

Springdale Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	104303
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	377056
Inspection dates	27–28 March 2012
Lead inspector	Doris Bell

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Craig Felton
Headteacher	Janice Hopkins
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2009
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Doris Bell

Additional inspector

Lynda Smith

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team observed 15 members of staff during 20 lessons, covering approximately eight hours of teaching. As well as observing full or part lessons, inspectors spent time observing sessions where pupils were learning letters and sounds. They also heard pupils read, watched them being taught in small groups and individually, analysed their work, and discussed their learning and school life with them.

Meetings were held with senior and middle managers, and representatives of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaires (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including: information relating to the attainment and achievement of all groups of pupils; the school improvement plan; governing body minutes; and evidence of monitoring and evaluation. They also spoke to parents and carers, and analysed 67 parental questionnaire responses, together with the responses to the questionnaires returned by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

This average-sized junior school has an above average proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, is also above average. None are at the early stages of learning to speak English. The school has specially resourced provision, known as the learning resource base, for pupils who have special educational needs. This caters for 20 pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties. Overall, the school has a well-above-average proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is high.

The school has achieved Healthy Schools status. It meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. A privately-run after-school club operates on the school site. It is inspected separately. The school shares the site with the infant school, which uses a different part of the same building but shares the administration block.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is not yet good because teaching and the curriculum are not yet fully effective in securing good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. However, it is improving because initiatives to do this are beginning to bear fruit.
- Achievement is satisfactory. Attainment is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics when pupils start school and when they leave. Progress is improving rapidly in reading and mathematics because of changes in the way they are taught, but it is limited in writing because pupils have too few opportunities to practise their writing skills in different subjects. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those in the learning resource base, make satisfactory progress. They are assisted in their learning and personal development by well-trained staff.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The quality of marking is good, and teachers assess and track pupils' progress well. However, the resulting information is not always used effectively to meet the needs of individual pupils when they learn in sets for English and mathematics.
- Pupils behave well and they have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. They and their parents and carers agree that behaviour is usually good. All groups of pupils work and play well together and support each other, regardless of background or ability.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior leaders lead teaching well and manage performance effectively. The impact of teaching on learning is regularly checked and areas for improvement are followed up with well-targeted training. However, subject leaders are not yet managing the curriculum sufficiently well in terms of links between subjects to provide pupils with good, regular opportunities to practise their writing and numeracy skills.

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Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching so it is at least good by:
 - ensuring that the learning activities planned for pupils in English and mathematics sets fully meet the needs of the different ability groups within the sets, so that all pupils can make faster progress.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing the roles and accountability of subject leaders
 - adopting a more creative approach to curricular planning by further exploring the links between subjects to ensure that basic skills, especially in writing, are promoted at every opportunity.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Most parents and carers say their children make good progress. The inspection team found that progress is satisfactory, but improving in line with the quality of teaching. Attainment is average, including in reading. Pupils are enthusiastic readers. They use a good range of strategies to help them read new words, and can use the text to find information. However, they do not always read questions carefully enough, as was evident when Year 3 pupils mixed up finding ingredients in ice cream with finding different flavours. The focus on teaching letters and sounds is improving spelling, and the use of a greater range of descriptive vocabulary is making writing more engaging. The pupils' ability to write in different styles to suit different purposes and audiences was evident in the diary recounts in Year 6, the playscripts in Year 5, and the range of writing on display and in their books. Pupils do not use the writing skills they develop in English lessons sufficiently well in other subjects to improve them further.

The recent initiative to raise standards in mathematics is adding to pupils' enjoyment of the subject. This was evident in lessons in Year 4 and Year 6 where 'experts' and 'novices' worked in pairs or groups to explore options and solve problems. In Year 3, this involved finding different ways to produce the number 15. In Year 6 it involved pupils measuring each other with a view to using the information alongside their developing understanding of average, mean, mode and median to find the height and measurements of a giant whose footsteps had been 'found'. In both cases, the classrooms were hives of activity, and learning was spurred on by additional challenges or additional support from staff.

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The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those in the learning resource base, follows the same pattern as for all other pupils. Their work is broken down into the smaller steps they need to make progress, and teaching and well-briefed support staff assist them in their learning. Pupils from minority ethnic groups also make satisfactory progress, and all groups of pupils are fully integrated into everything the school has to offer.

Quality of teaching

Most parents and carers say their children are taught well. The inspection team found that teaching is satisfactory over time, but the proportion of good and sometimes outstanding teaching is increasing, and therefore pupils' progress is accelerating. In the best lessons, tasks stretch pupils' thinking and understanding, and, drawing on their own good subject knowledge, teachers probe pupils' thinking with well-targeted questions. In such lessons, learning objectives are clear and pupils have many opportunities to reflect on their learning and check it against well-focused success criteria. This was observed in Year 6, where pupils groaned as they realised they had missed key elements in a diary recount, and improved their writing accordingly.

Pupils know their targets and their levels, and they are keen to move to the next level. The teachers' good marking helps them because it almost always shows them how to improve. The overall good use of assessment procedures, and pupils' involvement in them, is a marked improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils are taught in ability sets for English and mathematics. However, work is not always sufficiently well matched to the different ability levels within the sets. This sometimes means that more-able pupils in each set are not pushed far enough, or tasks are too difficult for some less-able pupils. Teaching sometimes includes good opportunities for pupils to show independence and initiative. For example, pupils in Year 5 worked in groups to produce playscripts showing different ways to persuade others to save water. Time-limited activities, and the enthusiasm of staff and pupils, keep most lessons moving at a good pace.

Teaching and the curriculum make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are taught to reflect on their behaviour and on their learning, and to respect others. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those in the learning resource base, are supported well in lessons and in withdrawal groups. In the learning resource base, just occasionally, staff do not clearly demonstrate what pupils are expected to learn, and learning is then slow to start when pupils move to independent work.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils enjoy school, attendance is above average, and punctuality is good. Parents and carers report that their children 'never want to miss a day', and praise the school for the way it helps to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils' attitudes to learning, and their conduct in and out of lessons, are good. Pupils and their parents

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and carers all say this is typical, and they praise the school for the way it manages behaviour. School procedures are well known to staff and pupils, and they are consistently applied throughout the school. The ethos of mutual care and respect thus engendered ensure that pupils work and play in a safe, secure learning environment. The pupils' good behaviour contributes to their improving progress, as the initiatives to raise achievement begin to take effect. The large majority of pupils, including those in the learning resource base, show great determination when tackling tasks, and a keen desire to do well.

Pupils are very supportive of each other. There is no evidence of sustained bullying of any kind, although there are occasional incidents of racist name-calling. The school deals appropriately with all such incidents, logs them and reports them in accordance with current guidelines. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school, and that they feel confident to ask any adult for help should they need it. School council minutes show that pupils have a strong voice in the school. Pupils are enthusiastic learners who want to do well. They have good social skills, and they enjoy taking responsibility. For example, pupils in Year 5 willingly go to the infant school at lunchtime to support play activities. Pupils collaborate well in lessons. A good example of this was observed in an outstanding Year 6 lesson, where 'experts' helped other pupils to gain a greater understanding of how to calculate the average height of pupils in their group.

Leadership and management

The senior leadership team has focused staff well on understanding their individual and collective responsibility for outcomes in Year 6. They can pinpoint improvements, for example in reading, and more recently in mathematics, that have resulted from the actions they have taken and the supporting professional development opportunities for staff. The rigorous checks on teaching and learning, and the way in which areas for improvement are followed up, are helping to accelerate pupils' progress in English and mathematics. For disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, monitoring extends beyond English and mathematics to checking how well work in other subjects is adapted to the pupils' needs. Senior leaders use assessment information well to set challenging targets for staff and pupils. The governing body supports the school well, holding it increasingly to account for its outcomes. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. The 'raising attainment' plan sets a clear agenda for improvement, which the whole school team is working to achieve. All of this shows the school has capacity for sustained improvement.

The curriculum is broad and balanced but it does not provide clear enough guidance on how to promote literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects. Subject leaders are in the process of developing their roles and responsibilities, and have not yet fully explored links between subjects to enable this to happen. Nevertheless, the curriculum promotes pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. As a result, pupils become confident of their place in the world, and develop a good understanding of the different faiths and cultures within it.

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Safeguarding requirements are fully met, and the school follows recommended good practice for keeping the pupils safe and secure. It promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily, although not all groups of pupils are sufficiently challenged by their work at all times. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those supported in the learning resource base, are fully integrated into the school. The governing body keeps a close eye on the provision for these pupils. Gaps between their learning and that of other pupils are similar to national gaps, although several pupils have made enough progress to come off the statement for their needs or to move to a lower level of concern. The school works closely with external agencies in all of this, and overall, the learning resource base provision is led and managed well.

Glossary

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.
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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



29 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Springdale Junior School, Wolverhampton, WV4 4NJ

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school, and for talking with us about what you do there. Thank you also, to those of you who completed the inspection questionnaire that gave us a range of information about how you feel about your school. We could see how much you enjoy coming to school by what you told us, and by your good attendance. You and most of your parents and carers are right in saying that your behaviour is usually good. We noted how polite you are, and how willing you are to help others, including those in the infant school. You told us that you feel safe at school and that you would ask any member of staff for help if you needed it. We agree with you that the school keeps you safe and secure.

All of you, including those of you who are disabled or have special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. The school is very successful in bring you all together and encouraging you all to take a full part in school life. Overall, we found that your school is satisfactory, but we think it could do more to help you reach higher standards in English and mathematics. Therefore, we have asked it to:

- improve teaching by making sure that within your English and mathematics sets, each one of you is given work that helps you to make faster progress
- improve leadership and management by exploring how links between different subjects can be used to help you consolidate and improve your writing and mathematics skills.

You can help by continuing to work hard, and taking every opportunity to practise your writing and mathematics. We hope you will continue to enjoy learning in the future as much as you do now, and we wish you well.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell
Lead inspector

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