

Springmead School

Independent school inspection report

DCSF registration number	933/6204
Unique Reference Number (URN)	134116
URN for registered childcare and social care	221147
Inspection number	344615
Inspection dates	11 February 2010
Reporting inspector	John Seal HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002¹, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005², the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The inspection of registered provision³ was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.⁴

This was a light touch inspection which focused principally on: the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Springmead School is a preparatory and nursery school which admits boys and girls aged from two to 11 years. It is situated in a large detached property in the village of Beckington, near Frome in Somerset. The school's aims are to provide a high quality education for its pupils in a safe environment that is stimulating, rewarding and fun, where pupils can work towards their personal potential and gain a lifelong love of learning. The school opened in 2002 and is registered for 132 pupils. There are currently 107 pupils in eight classes. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of one Nursery class, which includes registered provision for five children under the age of three, and one Reception class. There are 16 children who are funded by the government nursery scheme and 13 who attend part time. The majority of pupils are White British and have English as their first language. There are no pupils whose first language is not English. There are no pupils with statements of special educational need. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2007.

Evaluation of the school

Springmead School continues to provide an outstanding quality of education in all areas and meets all of the regulations as it did at the time of the last inspection. It has also addressed the areas for improvement. The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Pupils make outstanding progress because of the outstanding teaching and curriculum. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding, as is the promotion of their welfare, health and safety, underpinned by robust safeguarding procedures. The school premises are developed to a very high quality to meet the

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

³ Schools which provide childcare for children from birth until the term in which they reach their third birthday must register this provision separately with Ofsted.

⁴ www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2006/ukpga_20060021_en_4#pt3-ch2-pb4-l1g49

needs of the pupils. The passionate and professional leadership of the co-principals of the school has developed a very effective, warm, working relationship with the parents who hold the school in very high regard.

Quality of education

The overall quality of education is outstanding, as is the curriculum, which is based on the National Curriculum and thoroughly well planned for all subjects. It is broad, balanced and very relevant to the pupils' learning needs from the very youngest children in the registered provision and Early Years Foundation Stage to the oldest pupils. The school has a very strong and effective emphasis on developing the pupils' skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils' personal, social and health education is developed exceptionally well, not only as a discrete subject, but in other areas of the curriculum, including science and ICT. The school has successfully enriched the curriculum with specialist provision. This includes French for all ages, swimming and many different musical experiences and instrumental lessons. There is an extensive and exciting range of extra-curricular clubs and activities including karate, Urban Survival and Young Historians. The school encourages pupils to take part in the Springmead Award which develops a range of personal life skills and achievements throughout their time at the school. To supplement and extend pupils' learning in classrooms, the school organises an exceedingly high number of exciting and interesting visits for all ages which range from local day visits to residential field trips. The school invites many people to meet and talk with the pupils; these have included local poets, authors and artists, the police and representatives of charities.

Teaching and assessment are outstanding. Consequently, all children and pupils from the youngest to the oldest make outstanding progress. In all the classes, including Nursery and Reception, learning activities are extremely well structured and resourced. Lessons are very well planned and there are consistent, clear learning outcomes for each lesson, which is an improvement from the last inspection. Teachers plan a wide range of practical and formal activities to suit the needs of all pupils. Information about pupils' progress and learning is generally used well to support learning activities. There are many opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning with each other. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, which they often use to good effect by employing skilled questions and feedback when encouraging pupils to improve their skills and thinking. The school has addressed the particular issue of feedback well, which is an improvement from the previous inspection. Pupils have many opportunities to work independently and sustain concentration during their work. However, there are some occasions when pupils are over directed by teachers during a lesson, and this hinders pupils in developing their independent learning skills and slows down their progress.

The school has effective and rigorous assessment strategies which plan and track pupils' progress over time. This information indicates that pupils make outstanding

progress over their time in the school from the beginning of the Early Years Foundation Stage to the end of Key Stage 2 and achieve higher than average standards. Pupils' outstanding progress and above average attainment enable them to be successful in passing entrance examinations to local independent schools.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. From the registered provision and Early Years Foundation Stage onwards, the school's warm, welcoming and inclusive atmosphere fosters excellent personal relationships between pupils and adults. The very young children in the Nursery have a highly positive start to school and this continues through to the older pupils in Year 6. Pupils have exceedingly positive attitudes towards learning and their school life. The outstanding curriculum planning ensures that all pupils are very aware of different religions and cultures. A number of religious festivals are celebrated including Chinese New Year, Hanukkah and Diwali. The school has a very strong emphasis on harmony and tolerance and as a result, pupils play and learn together extremely well. Pupils' attendance is high and behaviour is outstanding. Pupils of all ages enjoy contributing positively to the school community; they are encouraged to take responsibility for returning class registers, tidying up and acting as librarians. The school encourages pupils to raise funds and think about other people in need. Pupils talked knowledgeably about raising funds for the Haiti earthquake and other charities. They also contribute to the local community, for example they collected gifts through their harvest festival for older people in sheltered accommodation locally. Pupils have very good opportunities to learn about public institutions in England through lessons about voting and how the government works. Younger children have visits from police and the fire and rescue service. Pupils are very well prepared for their adult lives and future economic well-being, because in addition to the excellent progress they make in their basic skills, pupils have very many opportunities to work together, become members of the school council and organise events such as assemblies and presentations.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The provision for all children and pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. The school's leaders ensure that conscientious care and attention go into the preparation, monitoring and evaluation of systems, policies and procedures which promote the highest quality of health and safety arrangements for pupils. The school has improved on the policy review aspect of this work significantly since the last inspection. The school pays close and rigorous attention to ensure that the procedures for safeguarding are robust and meet the current government requirements for staff training for child protection. All staff have the required checks before their appointment to the school and these are recorded efficiently in the single central register, as required. Bullying is extremely rare and pupils told inspectors that they were confident staff would deal with any incidents and said that they felt safe. They have a very good awareness of how to live healthy lifestyles through diet and regular exercise. Risk assessments are thorough and effective for

all events both on and off the school premises, and this promotes all pupils' health and safety. The school has a detailed and informative development plan to support the regulatory requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall provision, outcomes and effectiveness of the setting, including the registered provision, are outstanding. The vibrant and innovative teaching and skilful use of resources ensure children make rapid progress in all areas of learning. Children make a seamless transition from under three to five years; by the end of the Reception Year most children are working well beyond their early learning goals. Teachers plan activities that are captivating and challenging and track children's progress from the registered provision to the end of Reception very well. Teachers make very skilful use of questioning to establish children's understanding. Children's behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary; they are always fully engaged in their activities. There are many opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills and they learn to read and spell through rigorous teaching of phonics and regular consolidation. Children learn to interact well and excellent relationships contribute strongly to the enjoyable and purposeful environment. Children make a good start in learning how to stay healthy and safe. The curriculum is outstanding and provides a good balance between teacher-led activities and opportunities for children to develop their creativity and independence. Effective use is made of the well-equipped outdoor areas to provide stimulating learning experiences. Effective safeguarding ensures that children are able to learn in a safe, healthy and caring setting. There are sufficient and appropriately qualified adults. The setting, including the registered provision, has outstanding leadership and management, strongly committed to raising achievement through effective evaluation and regular review.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following point for development:

- Increase the proportion of lessons where all pupils are provided with sustained opportunities to practise and develop their skills for independent learning.

Inspection judgement recording form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education	✓			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	✓			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs	✓			
How well pupils make progress in their learning	✓			

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How good are the outcomes for children in the EYFS?	✓			
What is the quality of provision in the EYFS?	✓			
How effectively is the EYFS led and managed?	✓			
Overall effectiveness: how well does the school meet the needs of children in the EYFS?	✓			

School details

Name of school	Springmead School		
DCSF number	933/6204		
Unique Reference Number (URN)	134116		
EY URN	221147		
Type of school	Nursery, Pre-preparatory and Preparatory		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	April 2002		
Age range of pupils	2–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 47	Girls: 47	Total: 94
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 8	Girls: 5	Total: 13
Number of pupils aged 0-3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 3	Girls: 2	Total: 5
Annual fees (day pupils and childcare)	£6,591		
Address of school	Castle Corner Beckington Somerset BA11 6TA		
Telephone number	01373 831555		
Fax number	01373 831560		
Email address	info@springmead.com		
Headteacher	Stephen & Madeleine Taylor		
Proprietor	Stephen & Madeleine Taylor		
Reporting inspector	John Seal HMI		
Dates of inspection	11 February 2010		