links between Nursery and Reception ensure that children move from one class to another without any problems. Transition from Foundation Stage to Year 1 is also good. There is a very well thought out programme, which ensures that children make the change without any problems.

What the school should do to improve further

- Share the good teaching practice in the school and ensure that all teachers provide challenging activities that enable pupils to achieve well.
- Make effective use of the new ICT resources so pupils are able to use their computer skills to support other areas of learning.
- Ensure that all subjects are managed and monitored effectively so pupils achieve well. A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes and most reach average standards by the time they enter Year 1. Achievement across Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory and pupils reach broadly average standards. Pupils' progress in writing is stronger than in other subjects due to the consistent use of positive strategies for improvement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, in mainstream classes and those who are taught in the Focus Provision, achieve well. Their needs are well understood and all the adults who work with them give good levels of support and encouragement, enabling pupils to make good progress from their various starting points. A recent focus on increasing the progress of more able pupils has also had a positive impact and most are reaching the higher standards of Level 5 at the end of Year 6. Achievement overall is only satisfactory because not all pupils are challenged by the work they are given to do.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is a very friendly school where pupils are supportive of one another and show respect for the ideas of others. When a little girl in the Reception class referred to her teachers as princesses, for example, instead of laughing, the older pupils clapped in appreciation. Although pupils' awareness of cultural diversity is satisfactory, their spiritual, moral and social development is good. They have a growing empathy for others as could be seen when they were thinking about Poppy Day, and pupils showed appropriate respect in their minute of silence. Behaviour is good. Pupils are confident that any occasional difficult behaviour is dealt with effectively. There is a good awareness of how to stay healthy and safe. Pupils show pride in their own success, enjoy their work and respond well to taking responsibility. The School Council, for example, plays a part in decision-making, even being included in the selection of the new headteacher. There

are not enough opportunities, however, for pupils to contribute to the wider community. Their interpersonal skills are developing well and pupils' basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are sound and so preparation for their next stages of education is satisfactory. The school has worked well to improve pupils' attendance, which is now satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of learning varies, with good teaching throughout the Foundation Stage and in the Focus Provision for autistic pupils. Teaching elsewhere is more varied. A strength of teaching seen in many lessons was the use of effective questioning that explored pupils' ideas and extended their thinking. The pace of most lessons was brisk and the activities well structured so that pupils understood what to do. All teachers seek to match work to pupils' prior attainment, but not all are accurate in their assessments of pupils' work and the next steps in learning are not always sufficiently challenging. Teaching assistants show great confidence in their roles and carry them out effectively. This results in all pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, being supported well. Sometimes there is a lack of consistency in the use of 'signing' for the autistic pupils and they do not always benefit fully from this method of communication. Pupils' recorded work is marked conscientiously and comments provide encouragement. Marking frequently refers to pupils' individual targets and gives suggestions for improvement, but this good practice does not occur in all classes

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets the requirements in all areas, but ICT remains the weakest aspect. There are insufficient opportunities in ICT for pupils to use and further develop their skills in other areas of learning. Necessary resources and equipment have been purchased and will shortly be in use, but building work has delayed improvement. Whilst the emphasis is currently on seeking to raise standards in literacy and numeracy, the school is in the process of redeveloping the curriculum so that it makes learning in all subjects more exciting and relevant. Springfield already uses the expertise and facilities of a local special school very effectively to ensure that pupils on the autistic spectrum receive a good quality curriculum. Pupils' personal development is promoted well. There are residential visits for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 and an increased number of after-school clubs and activities. Other activities, such as a visit from a Roman soldier in Year 3, and events such as 'International Week' provide satisfactory opportunities to enrich pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral and personal care is a strength of the school. Pupils feel safe and parents are confident that pupils are well looked after. Rigorous vetting procedures, risk assessments and health and safety policies are used well. The school is successful in meeting pupils' social and emotional needs. Those with particular difficulties and those new to the school are well supported. Strong links with many outside agencies ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are also well supported. Individual educational plans are of good quality and are used effectively in work with learning support staff. The school has been successful in improving attendance

and pupils are keen for their class to get the 'good attendance award'. Academic guidance is satisfactory. There are good elements, particularly in Years 5 and 6, where pupils know their targets very well and effectively assess their own, and each other's work. The school acknowledges that the target system is not yet fully embedded in every class and, at times, pupils have too many targets to be manageable.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's accurate self-evaluation identifies areas for further improvement and this sets the agenda for the school improvement plan. Monitoring of pupils' standards and progress in English and mathematics is well organised and used effectively to identify those pupils who need additional support. Assessment procedures are more secure, but the school recognises that there is still some way to go in securing higher standards and better achievement. Many positive strategies have been introduced which are already having a positive impact, particularly with improving writing. The revised curriculum has been planned to give greater attention to developing the natural links between subjects, but this is not yet in place. Whilst these plans are taking shape, the main focus has been on literacy and numeracy and there has been insufficient focus on ensuring that the other subjects are managed and monitored effectively. There are plans for this to be addressed as part of the second phase of management reorganisation when the deputy headteacher is appointed. Governors have been successful in their management of the budget and the recent extensive building work. They are very supportive of the staff and are gaining a better insight into how they can successfully evaluate the work of the school.

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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?	3
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	2

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Springfield Primary School, Rowley Regis, B65 8JY

Thank you for making us so welcome and answering our questions when we visited you. You are rightly proud of the way your school is improving. It is providing you with a sound education. Here is a summary of what we found out.

- You make sound progress and most of you reach the standards expected.
- The children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress in lots of their work, as do pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- You behave well, especially in your lessons.
- You enjoy your activities and try to do your best.
- Teaching is satisfactory but many of your lessons are planned well and you find many of your activities fun.
- There is an increasing range of activities outside of lessons that you can enjoy.
- All staff look after you well and support you in your learning.
- The headteacher leads the school well and is successfully supported by the other staff.

These are the things that we would like to see improved.

- Ensure that activities build on what you already know and can do so you make good progress.
- Make good use of the new ICT equipment and give you more opportunities to use your computer skills to support your work in other subjects.
- Ensure that all subjects are managed well so you make good progress.

You can help to make your school even better by continuing to work hard and doing your best.

Thank you again for being so friendly and helpful.

Mrs Callaghan Lead inspector