

Springwell School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116620
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	338842
Inspection dates	12–13 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Charles Hackett

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lorna Harris
Headteacher	Jackie Partridge
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 11 lessons, seeing nine teachers teach, two therapy sessions and an assembly. Meetings were held with staff and two governors. The inspectors looked at a range of school policies and procedures, data on pupils' achievements and examples of pupils' work, and considered the 51 parental questionnaires they received.

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

- the success of leaders and managers on improving the achievements of all pupils and developing their independence
- how links with parents and other agencies are being used to improve the outcomes for pupils
- the quality of the systems used to track pupils' progress and how well the information thus gained is being used to develop the provision.

Information about the school

Springwell caters for pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties. Many have autistic spectrum disorders and others have additional learning difficulties and disabilities, such as communication difficulties, epilepsy and sensory impairment. Three pupils are in the care of the local authority. Since the previous inspection, the school has moved to a new purpose-built site. The school has recently gained the Activemark and Enhanced Healthy Schools awards.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Springwell is a truly outstanding school where the individual needs of pupils are addressed very effectively. Led by an inspirational headteacher, the staff team are totally united in their focused approach to helping each child to achieve. All staff have extremely high aspirations for the school's success and have received good support from governors, who have recently increased the effectiveness of their involvement in the school's management. Senior staff and governors have a very clear understanding of how effective the school is through detailed self-assessment. This has led to developments put in place that have enabled the school to be where it is now, having made significant progress since the last inspection and the move to new premises. All of this demonstrates an excellent capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy being in school. In lessons, they are often excited by the opportunities to learn through the creative activities planned by staff. Many pupils make outstanding progress, for example over 60% this year exceeded their expected progress in English and numeracy. Only a very few make less than expected progress; because of the excellent systems to track how well pupils are achieving, interventions are quickly put in place to offer additional support. Over their time in the Reception class, all children make outstanding progress to enable them to start Key Stage 1 with improved confidence and developing language skills.

A key focus of the school is to increase pupils' levels of independence. This is achieved extremely well and, when coupled with pupils' excellent behaviour, means pupils are very safe and happy in school, as they readily acknowledge. They all show a sense of appreciation for each other.

Teaching is lively and very well planned to match the differing ability levels of individual pupils. Very rigorous assessment procedures include very effective target setting and an excellent system for recording pupils' achievements through using can I statements. Pupils themselves are also actively encouraged to self-assess themselves to see how well they are achieving.

The excellent curriculum has been created to provide exciting learning opportunities, alongside individually tailored sessions designed to support the needs of all pupils. These include individual therapy sessions. The two observed were both highly effective experiences for the pupils involved. Pupils are very active members of the local community and the school has set up imaginative global links with other countries. However, the plan to develop community cohesion has little detail as to how pupils will increase their understanding of different religions and ethnic groups

Care, support and guidance are meticulous in the level of attention given to each pupil.

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Support includes initiatives to work with parents and carers to assist them in managing an aspect of their child's behaviour. Excellent links with parents and carers enable them to feel fully involved in their children's education. Parents and carers in turn are in awe of the school's work, many using superlatives, such as 'fantastic' and 'amazing' in their comments about the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Include more detail of how pupils will learn about different religions and ethnic groups within the community cohesion plan.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils make good and often outstanding progress in lessons because the work they complete is so well linked to their known ability levels. For example, in a Key Stage 2 numeracy lesson, higher ability pupils made excellent progress enthusiastically counting objects, taking some away and recording the numbers left. At the same time, another group were becoming confident in recognising numbers up to 10. Similarly, in a Key Stage 2 literacy lesson, a pupil read his story clearly to the teacher, while other groups developed their understanding of books. For example, through picking a book from the library and the teaching assistant reading it to them. The excellent data collected by the school show that all groups of pupils, including those in the care of the local authority, achieve equally well.

Pupils show by their excellent attendance that they enjoy school and feel very safe. This is demonstrated by their excellent behaviour and the very supportive approach to each other they adopt around school. They enjoy joining in large group activities, such as the whole-school assembly, eagerly joining in with the songs or initiatives, such as being appointed a 'helper' at lunchtimes, ensuring that they have good opportunities to understand the value of supporting each other. The members of the school council act as very positive advocates of the other pupils. This group make valuable suggestions to improve aspects of school. For example, recent ones include initiating improvements to the quality of seat belts and writing to the headteacher to ask for air fresheners for the toilets.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well supported by the positive environment created in the school. Pupils celebrate their successes through achieving their targets, and the assemblies give them good opportunities to reflect on different aspects of the school. Cultural experiences are numerous. For example, pupils in Year 6 enjoyed a lesson considering social and cultural aspects of France during the inspection, many turning up for a school council meeting still having French-style moustaches drawn on their faces.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers use their excellent understanding of specialist teaching techniques very effectively to enhance the quality of the school's provision. For example, an outstanding lesson was observed where it was very apparent how a group of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders had made giant steps in their ability to cooperate and share with each other. They followed instructions and shared with each other the excitement of following the teacher's presentations, showing outstanding progress in being able to function within a group. Similarly, in an individual art therapy session, the pupil involved moved from having been distressed earlier in the day for an unidentified reason to quickly becoming calm and settled as she explored different textures and smells. The effectiveness of the session was further demonstrated by her being able to continue for the rest of the day in a similar settled manner.

Classrooms are very positive learning environments, enhanced greatly by the imaginative use of resources. Interactive whiteboards are used very well to involve the pupils in many activities, such as in a Year 6 class where both visual and auditory information was used to help pupils greet each other. And in a Year 3 and 4 group where pupils launched rockets with their pictures in, to celebrate their achievements. Teaching assistants play a key role in supporting individual pupils or leading the activities of small groups. They also diligently record the often small steps of progress

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

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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pupils make in lessons.

Considerable effort has been put into creating an excellent curriculum. Its strength lies in how it is personalised to meet the needs of each pupil. The quality of planning documents for each subject is exemplary and ensures clear consistency in the approaches adopted in all classes. Pupils' experiences are extended extremely well by access to a wide range of specialists and excellent links with the local community.

For those pupils where they are required, individual detailed behaviour and care plans show the strategies for how pupils will be managed if they display specific behavioural traits. Many examples of how very effective these are at reducing potential problems were seen during the inspection. Many different strategies are used to provide pupils with effective support and guidance. For example, considerable thought is given to helping pupils prepare for moving classes, with photographs of new staff put into well-prepared booklets for pupils to take home for the summer break. Case studies on vulnerable pupils show how effectively the school cares for all.

The outreach service is highly effective in supporting children with a wide range of complex needs in other schools. Feedback from other schools clearly shows that Springwell staff, through individualised interventions, awareness raising and staff training, have successfully boosted the confidence and ability of mainstream staff in dealing with pupils with specific difficulties.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The strong senior leadership team is very rigorous in the manner it searches to achieve the best it can for the pupils. As part of this, very aspirational targets are set for individuals and groups. These further demonstrate the excellent capacity there is for sustained improvement. Detailed analysis of achievement data is used very well to monitor progress and identify any possible areas of concern. For example, achievements in science looked lower a year ago but, through a robust series of measures, achievements are now on par with other subjects. This robust quest for excellence ensures equality of opportunity and no possibility of any form of discrimination existing. A good emphasis on community cohesion supports this. Local links with schools and the community have been extended to links with a school in Kenya. More detail, though, is needed in the plan on the way the school will cover religious and ethnic differences and thereby further promote community cohesion.

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

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The use of 'home link books' ensures parents and carers are kept well informed about the developing needs of their child and their progress. The school has developed strong multi-agency working across a wide range of learning areas, including teachers, support staff and therapists.

Governors now play an important role in the management of the school and are making good use of information they receive to contribute to its development. They, also, contribute to the outstanding safeguarding arrangements in place. The site is very secure and health and safety are taken very seriously. Excellent levels of supervision do not detract from the emphasis placed on pupils developing their independence but are used well to maintain pupils' safety at all times.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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 equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

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Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the impact it has had on their children. 'Absolutely fabulous school with excellent leadership and teaching' and 'I could not wish for a better school for my son' are typical of the comments parents and carers made to the inspectors.

Many parents and carers stress that, through being at the school, their children have gained considerably in confidence. 'He has grown in confidence, independence and speech' is how one parent expressed this. Many commented on the high quality of headteacher and all the staff. Examples of these comments are; 'friendly able staff', 'the staff are exceptional and go beyond the call of duty', 'all the staff are supportive' and 'they are the best'.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Springwell to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 51 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 64 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	94	3	6	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	92	4	8	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	43	84	8	16	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	88	6	12	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	48	96	2	4	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	86	7	14	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	46	12	24	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	42	82	9	18	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	88	6	12	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	82	9	18	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	84	8	16	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	47	92	4	8	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	92	4	8	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



17 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Springwell School, Southampton, SO19 6DH

Thank you so much for being so helpful when I came with Mr Kirkley to your school recently. I know only some of you will be able to read this letter, so I hope your parents or carers and staff at school will help the rest of you. I very much enjoyed meeting you all and a special thank you to those of you on the school council for letting me come to your meeting.

We think your school is amazing. We know all your parents and carers agree with us. We can see you all really enjoy being in school. You do especially well in helping each other and being independent. All the staff work very hard to help you. They are very good at knowing what you can do and giving you things to do to help you make really good progress. We can see there are lots of activities you all enjoy taking part in.

The school is very well led by your headteacher. She has developed a very strong staff team who are all keen to make your school as good as possible. My job is to suggest some things to help your school be even better. In a school as good as Springwell, this is very difficult. One very small item I have suggested, which I hope your parents and carers and the staff will explain to you, is:

- Include more information about how you will be taught about different religions and ethnic groups in the community cohesion plan.

Keep working hard and doing your best to help the school.

Yours sincerely

Charles Hackett

Lead Inspector

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