

Springfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109866
Local Authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	325047
Inspection date	9 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Brian Evans

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	300
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stuart Wilson
Headteacher	Mrs Angela Hay
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Barton Road Tilehurst Reading RG31 5NJ
Telephone number	01189 421797
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors gathered evidence from lesson observations, looking at pupils' work, assessment information, documents, interviews and discussions. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- teaching and learning, especially in Years 1 and 2 - whether standards are high enough and whether pupils are making sufficient progress
- strengths in pupils' personal development
- systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress, and how they inform pupils as to how they can improve their work
- the impact of leaders on standards and pupils' progress.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This larger than average primary school admits pupils aged from 3 to 11. Most pupils are of White British origin, and some are from mainly Mixed Black or Asian Heritage. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, mostly to do with reading and writing, is below that found nationally. There is an above average number who have a statement of educational needs. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below national figures. Among a number of awards, the school has achieved Healthy School Status.

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 school. Pupils attain broadly average standards and, given starting points on entry to the school, make good progress by the end of Year 6. The strong and energetic headteacher is a good leader and manager. Her able deputy headteacher, and a good team of middle leaders and administrative staff, give her very good support. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in using assessment data more effectively to monitor pupils' progress. Pupils have clear targets written into their books and know what they have to do to improve. Investment in a wide range of information technology hardware and software has increased pupils' enjoyment of learning. This is helping to raise the achievement of all groups of pupils in all subjects, but especially in English, mathematics and science for older pupils. The whole-school project on writing is making a positive impact on standards in Years 1 and 2 and is helping boys to close the gap on girls in their literacy work. The school's capacity for further improvement is good.

Pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6. However, at the end of Year 2 in 2008, standards and achievement in literacy and numeracy dipped significantly, mainly because there was an unusually high number of staffing changes. Since September 2008, regular assessment of pupils' work, validated by external consultants, shows that literacy and numeracy levels are rising in Key Stage 1 and are showing an improving trend again. This is being achieved by more consistently effective teaching, together with specific support for individual needs. Initiatives such as 'booster' classes after school complement the work of teachers and well-prepared classroom assistants, who work effectively with small groups during lesson times. Most pupils are now making satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. Nevertheless, the school recognises that there is much still to do to ensure that all pupils at least match their expected levels in literacy and numeracy by the time they enter Year 3. Pupils with specific learning difficulties in reading and writing, and those who are gifted and talented, make good progress because teachers have the resources and the appropriate specialist guidance to address their needs.

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons vary from outstanding to satisfactory. An excellent Year 1 lesson on 'guess the weight' was characterised by an exciting variety of teaching strategies that enabled pupils to make use of their previous knowledge and understanding. Typically in many other classrooms, strengths include very effective use by the pupils of the interactive whiteboard, and good teamwork between classroom assistants and the teacher. Audio-visual recordings of them reading their poems on screen led to very lively discussion between older pupils on how to read a poem well - these debates continued long after the lesson finished. Occasionally, while otherwise satisfactory, teaching lacks the same dynamism, pace or challenge, and so pupils find learning less enjoyable. An increasingly creative curriculum also underpins good teaching and learning. For example, themed weeks are programmed at frequent intervals throughout the year on a wide range of topics. They give pupils good opportunities to apply their skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology. Pupils speak with enthusiasm of what they learn about the world from visitors to the school, including dancers and storytellers from Britain, Africa and Asia, who introduce them to a wide range of cultures and faiths from this country and abroad.

A few parents expressed concern about the behaviour of a small minority. However, pupils believe that silly behaviour is picked up and dealt with very quickly by their teacher, and that bullying - when it occurs - is dealt with effectively by staff. Behaviour in the classroom and

around the school, including the busy lunch hall, is good. Attendance is above average because procedures for following up absence are rigorous. Most pupils enjoy school. They develop good spiritual, cultural, moral and social skills. An excellent school assembly focused on the personal development of the Year 6 pupils who had just returned from an adventure holiday in the mountains and lakes of north Wales. A number spoke of the increased belief they now had in themselves, and how they now understand the importance of teamwork after facing and overcoming the challenges of wading through icy streams, climbing rock faces and paddling on the lakes. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, and the school playground and field are used enthusiastically for physical activities and clubs including, for example, dance. Pupils have many and varied opportunities to take up individual responsibilities, for example as 'buddies' to younger pupils and through the school council. By the time pupils leave the school, they have good skills to meet their needs in the future, and show good enthusiasm for taking responsibility within the school.

Support for vulnerable pupils is good. Safeguarding procedures are thorough and the school provides a safe environment. Parental response is overwhelmingly positive. The school makes a strong contribution to promoting community cohesion because global links are developing well and extend pupils' greater knowledge and understanding of the wider world. Partnership with external agencies and transition to secondary school is good and well-structured. The governing body provides good support. Governors enhance their knowledge of the school by 'learning walks' through the school from the Foundation classes to Year 6.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Many begin with below average personal, social and emotional skills, and a number also have below average communication, language and literacy skills. However, children achieve well across all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1, and most reach standards that are similar to national expectations. Teaching is consistently good, being based on strong teamwork between all adults and on good observation and assessment procedures. Teachers plan activities that take into account prior experiences and learning needs. The carefully structured curriculum responds to priorities in children's learning, for example by meeting the needs of a number of boys, an area which continues to be of concern. Outstanding attention is given to the welfare of all children, and this is confirmed by the extremely confident and happy children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Parents are very supportive; one comments, 'The structure of the Early Years Foundation Stage is fantastic!' Children respond well to opportunities to make choices and select their own activities. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well and ensures a good transition for children into Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend and build on current strategies for raising achievement in literacy and numeracy in Key Stage 1.

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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?	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?	1
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	2
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	2

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	2
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**

24 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Springfield Primary School, Reading, RG31 5NJ

We are writing to let you know how much we enjoyed our visit to your school, even though it was delayed twice because of the snow! It was a pleasure to talk to so many of you, and we very much appreciated the help you gave us during the day. You will be pleased to hear that Springfield is a good school and that you are making good progress in your lessons. Here are a number of things we like about your school.

- You get a good start to school life in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- You are keen to come to school, enjoy learning, and look after each other very well. We especially enjoyed listening in assembly to the Year 6 pupils who gave such interesting accounts of their adventures in Wales. As one said: 'It taught me to believe I can succeed and do things that I never thought I could, and also how important it is to work together as a team in overcoming challenges.'
- You are keen to follow a healthy lifestyle and make a good contribution to the life of the school.
- You enjoy taking part in activities outside the classroom - some of you know that we peeped in on the dance club at the end of our visit. We were disappointed that the wonderful snowmen you built on your field were unfortunately beginning to melt on the day we visited you.

The challenge now is to achieve even higher standards in your work. I have asked your teachers, with your support, to help you make even better progress in your literacy and numeracy, especially those of you in Years 1 and 2.

Once again, thank you for being so friendly and helpful. We wish you the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Brian Evans

Lead Inspector