

Springfield School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 111507 |
| Local Authority | Cheshire |
| Inspection number | 325394 |
| Inspection dates | 20–21 October 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Michael McDowell |

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.

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| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Community special |
| Age range of pupils | 2–19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 117 |
| Sixth form | 22 |
| 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 David Griffith |
| Headteacher | Mr M Swaine |
| Date of previous school inspection | 3 October 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Crewe Green Road Crewe Cheshire CW1 5HS |
| Telephone number | 01270 582446 |
| Fax number | 01270 258281 |

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|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Age group | 2–19 |
| Inspection dates | 20–21 October 2008 |
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This school provides for girls and boys who have a statement of special educational need because of their severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Provision is also made for a small number of pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders. There are eight children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Because of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities all pupils are working well below national age-related expectations. Most pupils are White British. A small minority are from British Asian backgrounds. A small number of pupils are looked after by the local authority. The school holds the Inclusion Quality Mark, the Artsmark Gold Award, the Sports Activemark and the Basic Skills Quality Mark. It also has the National Healthy Schools Kitemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It enjoys such a high reputation in the area that there is a waiting list for places. The parents and carers whose children are on roll say that the school has made a very positive difference to their children's lives.

Achievement is outstanding. Building on their excellent start in the EYFS, pupils from Year 1 to Year 11 make exceptional progress as do students in the sixth form. Girls and boys achieve equally well. Children who are looked after by the LA and the very few pupils for whom English is not the main language spoken at home make progress at the same rate as others with similar starting points and capabilities. Pupils' exceptional achievement is brought about by the excellent learning opportunities that the school provides. Teaching and learning are of outstanding quality. Teachers and special support assistants have profound knowledge of their pupils. They use this to capture pupils' attention and to help them persevere and succeed in their tasks. They ensure that pupils always know how well they are doing and how they can improve. Lessons are cheerful and full of interest. Pupils enjoy them very much. The curriculum is outstanding. It matches the needs of pupils exceptionally well. This is illustrated by the very strong emphasis throughout the school on helping pupils to communicate effectively through speech, sign or picture exchange. For those who have previously been isolated by their inability to make known their needs, feelings or ideas, having a reliable method for doing this changes their lives for the better. This also strongly contributes to the notably calm climate for learning in the classrooms.

The confident and purposeful manner in which pupils move about the school and do the jobs that they have been assigned without over-reliance on adults clearly shows that their personal development is exceptional. Pupils across the age range are curious about and appreciative of other cultures. They have great respect for others and their beliefs. They contribute exceptionally well to the community and are very proud of their school. They know a great deal about how to stay healthy and keep safe and they reflect this in what they do. Care, support and guidance are outstanding. The well-being of pupils is at the heart of all the school provides. The personal care and support offered to those with the most profound disabilities is first-rate.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The school has benefited from the stability provided by its long serving, very experienced, headteacher. There is an enthusiastic and talented leadership team whose members know and carry out their responsibilities very well. As a result, the school has improved very well since the last inspection when it was judged to be exceptionally effective. The leadership monitors the school's performance comprehensively and plans further developments very clearly and thoroughly. Resources are used efficiently and very effectively to give pupils the best possible opportunities to learn. Governance is exemplary. The leadership provides the school with an exceptional capacity to continue to improve. It provides outstanding value for money.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The sixth form is outstanding. Students, whatever their starting points, benefit from excellent learning opportunities and exceptionally good teaching, support and guidance. As a result, achievement is outstanding. Students develop their personal skills extremely well and broaden their social experience. They complete accredited courses that are closely matched to their

individual capabilities. The Gateway course validated by MENCAP particularly suits those with the most profound learning difficulties. Others are properly challenged by GCSE courses in food technology and graphic products, by an ASDAN Entry Level course and by taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. In 2007–8 all students gained grades or awards in the courses they completed. Use of a class base on the adjacent Manchester University campus extends students' social learning as does their attendance at local colleges. Through excellent links with institutions and agencies, including Connexions, students move on successfully to post-school provision. Leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The EYFS is outstanding. It is exceptionally well led and managed. Work with parents of children who are to join the school is exemplary. Home visits are made and parents are encouraged to share their unrivalled knowledge of their child with the school. As a result of this painstaking work, children settle in quickly and get off to a very fast start in the part-time Nursery. The pace of their learning continues during the Reception Year. Children make exceptional progress overall and particularly in developing their communication, language and pre-literacy skills. Their personal and social development is also rapid as they learn to be with others, to share, take turns and establish self-help skills. Children thrive in a setting that balances play and activities that they choose for themselves with others that are led by teachers. Children who are highly dependent are included in all activities to the greatest possible extent. Children are supported, cared for and guided extremely well. They make full use of the excellent, well equipped outdoor play area. Teaching is strongly founded on extensive knowledge of the children. Activities are very carefully planned and resourced so that individual needs are met. Frequent and accurate observations of children at work and play lead to a full record of their development on which assessment is securely based.

What the school should do to improve further

There are no significant areas for improvement. The school has already properly identified all minor areas for development and is successfully addressing these.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The school tracks pupils' progress using a variety of suitable measures. School records show that all pupils from Year 1 to Year 11 make consistent gains in all areas, including literacy, numeracy, science, and personal and social development. Through a national project, their progress is compared to that of pupils elsewhere who have similar capabilities and starting points. This comparison shows that progress, overall, is above or well above average. Pupils across the age range are found to make exceptional progress in science. Progress in numeracy, speaking, listening and reading is also particularly notable. All pupils develop highly effective communication skills, augmented in many cases by the use of picture exchange and signing. Pupils in Key Stage 4 complete externally accredited courses that suit their interests and capabilities very well. Remarkably, in 2008, all eligible pupils in Year 11 followed a GCSE textiles course and gained passes at grade C. The great majority of pupils reach or exceed the very challenging targets set for them. To the greatest possible extent they develop the skills that will contribute to their later economic well-being and enable them to be as independent as they can.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils show through their actions that they are exceptionally committed to helping others. Those who are able are proud to act as advocates for fellow pupils who have profound and multiple disabilities. Good talkers become 'PECS buddies' for those without speech who rely on the picture exchange communication system to make known their needs, feelings and views. Older pupils happily carry out important jobs in the school such as cleaning the water coolers or giving out drinks at lunchtime. On a broader level pupils make an equally strong contribution to the community. They have, for example, carried out roadside planting to help beautify a nearby business park. Pupils across the age range make a continuing commitment to the support of a child in the Third World. Pupils are absent from school only for critical health-related reasons. Attendance is good. They enjoy their lessons and are ready and eager to learn. They get on with one another very well and report that there is no bullying. Their behaviour is excellent. They revel in the many opportunities for sport and outdoor activity and are well aware that these help them to keep fit and healthy. Older pupils and students in the sixth form make significant strides in developing their social confidence when they mix with others of their age at local colleges.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching is very firmly based on excellent knowledge of the pupils. Classes are very well managed. Lessons are thoroughly planned so as to take into account individual differences between learners. There is a strong emphasis on learning by doing and lessons are filled with cheerful activity. Teachers make imaginative use of resources including, with the youngest, toys and puppets. Pupils in Key Stage 1 who are just beginning to read and write are all attention as 'Bert the Word', a glove puppet, introduces them to the letter of the week. They show their growing confidence as learners as they eagerly take their turn to write the letter on the electronic whiteboard. In Key Stage 2 pupils bounce to the rhythm of the verse as they bring 'The Gruffalo' to life in a drama lesson. Pupils in Key Stage 4 who have the most profound learning difficulties are skilfully enabled to use all their senses to explore the leaves and fruits of autumn. They capture what they see, feel, smell and touch in a poem expressed in words and symbols.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum fully meets national requirements and the aspirations of pupils. It is culturally enriched by the contributions of visiting performers, including, recently, a samba band. At each stage it is very well matched to pupils' learning and personal needs. Provision for those with particularly complex barriers to learning is excellent. For example, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are supplied with highly relevant experiences, enabling them to make outstanding progress. Those with autistic spectrum disorder have effective, specialist teaching. There is throughout exemplary emphasis on the development of communication skills. Older pupils now have more opportunities to follow suitable accredited courses than they did when the school was last inspected.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school gives the highest priority to the welfare of pupils. There is a well understood policy for child protection that is frequently reviewed. Risks are properly assessed. Those who need them have individual health plans to ensure their well-being. All pupils are given clear guidance through their individual learning or behaviour plans about their targets and they play a part in setting and reviewing these. In excellent and continuous dialogue with their teachers and support staff they are helped to understand what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve. Work with vulnerable pupils and their families is exceptional and is firmly founded on the productive relationship that the school has built up with other agencies and with parents and carers. As older pupils prepare to leave school they are given the support and guidance that they need to choose their future pathway.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The effectiveness of the leadership is shown by the exceptional achievement and personal development of pupils and the very high standard of all that the school provides. Parents support the school in the strongest terms. When, as happens extremely rarely, parents raise concerns the school works with them patiently until these are resolved. The headteacher provides calm and assured leadership and he is greatly helped by an accomplished and enthusiastic leadership team. All who work at the school contribute to its success. It realises its aim to help every pupil to thrive as a learner and fulfil her or his potential. The internal organisation of the school reflects the fact that all pupils are of equal importance. The school is deeply committed to inclusive practices and to the development of community cohesion. Statutory safeguarding procedures meet requirements. The school rigorously monitors the progress made by all pupils and the quality of what it provides. The leadership is very well aware of the school's strengths and what should be done to improve it. The improvements called for at the last inspection have been carried out and there has been significant further development, for example, to the curriculum in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Governance is extremely effective. The school benefits from the exceptional oversight and support that the governors provide.

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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 | 16-19 |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | | |
|--|-----|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1 | 1 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being? | 1 | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 | 1 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 1 | |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 1 | |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 1 | |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 1 | |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 1 | |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 1 | |

Achievement and standards

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

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? | 1 | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 | |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 | |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 | |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 1 | |
| The attendance of learners | 2 | |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 | |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 | |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 | |

The quality of provision

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs? | 1 | 1 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 | 1 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 | 1 |

Leadership and management

| | | |
|--|-----|-----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 | 1 |
| 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 | 1 | |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 | 1 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 1 | |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 1 | |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 1 | |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 1 | |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes | 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**

Thank you for being so helpful when I inspected your school. I very much enjoyed seeing you in lessons and at lunchtimes and happily making your way around the school.

I was very pleased to meet with some of you for a talk and I was very impressed by what you told me. You said that your school is 'great' and I agree with you. You told me that you enjoy your lessons and being with your friends. You felt that there was no bullying taking place and that when at times friends 'fall out' there were always adults to whom you could turn for help. You know a lot about keeping fit and healthy and enjoy all the opportunities you are given to take part in swimming and sport. I was very pleased to see how much you help one another by acting as advocates or 'PECS buddies'. When I asked you about your school work most of you said that it was neither too hard nor too easy but just right. Those of you who are school councillors feel that you are helping to improve the school and I am sure that you are.

I found that your school is outstanding. You work hard and achieve as much as you can. You come to school whenever you can, behave very well and try your best to think of others and help the community. You are given super teaching and lots of interesting things to learn and do. The school takes the best possible care of you, keeps you safe and gives you all the support you need. The way your school is led and managed is excellent.

Your headteacher, the governors and the staff know exactly what to do to continue to improve your school and they have very clear plans which they are carrying out.

Thank you once again for your cheerful friendliness and the best of luck in the future.