

Springfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134083
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	316237
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2008
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	682
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	142
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger King
Headteacher	Christopher Webb
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Springfield Road Moseley Birmingham B13 9NY
Telephone number	01214 643618
Fax number	01214 646988

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2008
Inspection number	316237

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Springfield Primary is a large school with an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) of one Nursery and three Reception classes. There are three mixed ability classes in each year group from Years 1 to 6.

All the pupils come from minority ethnic groups, mostly Pakistani. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is high and many start school with no English at all. Just over a fifth of the pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is above average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties and a few are hearing or visually impaired. Twice as many pupils than in most primary schools are entitled to free school meals. When children start in Nursery they have low levels of skills and knowledge.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Springfield is a good primary school. It has improved well during the last few years and standards are rising. The pupils make good progress from the start of Nursery to the end of Year 6. Led by the very effective headteacher, all staff have high expectations and are working successfully to raise pupils' good achievement even further.

The school sets challenging targets that are met well. Where necessary, the targets are increased to reflect pupils' improving achievement. In this way, the school has raised the challenge for the more able pupils. More of them are reaching the higher levels in Year 2 and Year 6 than was the case before. Overall standards are average by the end of Year 6. In writing, they have lagged behind other subjects and the provisional results for 2008 showed them to be below average. This school year, standards in writing are rising and close to average. There is some exceptionally good writing in Years 5 and 6. Pupils have the necessary basic skills in information and communication technology (ICT), although the resources and accommodation for this subject are limited. Senior leaders have well focused plans to improve provision for ICT so that pupils' achievement is raised. Pupils' preparation for the next stage of their education and life outside school is satisfactory.

Pupils are enthusiastic about their school. They say they enjoy it because teachers make learning fun and exciting, and they learn something new every day. Their eagerness to learn is a cornerstone of their good achievement. The pupils are well aware of the need to keep healthy and safe. They enjoy sports and physical education a lot and know how this helps to keep them fit. Although attendance rates are below average the majority of pupils attend school whenever they are well enough. The school works successfully to raise attendance and to discourage extended holidays in term-time. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have firm understanding of the other faiths and cultures in society and they support each other well. Pupils are proud of their school and its community and racial harmony is good.

The pupils are taught well. Lessons are interesting and involving, and teachers pack a lot into the time. The focus on developing skills and knowledge is sharp and pupils regularly check how far they are meeting their targets and improving their work. Academic guidance is very good. Occasionally, a few younger boys find it hard to concentrate and behave well, which a very small number of parents are concerned about. Despite this, these parents can be reassured that the great majority of lessons are calm and settled and behaviour is generally good. Most teaching assistants are skilled at helping pupils who speak English as an additional language to make quick progress. These pupils very soon achieve as well in literacy and numeracy as the others in their class. Provision is good for EYFS children and so they learn and develop effectively.

The curriculum has been carefully planned to ensure all pupils learn successfully. The focus on problem solving and investigation in mathematics and science is good. Staff are working to improve the use of other subjects to build pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, although there is still further scope for development here. Pupils are given good care and guidance and the procedures to safeguard them are robust. Good support is provided for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Pupils with hearing and visual difficulties are catered for well. All pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

The strong trend of improvement in school is due to the good leadership and management. There is a very pronounced 'can do' ethos amongst staff, governors and the pupils. This is accompanied by a steadfast focus on raising pupils' achievement, especially amongst the

headteacher and senior leaders. Governors keep a watchful eye on how well the school performs and they ask challenging questions to keep it on course for improvement. The systems of checking the quality of the school's work and tracking pupils' progress are significant assets because they pinpoint areas for improvement very quickly and ensure that effective action is taken to eliminate weaknesses. The school has good capacity to maintain its improvement, especially in pupils' standards and achievement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children do well in the EYFS. Although their language and literacy skills are much lower than the levels typically expected when they start Nursery, they soon adapt to school life and begin exploring the many interesting things that are set out for them. They also make good progress in their social and emotional growth, and play and learn happily as part of a group rather than on their own. A few boys take longer to settle than other children and their behaviour is not always good enough. Staff work appropriately to ensure these boys remain well motivated and focused on their activities.

The children are nurtured carefully and grow in confidence. Provision is well tailored to their needs and the support from staff is generally well focused on helping them build the necessary early skills of literacy and numeracy and to ensure their welfare. The outdoor space is small but it has been developed into a very inviting area where the children can discover and investigate as well as play. Children make good progress and by the time they leave Reception most are close to the targets for children their age, although many still have some EYFS skills and knowledge to attain.

The EYFS is well led. Staff know what requires improvement and where the strengths lie. There are good quality development plans for the EYFS based squarely on improvements to increase children's achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve resources for ICT so that pupils can improve their achievement in this subject.
- Make sure that pupils have sufficient opportunity to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards have been rising well over the last few years and pupils' progress has accelerated. The good start in EYFS ensures the children in Nursery and Reception gain in skills and knowledge at a brisk rate. By the time they join Year 1 they have reached standards that are below average but considerably higher than their low starting points.

Progress remains good in Years 1 and 2. Standards were below average in the 2007 national assessments but this year they have risen, and currently are not far short of the expected level. More pupils are showing the potential to reach the higher levels than before. Similarly, in Year 6, the more able pupils are doing well at present and the proportion of potential higher levels is rising steadily. This is due to the challenging targets set for pupils and the careful tracking of their progress. Standards are broadly average in Year 6 now. The sheer good quality of provision for pupils in the year group is helping to push them up further.

Because the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high, a few older pupils still have difficulties in understanding all the different ways in which a question can be asked in mathematics, for example. This sometimes affects their results in tests, as they know how to do the calculations but have difficulty in interpreting the question. Staff work well to overcome this and most pupils are successful mathematicians.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. The process of helping pupils become good citizens and healthy and safe individuals starts in the EYFS where children's insecurities in working with others and talking confidently about their activities are overcome effectively. Thus, their personal, social and emotional development is good.

Pupils are keen to do well in school. They develop satisfactory basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT and show increased independence, maturity and sensible behaviour by the time they leave Year 6. They show appropriate initiative and a sound ability to work as part of a self-reliant team. Pupils' enthusiasm for school runs parallel to their attendance. Most of them attend well throughout the year, although a small number take extended holidays in term-time. Governors have recently changed their policy on this in order to ensure that the amount of absence during school weeks is reduced.

Pupils take good care of each other and work well to help others in the school community. They also work appropriately with people from the wider community. There is good harmony and tolerance in school and pupils are keen to point out that bullying is not tolerated and dealt with firmly. The school fosters community cohesion well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching quality is good in all parts of the school. Pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard. In the EYFS provision is good, which results in the children making good progress in their learning and personal development. There is some outstanding teaching in school, as seen for example in a Year 5 writing lesson about creating gripping sentence openings, where the seven different ability groups all made exceptional progress. The work was fine-tuned to each group's learning targets and there was constant reference to how to improve. As in the rest of the school, pupils with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities made the same progress as the other groups because staff support them enthusiastically. Assessment of learning, including by the pupils themselves, was a particular strength of this lesson. It was also observed in a good number of the other lessons seen.

The management of pupils is generally good. There are times when some of the younger boys could be more firmly returned to good working patterns because occasionally, and for short periods, their behaviour is not good enough. Older boys, like the girls, are mature and sensible workers in lessons and behaviour is often impeccable.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well geared to pupils' needs and provides all the necessary subjects. It is enriched by an appropriate programme of out of school activities, and subjects are often brought to life by the imaginative way in which lessons are planned. The curriculum for ICT is satisfactory and staff use the available equipment as well as possible to build and extend pupils' skills. However, the ICT room and the number of computers are small for the number of pupils in school. This sometimes affects the frequency and quality of lessons in the subject. There are detailed plans for future improvement to ICT provision.

Literacy and numeracy are the bedrock of the curriculum, although the use of other subjects to help pupils build skills and knowledge in these aspects is not yet consistent. The focus on speaking and listening skills is good, which enables pupils with English as an additional language to become fluent speakers and writers.

Pupils' personal, health and social education is well planned and delivered. As a result, they develop well as people. Their creative skills are fostered well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is vigilant in looking after the pupils. There are good links with outside agencies to follow up concerns, and the partnership with parents in this is satisfactory and strengthening. A few parents are worried that the school does not always consider their views, keep them informed of what is happening or follow up their individual concerns. Most parents, however, rate the school positively for its work to build links with them and say that this helps their children settle to good work.

Good support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teaching assistants are central to this and their effective efforts ensure that their pupils progress well. Academic guidance is a particular strength. Marking is consistently helpful for pupils in identifying the next steps to improve their work and there is a very successful system in lessons of setting targets for individual pupils and checking that these are achieved.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is moving ahead because it is well led and managed. The headteacher has high expectations of all staff, the governors and the pupils. Senior leaders work effectively to uphold these expectations. There is excellent quality development planning that is focused directly on raising pupils' achievement. At present, middle managers' responsibility for achievement and standards is being strengthened to give them a greater leadership role. Governors are fully supportive of the school and take a suitably critical, yet positive role in ensuring it performs well. Financial management is secure and staff and resources are used well.

Senior leaders use challenging targets effectively to raise pupils' achievement. More able pupils are now achieving well because of this and the proportion capable of reaching the higher levels in national tests and assessments is rising. Sensibly, the school is now using the proportion reaching the expected level or the higher level in both English and mathematics as a rigorous

measure of achievement. Pupils of all backgrounds and ability groups are able to make good gains in their learning because their needs are met well. School leaders make accurate judgements of how effectively the school is working because their checking and evaluation systems are good.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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?	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
The extent to which 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	2
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 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?	2

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	1
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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

20 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Springfield Primary School, Birmingham, B13 9NY

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited school recently. Many of you told us Springfield is a good school and we agree. Our report includes many good things about your school.

- You make good progress and reach the expected standards.
- Children in Nursery and Reception settle well to their learning and they build skills and knowledge quite quickly.
- Although there are one or two exceptions, you behave well.
- You look after each other carefully.
- You are well taught and your curriculum is often exciting.
- Staff take good care of you and help you to improve your work.
- Mr Webb and the staff expect you to do well.

To make the school even better, we have suggested two things that could be improved.

- There could be better equipment for ICT so that you can learn even more about the subject.
- Teachers could help you improve your literacy and numeracy skills by linking them more often to other subjects.

We think you have a bright future in school. We also know you will want to help your teachers make these improvements. You can start by making sure you always do your best writing in subjects like science, geography and history.

- Good luck in your studies.
- Yours sincerely

David Carrington Lead inspector