

# Springfield Community Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121792
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hackney
<b>Inspection number</b>	320685
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sheena MacDonald HMI

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	216
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Sandra John
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Shanthi Ravi Varma
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Castlewood Road Hackney N16 6DH
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8800 9007
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8800 8738

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Springfield is a one-form entry primary school with a full time Nursery. Pupils come from a diverse mix of ethnic backgrounds and three quarters of the pupils represent ethnic minorities, mostly Turkish, Polish, Black Caribbean and Black African. A much higher than average proportion of pupils has English as an additional language. Many of these pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average; the majority of these difficulties are behavioural, emotional and speech, language and communication. High numbers of pupils come from households with high levels of social need; there is an above average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Mobility is high across the school with above average numbers joining or leaving the school other than at the usual time. The school is a Fresh Start school and has experienced a large turnover of staff during the two years since it opened.

## 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 standards and achievement of pupils in Years 1 to 6, teaching and learning and leadership and management. As a result, the school's overall effectiveness is inadequate.

There has been considerable turnover of staff during the past two years and the majority of the teaching staff, and members of the senior leadership team, are new to the school. These enthusiastic staff are beginning to redress the legacy of underachievement and there are some positive early signs of improvement. Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Throughout the whole school, pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy coming to school, behave well and have good attitudes to learning. The vast majority of parents confirm that the children are happy and feel safe at school. Pupils and parents also appreciate the opportunities such a culturally diverse school brings. As one commented, 'it is a school of all nations which helps us to learn about different cultures'.

There is a legacy of underachievement caused by weak teaching in the past and insufficient good teaching to remedy this. The lack of strong direction from leadership and management has resulted in standards that are exceptionally low in English, mathematics and science and inadequate progress over time. Several parents commented that the more settled staffing has made a positive difference to their children's progress and there are some encouraging signs that the school is beginning to redress the underachievement and tackle the causes of it more vigorously. Assessment systems are now more rigorous and the school has a more accurate understanding of how well pupils are achieving, where the gaps are and what needs to be done to speed up the rate of progress.

Although teaching overall is unsatisfactory because progress is inadequate, this situation is improving. Lessons observed during the inspection were satisfactory with some that were good. Teachers and teaching assistants plan well-organised lessons and pupils respond well. Relationships are characterised by warmth and mutual respect. The major weakness at the heart of teaching and learning is a lack of clear understanding of how assessment needs to inform day-to-day learning. Too often, activities are not tailored to meet the different needs of pupils and the rate of pupils' progress is restricted.

Leadership and management have not ensured an adequate pace of improvement. Whole-school planning is not sharply focused on raising standards and monitoring and staff development activities are not always precisely targeted to ensure improvement. Evaluation of the impact of improvement strategies is not strong enough to enable the school to have a clear idea of what actions are having the most impact. Recent appointments have strengthened the senior leadership team and this is beginning to have a positive impact on the pace of improvement. The school now has a clearer idea of its strengths and weaknesses and a better understanding of where action is required to speed up improvement. Continuing good provision in the Foundation Stage, consistent implementation of strategies resulting in good personal development and the improved quality of teaching and senior leadership mean that the school has the capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. At the start of the Foundation stage children generally have skills and knowledge, particularly in English, which are below that expected nationally. However, by the time they move into Key Stage 1 they have caught up and most are achieving at national expectations. They experience a wide and interesting curriculum that is carefully focused on their needs. Particular attention is rightly paid to developing children's language skills. Teachers make good use of the classrooms and the outside areas, to develop skills and knowledge across all the areas of learning. Teachers assess pupils regularly and all adults work well together to support children's individual needs. Children play happily together and there are good routines to ensure their safety and enable them to develop confidence and independence. As a result of this good provision, children make good progress in their learning and in their personal development.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science and make sure all pupils reach their potential.
- Improve the use of assessment to inform lesson planning and ensure that activities are well matched to meet the differing needs of all pupils.
- Improve the quality of all teaching by sharing the existing good practice.
- Improve school improvement planning so that actions are sharply focused on raising attainment.
- Improve monitoring and evaluation so that weaknesses are urgently addressed and the school is able to identify those strategies which are having the most positive effect.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 4

In the past, the school has not built on the good progress made in the Foundation Stage. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, standards are significantly below average in all subjects and the rate of progress too slow. In the current Year 1 class, good progress is being maintained. In the rest of the school, the legacy of underachievement is evident in the low standard of pupils' work. However, systems for gathering and analysing assessment information are now more accurate and are beginning to be used more effectively. There are encouraging signs of progress beginning to speed up particularly where the quality of teaching is good. There is a lot of ground to make up but overall, the current rate of progress is not sufficient to make sure that all pupils achieve their potential.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy coming to school and say that they 'like to meet friends and learn interesting things'. They respond well to consistent behaviour management systems and as a result, behaviour in the classroom and around the school is good. The level of exclusions and incidents of inappropriate behaviour have reduced dramatically in this academic year. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They care for and show respect for each other and enjoy belonging to such an ethnically diverse school. Pupils appreciate the good range of physical activities and show pride in their

Healthy Schools award. The school has implemented successful strategies to improve attendance and many pupils achieve very high levels of attendance. Despite this, regular absences of a few families depress the overall attendance rates. There are opportunities for pupils to take on a variety of responsibilities, for example, some are trained peer mentors and help sort out difficulties in the playground. The members of the school council are very active and proud of their contribution to bring about improvements. Pupils contribute to the local community through activities such as musical performances and fundraising for charity. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop important life skills such as using their initiative and working collaboratively. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are too low and not enough is done to develop these skills across the curriculum to help pupils understand how they contribute to success in the workplace.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

There are pockets of good teaching and learning throughout the school where lessons are lively and interesting, activities well matched to different abilities and progress is good. Most lessons are carefully planned and well organised. Relationships are good, pupils are well behaved and keen to learn. Speaking and listening with partners and in groups is given a high priority: the impact of this is seen in the developing confidence and fluency pupils demonstrate in and out of lessons. However, in many lessons, long teacher-led sessions mean that pupils do not have enough opportunity to demonstrate and develop their own learning. This results in inadequate progress. In too many lessons, all pupils undertake the same tasks regardless of individual needs. Although staff identify learning objectives for each lesson, sometimes these are not very clear and not sufficiently related to the activities that follow. The quality of marking is variable, some is good but in some classes, work is not marked regularly and does not give pupils sufficient advice on what they have to do to improve their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

All subjects are adequately covered with an appropriate emphasis on literacy, numeracy and physical education. The newly implemented curriculum map ensures that subjects are covered in a more coherent way with good links being made across subjects to make the learning more relevant. However, there are not enough opportunities to practice and develop literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Currently the curriculum is not sufficiently well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. The curriculum for personal, social, health and citizenship education is good and is having a positive impact on pupils' personal development and their understanding of issues such as how to stay healthy and safe. The school makes good use of visitors and the local community to enrich the curriculum and there is a good range of after school clubs.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pastoral care is good and there is a strong focus on ensuring pupils' safety and well-being. Pupils are confident that any worries will be treated sensitively by adults and that they will be helped through any difficulties. Good levels of support staff, including a learning mentor and Turkish and Polish speaking teaching assistants, provide targeted care and guidance. There are

improving systems for tracking and supporting pupils with additional needs including those with English as an additional language. Sometimes support in class is over directed and as a result, pupils are not able to develop independence in their learning. The school makes good use of external expertise. The headteacher has acted appropriately to minimise risks and ensure safety during the current building work. Academic guidance is less secure. Systems are in place to track progress but there are inconsistencies in the use made of information to identify the next steps in learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 4**

A lack of consistency and rigour in monitoring and evaluation and inaccuracy of assessment information has blunted the impetus of improvement. Staff turnover has affected continuity and the ability of leadership to establish clear direction. Despite these weaknesses, the school is a safe, harmonious community where pupils and adults get on well and want to spend time together. Recent appointments to the senior team have strengthened leadership and brought some much-needed good quality management and teaching skills to the school. Indications are that good role modelling by senior staff, and recent initiatives intended to improve the quality of teaching and learning, are sharpening the teachers' focus on attainment, thereby improving provision and helping to raise standards. Improvements in the rate of progress made by pupils in several classes, for example, in Year 1, are a direct result of the sharper focus on assessment, led by a member of the senior team.

Although the school has a satisfactory understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, its judgements about its effectiveness have been over generous. This is because monitoring and evaluation systems have not focused sufficiently on pupils' learning and have not been rigorous enough in following up and eradicating weaknesses. Subject leadership varies in quality from good to inadequate and this is reflected in the quality of support provided by coordinators. Links between improvement strategies and pupils' progress are not focused sharply enough to enable the school to monitor, evaluate and measure the impact of different activities.

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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
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	4

### 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	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	3
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	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?	Yes

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

04 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Springfield Community Primary School, Hackney, N16 6DH

As you know we visited your school recently to find out how well you were doing. We really enjoyed our time with you. Thank you for being so friendly, polite and welcoming, especially those of you who gave up time to talk to us. We have decided that your school needs 'A Notice to Improve'. Although there are many good points about your school, we think there are some important things that need to be improved.

- Your school needs to raise the standards you achieve in English, mathematics and science.
- Sometimes you all do the same work in lessons. Your teachers need to know exactly what each of you can do already and what the next steps are in your learning. Then they can make sure that they plan activities so that they are just right for all of you, not too hard, not too easy but challenging enough to make you think hard and make good progress.
- We would like your teachers to share their ideas so that all lessons are as good as the best ones.
- Your school has an improvement plan but it does not concentrate hard enough on how well you are doing in your work. Everybody in school needs to make sure they use their energy on things that will help you achieve good results.
- The leaders in your school must keep a very close eye on things so they know exactly what is working well and what needs to improve. Then they need to act quickly to make sure the good things carry on and the weaker things get better fast!

There is a lot about your school that you should be proud of. Your behaviour is good, you get on well together and you are eager to learn. Some of your teachers and senior leaders are new to the school and as a result things are already beginning to improve. I know that your good behaviour will help teachers to concentrate on making all the lessons better.

We wish you every success in the future.

Thank you again for helping to make our time in your school so enjoyable.

Yours sincerely,

Sheena MacDonald

Her Majesty's Inspector