

Springwater School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121776
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	327565
Inspection dates	24–25 June 2009
Reporting inspector	David Muir HMI

The inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community Special
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	41
Sixth form	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sybil Blackburn
Headteacher	Miss Y Limb
Date of previous school inspection	March 2006
School address	High Street Starbeck Harrogate HG2 7LW
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector visited 12 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and a group of parents. He observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation documents, governors' meeting minutes, pupils' files, School Improvement Partner reports and 22 parental questionnaires.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- how the school tracks the progress of all learners in the school
- the extent to which the school is effectively meeting the needs of all of its learners
- the effectiveness of the curriculum at all key stages of the school
- the quality of the school's work on personal outcomes for the learners
- the effectiveness of leadership and management at monitoring and evaluation
- the effectiveness of the school at securing improvement at all levels.

Information about the school

Springwater School is a small school for learners with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and those who are on the autistic spectrum continuum (ASC) with additional disabilities and/or learning difficulties. All learners have a statement of special educational need. The school serves the area around Harrogate and further afield to Selby. Most learners are White British. There are some transient learners due to the local presence of military bases. The entitlement to a free school meal is higher than the national average. Learners come from a wide range of rural and urban backgrounds. At the time of the inspection there were two learners in the Early Years Foundation Stage age group who were being educated within the primary department. The headteacher has been in post since September 2008.

The school holds the following awards: Local Authority Inclusion Award, Sportsmark and Work Related Learning and Careers Quality Mark.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Springwater School is a good school and it is improving. The school meets the needs of all learners very effectively and many of their outcomes are outstanding. Excellent relationships throughout the school, and a shared vision, combine extremely well to create a positive ethos where every learner is valued and is enabled to achieve well according to their starting point and their learning needs. They make good progress at all six key stages. Learners love coming to school and the school is an extremely happy and positive learning environment. They participate in a wide range of activities and educational visits which help them to develop their understanding of the world around them. Parents, learners, governors and staff are all rightly proud of the work the school does and the achievements of all the learners. Learners are polite and have positive attitudes to their learning and to each other, and the school is careful to keep them as the focus of everything it does. Because of recent successful changes and the plans that are now in place to improve the school, it has good capacity to make sustained improvement.

Due to the severity and complexity of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, learners enter the school with levels of attainment which are well below average and they leave the school with attainment still well below average. However, the school's increasingly robust data collection systems and the inspection evidence show that during their time in school, all individuals and groups of learners make good progress relative to their profound and/or complex needs and their starting points.

The quality of teaching is good overall. A significant minority of teaching observed during the inspection was outstanding and none was inadequate. Teachers use their knowledge of learners' levels of attainment well to inform their planning for lessons, but the school recognises that this is an area which needs further development and more consistency across departments. The curriculum meets the needs of all learners well. Nevertheless, the school has identified the need to further develop it at all key stages to inject more creativity and flair so that learners are engaged even more effectively. The school also has plans to provide more opportunities for learners to gain accreditation appropriate to their needs and interests. The school is currently developing its sixth form provision in partnership with another local special school and plans are on track for this to be up and running at the start of the Autumn term 2009. The quality of the care and support for learners in the school are outstanding due to the wide range of partnerships used to support learners' needs. The school's safeguarding arrangements are good and meet statutory requirements. The transition arrangements for students moving on from the school to the next stages of their lives are also very well planned so that parents and students are extremely well

guided and supported through this potentially unsettling time for the more vulnerable young people.

Learners' behaviour is outstanding throughout the school. This is the result of excellent and consistent behaviour management by all staff, and more importantly, the increasing skills that learners develop in managing their own behaviour. They actively enjoy their learning and feel safe and confident at school. The school very effectively promotes healthy lifestyles for all members of the school community and learners respond well to the wide ranging curriculum and the extra-curricular activities on offer which promote healthy lifestyles. The school has numerous, very productive links with the community, including the local primary school, colleges and businesses. The school has also contributed very effectively to the local community's Britain in Bloom challenge by opening up its impressive Woodland Walk to the judges. The local community uses the school's facilities regularly and are proud to have the school in its midst. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners is outstanding due to the wide range of activities in these areas and the opportunities that the school actively seeks for learners to meet people from communities which are different to their own. There have been no incidents of bullying or racism reported in recent times. This is the result of the positive and respectful ethos evident in the school and the skills of staff who are able to communicate very effectively with all learners and anticipate any emerging problems.

A considerable strength of the school has been the way in which the headteacher has engaged the whole school community in revitalising the aims and vision of the school. Her approach has been valued well by parents, learners and staff who all feel that their views have been heard and considered in the development of the school's direction. She has promoted the school's feeling of being a cohesive and dedicated school community where everyone is working together for the good of all learners.

What does the school need to do to improve further

- Further develop teaching and the use of assessment to ensure that more learners are able to make even better progress in their lessons, by consistently:
 - using data to inform planning for the next stage of learning and target setting in all lessons
 - ensure that work set is of a level which engages and challenges all learners in all classes.
- Develop the curriculum in each department to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils even more effectively and challenges them appropriately by:
 - identifying and sharing best practice within the school and from outside to innovate and be creative in reviewing the curriculum offer starting with the sixth form changes currently taking place
 - using the school's expertise and knowledge of its learners to adapt the curriculum to make it flexible enough to meet the needs of any future learners
 - ensuring continuity through the key stages from Early Years Foundation Stage to sixth form.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

All but one aspect of the Every Child Matters outcomes are outstanding in this school, including behaviour and punctuality and the level of attendance is high. This is due to the high level of commitment of staff, governors and parents to put the learners at the centre of everything they do. Learners enjoy their lessons and have developed excellent attitudes to learning in all key stages. They value their time in the school and this is supported by parental feedback, in which all questionnaire responses and interviews with parents, showed that they are confident that their children enjoy school 'always' or 'most of the time'. Learners actively engage in their learning and are attentive to their teachers and support staff. The school council meeting, which was observed during the inspection, showed that learners are keen to have their voices heard and they are confident that they can help the school to develop. The school's evidence, and evidence from the inspection, shows that there are no differences in how different groups of learners achieve in the school and how much they enjoy their time there.

Extremely strong links with the local community and high-profile local businesses provide work experience placements for the older students. These opportunities alongside information and communication technology developments, the school's partnerships with other organisations, the school's work on basic skills and the development of social and personal skills allow the learners to develop their workplace skills outstandingly.

The school ensures that learners are involved in a wide range of activities and curriculum opportunities which contribute very effectively to their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. These include dancing with Ballet Rambert, visiting a local synagogue and a mosque as well as a high level of involvement with the local parish church. Learners are also keen to raise money for a range of good causes, nationally and globally, and the school works hard to raise their awareness of these causes. The Woodland Walk also contains the 'Thought Tree' which is used by learners to reflect on events happening in their lives and to those around them.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Overall, teaching is good in all key stages and promotes good achievement for all learners. In the best lessons, teachers plan activities which meet the needs of all learners very well and they make outstanding progress as a result. In these lessons, the skilful teachers and support staff work well together and know how to challenge learners effectively, constantly seeking out opportunities to develop their personal and academic skills. The few less effective lessons observed lacked clarity and pace and learners only made satisfactory progress. Overall, planning is detailed, showing a thorough knowledge of the learners in the class and a comprehensive understanding of their needs. There is an awareness of academic levels as well as social, personal and medical needs and this contributes well to the good progress made. All teaching assistants provide excellent support for learning and for teachers. They know the learners very well and should be extremely proud of their contribution to the improvements in the school. They are valued very highly by both teachers and parents who realise that the school would not be as successful as it is now without their dedication and hard work.

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils well, and as a result, good progress is made. The school has plans to develop this further to provide more choice and variety in the curriculum. There is an increasing range of after-school and lunchtime activities provided by the school and it provides the full core provision for extended schools. Many learners take advantage of the drama club and the youth club amongst others. The school is planning, with parents, how to extend the choice further. There are many educational visits organised, which give learners opportunities to experience events, and meet other young people, around the region at sporting, music and other events.

The school uses partnerships and its own skills and experience very effectively in all aspects of its work to provide excellent care, guidance and support throughout all areas of the school. This aspect is particularly valued by parents, one of whom said, 'there is not one person in this school that I do not trust' and that staff are 'worth their weight in gold' for the support and guidance that they provide for learners and their families.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The impressive headteacher, with the support of a highly effective senior leadership team and a very dedicated staff, has created a vision for the development of the school which is shared by all members of the school community. The engagement of parents, governors and learners in the development of the vision has provided it with

additional impetus and momentum. There is a clear focus on improving outcomes for the learners and this has been successfully achieved in a short space of time. Staff feel that their contribution is valued and appreciate the opportunities they are given, to be heard.

The senior leaders have a very good understanding of how well the school is doing and what it needs to do to improve further. It is now working on improving the use of target setting to raise standards throughout the school and increasingly accurate tracking of learners' progress is allowing the school to make good progress on this. This tracking shows that there is no difference in the progress of different groups of learners and that they all make good progress.

There is an outstanding partnership with parents in which their views are regularly sought on a range of issues, from extended school provision and after-school clubs to the aims and vision of the school. Parents value this very highly and they were particularly impressed when the headteacher phoned them all within her first few days of taking up her post to introduce herself to them. This made them feel very welcome and valued as partners in the education of their children.

Governors provide outstanding support and challenge for the headteacher and work well with the school to support the monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school's performance. A particularly good aspect of the governing body's work is the link that individual governors have with departments and classes. This allows them to get to know the school extremely well and to contribute in an informed way to discussions about the quality of education in the school. The school meets all statutory requirements with regard to safeguarding. The school tackles equality of opportunity very well and is proactive in ensuring that there is no discrimination in the school. The school promotes community cohesion well, but is aware that evaluation of the impact of this area on outcomes needs to be more finely focused.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

All the Early Years Foundation Stage children are placed within the primary department and as a result outcomes judgements are the same as those of children in that department. All adults who work in there are trained in Early Years Foundation Stage methods. They use this knowledge to monitor the progress of the

children closely. Every child is planned for individually and records of progress are collated in line with Early Years Foundation Stage expectations. They enjoy outdoor and indoor provision which is of a high quality and play is an important part in the curriculum so that children develop social awareness and skills and make good progress in their personal development. There is a good combination of adult and child-led activities because adults are sensitive enough to be able to adapt their plans to accommodate children's responses to keep learning opportunities optimised. The Early Years Foundation Stage promotes the welfare of children well and safeguarding procedures are good. Other judgements are in line with the whole school judgements.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Sixth form

At present, the post-16 provision in the school is integrated in to the main secondary department, so all judgements for the sixth form are the same as for the whole school. The school now has advanced plans to establish a joint sixth form provision with a neighbouring special school and this will provide a distinct provision from September 2009.

Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2
Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

A majority of parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. Their responses were unanimously positive about all aspects of the school. No negative comments or views were received. The inspection evidence concurred with this view as many learner outcomes were found to be outstanding and that the school's partnership work with parents and carers is also excellent.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Springwater School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspector received 22 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 41 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	2	0	0

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



26 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Springwater School, Harrogate, HG2 7LW

Thank you very much for making my recent visit to your school very interesting and enjoyable. I enjoyed seeing you work and meeting you.

I found that your school is a good school and it is improving in many areas. The headteacher and your teachers and teaching assistants all have good ideas about how to improve the school even more. You enjoy coming to school and you make good progress while you are there. Your parents and carers are very happy with how the school educates you all. They nearly all said that you always enjoy coming to school. Your personal development is a particular strength of the school and you work very hard to improve your personal skills and to manage your own behaviour when you have difficulties. You all have very good attitudes to learning and you should all be very proud of yourselves. I know that the staff are all proud of you.

I have asked the school to improve two things to make the school even better than it is now:

- use their knowledge of your abilities and achievements to plan even better lessons than you already have
- make the curriculum more exciting and creative, to bring in new ideas to give you more 'Wow factor' in your lessons.

You can all help with this, by telling the teachers what is good and what makes you interested and you can make it clear what you enjoy and what helps you learn.

Best wishes

David Muir
Her Majesty's Inspector

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