

# Springmead Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117325
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326575
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lynn Lowery

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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<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 (total)	435
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Victoria de Naeyer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Judith Sumner
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Hillyfields Welwyn Garden City Hertfordshire AL7 2HB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01707 331508
<b>Fax number</b>	01707 334562

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Springmead is a larger than average primary school. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) includes children in the Nursery and Reception classes. They start with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the number of children for whom English is an additional language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average overall, but it is higher in some year groups than others. The school hosts the local authority's behaviour support unit for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school has achieved Investors In People status, the Active Mark Gold Award, Extended Schools Certificate and the Healthy School Award. A before- and after-school club called 'Jousters' operates on the school site and is privately run. This was inspected at the same time as the school.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Springmead is a good school that is continually seeking ways to improve. It has some outstanding features. It is committed to ensuring that every child matters whatever their background, ability or learning need. It is very quick to identify pupils who would benefit from extra help and staff use a wide range of strategies to support pupils' individual needs.

Pupils enjoy school a great deal and make excellent progress in their personal development. They show very responsible attitudes and are keen to help others. Pupils are polite, friendly and well behaved. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are interesting and enjoyable and ensure appropriate challenge for pupils of different abilities. Consequently, pupils work hard and make good progress. They achieve standards that are above the national average overall at both key stages, although their attainment in English and science is significantly better than it is in mathematics. Pupils know their learning targets. However, they are not always in child-friendly language and they do not always receive sufficiently detailed guidance on exactly what they need to do to improve. Parents' and pupils' views of the school are overwhelmingly positive. This comment from a parent accurately reflects their views, 'This is a first class school, extremely well led by an innovative headteacher and good teachers.' The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Strong partnerships and extensive links with other schools and care agencies enrich the quality of provision and support pupils' personal development.

Leadership and management are good overall, and there is excellent leadership from the headteacher. This underpins the school's continual development and has inspired staff so that, at all levels, they are committed to raising standards and ensuring all pupils reach their full potential. Curriculum developments have been systematically implemented and their impact rigorously monitored. As a result, standards continue to improve and pupils benefit from a vibrant and challenging curriculum, which includes the chance to be a member of a gamelan orchestra.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children get a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes. They achieve well because of the rich variety of activities planned for them and the effective way that their involvement is monitored. Standards are slightly above average by the start of Year 1 because children make good progress from typical starting points. Children achieve well in their literacy skills because of the methodical teaching of their letter sounds. Practical activities are used successfully. For example as part of their mathematical development, children enjoy learning about different ways of adding groups of objects together because they do this using model animals. Occasionally, staff do not question children effectively to enable them to understand what skills they have developed well. Good use of the outside areas helps to develop children's creative and physical development. Children learn effectively about the world around them because resources are utilised successfully, such as when they learn about how to care for people in a hospital. Children's personal development is outstanding because their welfare needs are met extremely carefully. Good leadership ensures assessment is used effectively but information about attainment on entry is not recorded in detail and so it is difficult for staff to have a thorough understanding of children's progress.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics to at least the high levels already achieved in English and science.
- Ensure that pupils fully understand their targets and know exactly how to achieve them.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school and reach above average standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. Girls reach exceptionally high standards in English at both key stages. This shows a significant improvement since the last inspection, when they underachieved. Standards at Key Stage 2 have risen every year for three years and they also rose at Key Stage 1 in 2008. School records and pupils' work indicate that standards are continuing to rise and that a larger proportion of pupils are attaining above expected levels. There is a very wide range of support available and, as a result, pupils of all abilities make good progress, including those with additional learning needs. The school knows that standards are not as high in mathematics as they are in English and science and has rightly identified this as a focus for further development. The school now sets itself challenging targets and all staff are committed to helping pupils achieve them. Overall, there is no significant difference between the achievements of different groups of children.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They show a very good understanding of, and concern for, the needs of others. For instance, Year 5 pupils successfully organised and ran a 'Bring and Buy' sale to raise funds for a television appeal. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community through the school council and have recently formed an eco council. Younger children value the support of their Year 6 'buddies'. Although behaviour overall is good, the vast majority of pupils behave very well. Behaviour is a cause for concern for a small minority of parents, but pupils themselves say that any incidents of misbehaviour are dealt with well. Pupils enjoy greatly the wide range of opportunities for learning which the school offers, and attendance is well above average. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the need to stay healthy, both through sensible eating and regular exercise. They also have a very good understanding of the need for safe practices, for instance on the playground. They make a good contribution to the wider community by fund raising and their recent link with a school in Uganda. Their positive attitudes to learning, and the standards they achieve, prepare them well for later life.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Pupils make effective progress in their learning because of good teaching. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and enables them to plan interesting lessons that take into account the different abilities of pupils in the class. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Teaching methods allow pupils to learn effectively through a variety of learning styles. Pupils develop their basic skills methodically and information and communication

technology is now an integral part of their learning. For example, interactive whiteboards are used confidently and contribute to pupils' interest and enjoyment in lessons. Teachers share success criteria with pupils and this is increasingly helping them evaluate and improve their work. In a good lesson seen in Year 6, pupils used these to establish what their next steps would be to improve their writing. Pupils are given personal targets but they do not always receive detailed explanations of how they can meet them fully.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The school offers pupils a broad curriculum, with many opportunities for them to enrich and extend their learning. Teachers in the same year group plan together well to ensure equality of provision in parallel classes. The school effectively teaches some subjects, such as art, in concentrated blocks, which assists pupils to develop their skills in more depth. French is taught well from Years 1 to 6 by class teachers. There are outstanding opportunities for pupils to develop musical skills, for instance through djembe drumming, which is taught to whole classes by a visiting specialist. An excellent range of clubs benefit learning, mainly for junior pupils, which include sporting activities, Spanish and handicrafts. Pupils enjoy a wide range of visits, for instance to the National Gallery and Hampton Court Palace. The school's very strong personal, social and health education programme contributes well to pupils' outstanding personal development.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Adults know the pupils very well and offer all, including those who are vulnerable, excellent personal support and guidance. Consequently, pupils say they feel safe and there is always someone they can turn to for help. Safeguarding and child protection procedures meet statutory requirements, and risk assessments are carried out appropriately. The school has excellent links with the local authority's behaviour support unit which helps pupils and integrates them into mainstream classes whenever possible. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported, as are those for whom English is an additional language. Consequently, their progress is good. All pupils have individual targets for English, mathematics and science. These are easily accessible and many pupils know them by heart. However, the language used in them is not always easy to understand and marking, while frequent, does not always tell pupils exactly what they need to do to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

There has been good improvement since the last inspection and all the previous key issues have been addressed. This is due to the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, who has inspired staff at all levels to work relentlessly in their pursuit to improve the learning of all pupils. Changes to the leadership structure have created very effective staff teams who rigorously monitor pupils' progress and improve the curriculum where necessary. They quickly identify and provide for the individual needs of any pupils seen to be underachieving. This is ensuring that standards are now improving at both key stages. Keen, supportive and relatively new governors are committed to helping the school improve. The chair of governors leads them extremely well. She ensures they are fully involved and informed and that they receive the

training they need to execute their responsibilities effectively. A rigorous and effective monitoring system and good self-evaluation procedures are driving school improvement. The school improvement plan is an excellent document and underpins all the work of the school. It focuses on improving teaching and learning and is frequently reviewed and adjusted to ensure that action taken is constantly moving the school forward.

The school's leadership works effectively to unite the community. Pupils take part in many services and activities in the local church. For example, at Christmas, pupils joined with the Welwyn Garden City brass band to sing together in a very successful concert. The wider community is supported well because pupils organise special events such as inviting local senior citizens to share their harvest celebrations. A group now meets regularly to develop the school's awareness of global issues.

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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?	1
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?	1
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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	1
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	1
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**

22nd January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Springmead Primary School

Thank you for being so welcoming, friendly and helpful when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and finding out about the interesting things that happen.

We think Springmead is a good school where teachers plan interesting and enjoyable lessons and everyone gets the help they need to do well.

We think your behaviour is good and that you work hard in lessons. We are very pleased that you like to help each other and share ideas. We know that the parents of Reception children really appreciate the way Year 6 pupils help them at lunchtime and around the school.

The school gives you many opportunities to be responsible and you are very keen to take them. Your school council takes the role seriously and listens to your views. Your headteacher is always willing to listen to their suggestions and so you have been able to make improvements to your school.

So that your school can become even better we have asked your teachers to:

- help you improve your mathematics so that you do at least as well as you do in your English and science
- make your learning targets easier to understand and tell you exactly what you need to do to improve your work.

We know you really enjoy your time in school and we hope you will go on working hard. We wish you every success for the future.

Best wishes

Lynn Lowery

Lead inspector