

Springfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134065
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	328816
Inspection date	20 May 2009
Reporting inspector	John Paull

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	328
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 Mike Mackrory
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Hunton
Date of previous school inspection	18 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Forsythia Close Springfield Chelmsford Essex CM1 6XW
Telephone number	01245 461077
Fax number	01245 450201

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the rates at which pupils make progress and the extent to which this matches the senior leaders' self-evaluations of teaching, learning and other provision;
- the quality of leadership and management and its impact on provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs and its impact on progress.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, chair of governors, staff, parents and pupils, observations of teachers and pupils at work and scrutiny of documents, including records that track pupils' progress. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is available for four to five year olds in the school's Reception classes. While attainment on entry is broadly average, it covers a very wide range. The level of mobility amongst pupils is above average and very high in some year groups. The majority of the school's pupils are of White British heritage, although a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds is also represented. Some of these pupils enter the school directly from overseas and, of these, a few are at an early stage of acquiring English as an additional language. The school usually has one or two children on roll who are looked after by the local authority and this is the case currently. The proportion of pupils identified as finding learning difficult, including those with a statement of special educational need, is above average. These pupils experience a wide range of needs, including a significant proportion with social and emotional difficulties.

The school is currently recognised as an intermediate level International School. It holds Healthy Schools, Activemark and Gold Wildlife awards, as well as the bronze standard in the Eco-Schools scheme.

The governors are responsible for the school's breakfast and after-school clubs. A separately managed pre-school is also available on site. The quality of care in the pre-school is the subject of a separate inspection report

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Springfield Primary is a good school. Its good leadership and management ensure that pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make good progress. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is exceptionally well managed, leading to outstanding progress and effectiveness in Reception. A number of other features, including pupils' personal development and well-being, are also outstanding. These judgements reflect, in all respects, senior leaders' and governors' views of the school, as indicated in their self evaluations, which are remarkably accurate and being used highly effectively to drive improvement further. This accurate understanding of strengths and areas for development confirm the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Pupils' good achievement is based on good teaching and learning through the school. They achieve above average standards by the end of Year 2. Assessments towards the end of the year in reading, writing and mathematics support this finding. Standards by the time pupils leave in Year 6 are usually above average in English, mathematics and science. Any year-to-year fluctuations between subjects are quickly identified and good subject leadership, with support from the headteacher, means interventions and initiatives are put into place quickly. An example of this is successful measures to improve pupils' mental mathematics and problem solving, although more remains to be done to consolidate pupils' learning, especially in this subject. In English, exciting, flexible uses of vocabulary and accurate grammar characterise much of pupils' writing. This is partly because of some examples of outstanding teaching in this subject and partly because of an initiative known as 'Screen to Page'. Opportunities for pupils to imagine themselves as film directors leads to them using still images to order events and pick out, for example, particular features of the screenplay. During the inspection, this innovative method enthused pupils when they focused on sound effects. They used highly descriptive language to capture the essence of noises that might accompany what the 'stills' depicted. Many pupils produced very expressive writing, including boys, whose writing had previously been identified as not as strong as that of girls. Leaders have monitored the impact of this initiative, ascertaining whether the skills that pupils acquire transfer to other writing. So far, the outcomes look very good, although not yet fully established throughout the school. Pupils who find learning difficult make good progress, including those with statements of special educational need. Several parents expressed considerable satisfaction with this aspect of the school's provision. They commented that they feel well supported themselves, helping them to help their children. Higher attaining pupils and those with particular gifts and talents also thrive with many reaching levels above those normally expected for their age. Similarly pupils who speak English as an additional language, including some who joined the school directly from overseas, are well supported and make good progress.

The curriculum, and care, guidance and support are outstanding. They contribute considerably to pupils' exceptional personal development and feelings of well-being. In addition to its innovations in English and mathematics, the curriculum has strong local and international dimensions. Senior leaders' monitoring of community cohesion indicates the development of pupils' very positive attitudes towards cultural diversity and richness, both in Great Britain and in other countries. During the inspection, information and communication technology was used very effectively to hold video conferences with pupils in schools in other countries. Even children of Reception age were involved, listening very attentively to responses to their questions. Much of the pupils' work builds on skills in a way that emphasises applications to a range of topics

and subjects. Studies of Romania, for example, include writing that helps pupils to appreciate how the Dracula legends have influenced English literature and Hollywood films. This exciting curriculum helps to ensure that pupils enjoy school greatly, as one of them commented, 'There's always something new at our school to grip you hard'. In this way, interest and concentration are promoted and excellent behaviour in classrooms and around the school is another important outcome. This is reflected in the good attendance of the large majority of the school's pupils. All statutory requirements to safeguard pupils and ensure their health and safety are in place and these judgements extend to what is provided in the breakfast and after school clubs, which pupils also enjoy attending. Pupils know much about healthy diets and the value of exercise. The staff are always willing to support pupils through any upset in or out of school. As a result, pupils feel confident and safe and are supportive towards each other. Outstanding contributions to the community result. Examples in school include serving each other at tables during lunchtime, occasions when older pupils act as play leaders and mentors to younger ones and the constant routine help they offer in organising resources in their classrooms. They also entertain elderly people in the community, inviting them into school for tea. All of this, linked to pupils' good skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology mean that they are well prepared for the future.

The headteacher, together with leaders at all levels, ensures accurate tracking of pupils' progress through the school and effective evaluation of the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. This information ensures that successful improvements are made and that academic guidance and support for all groups of pupils is thorough. This includes excellent links with parents, outside agencies and other schools. Challenging targets are set and teachers and teaching assistants work successfully as a team for the benefit of pupils' education. Governors know the school well. They visit regularly and take strategic responsibility for provision, carrying out their statutory responsibilities effectively. The following comment from a parent, typical of the vast majority, sums it up, 'The school and teaching staff are always trying to make learning fun, exciting and interesting. The school is constantly striving to make improvements. We are very happy with our children's progress'.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The headteacher and other leaders, including a new coordinator, manage provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage exceptionally well. As a result, an excellently well thought out balance exists between activities that children initiate themselves and those directed by adults. This ensures that highly effective learning takes place. The children have access to a remarkable outside area that ensures their very rapid progress in all areas when they choose to be outdoors. High quality teaching and excellent resources ensure similar outstanding progress in the classroom. Here, adults keep up a constant flow of talk to children, never missing an opportunity to address language requirements and to develop vocabulary. As a result, by the time children enter Year 1, many of them reach the expected age related goals and several exceed them, as indicated in extremely careful and thorough assessments of children's work and play. Nearly all of them achieve outstandingly well.

All required welfare requirements are in place to help ensure children's safety and well-being. Staff have high expectations of children's personal development ensuring that personal, social and emotional goals are also achieved very well. Sessions in phonics and number work are planned to excite and absorb interest, keeping children happy and highly motivated.

What the school should do to improve further

- Consolidate and complete what the school is doing to improve learning further, especially in mathematics, so as to make rates of progress even faster.

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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?	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?	2
The standards ¹ 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

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
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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**

21 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Springfield Primary School, Springfield, CM1 6XW

Thank you for being so helpful when we came to inspect your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you which included looking at your work and visiting your lessons. We also enjoyed talking to you and especially the time that we spent with you at lunchtime. Many of you that we met, including the school councillors, told us how good you think that your school is. We agree that you attend a good school, where the adults look after you excellently and make sure that you learn effectively in all your subjects. Standards at your school are above average. We were very impressed with your excellent behaviour, and were delighted to hear so many of you tell us that you enjoy school a lot.

Here are some other strong features of your school.

- The international aspects of your learning make lessons very rich, varied and interesting for you.
- By Year 6, you have very responsible attitudes towards others and show this in the way that you work with the staff to support and advise younger pupils and set a very good example.
- All the teachers and assistants assess what you do carefully, so they know what to plan next to teach and how to guide you well.
- Teaching and planning for children of Reception age is excellent.
- Your parents like the school a lot and are pleased to work with it in order to provide the best for you.
- Your headteacher has good ideas for making your school even better. Here is something that we have asked your headteacher, governors and staff to do.
- Accelerate your progress even more by building on the improvements they are making to your learning, especially in mathematics.

You can help by continuing with all your help and cooperation, and behaving as well as you do already. I wish you every success in the future and hope that your education will continue to excite you as much as it does now.

Yours faithfully

John W. Paull

Lead inspector