

# Spelthorne School

Feltham Hill Road, Ashford, Surrey, TW15 1LT

**Inspection dates** 11–12 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Most pupils achieve well. They make good progress from low starting points to reach broadly average standards at the end of Year 6.
- The environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage helps children settle quickly and develop a good grasp of early social, communication and mathematical skills.
- Teaching is good overall and some teaching is outstanding. Teachers' questioning deepens pupils' knowledge and pupils play a key role in contributing to lessons.
- The provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is strong because leaders and managers think carefully about how best to meet their individual needs.
- Pupils attend regularly and are enthusiastic about school. They enjoy lessons, feel safe and appreciate the care they receive from teachers and support staff. They behave well and treat each other and adults with respect and consideration.
- Leaders and managers have successfully established a shared vision built on high expectations for every pupil.
- Governors play a key role in supporting and challenging the school. The management of staff performance has been particularly effective in raising the quality of teaching.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not yet high enough to ensure pupils make rapid and sustained progress throughout all year groups.
- Comments in marking usually indicate the next steps in pupils' learning but teachers do not regularly provide opportunities for pupils to respond to these comments in lessons.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 lessons or parts of lessons, including joint observations with senior leaders. They visited the speech and language unit and the nurture group. The teaching of a range of subjects was observed, including phonics (letter patterns and the sounds they represent) and guided reading. In addition, the team listened to pupils read and attended assemblies.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff and representatives from the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 23 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the 190 responses to a recent parental survey commissioned by the school and of the questionnaires returned by staff.
- They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including those relating to safeguarding and child protection, the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, data on pupil performance, notes of visits from the local authority, logs relating to behaviour and absence figures.

## Inspection team

Jeanie Jovanova, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Viner	Additional Inspector
Ros Ferrara	Additional Inspector
Bryan Meyer	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is lower than that found nationally. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. A range of minority ethnic groups are represented in smaller numbers. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is lower than average.
- The school has an integrated resource centre for pupils with speech, language and communication needs.
- The school operates a nurture group for its own pupils and those from a local cluster of schools.
- The school opened in September 2011 after amalgamating the former infant and nursery and junior schools on the same site. A new headteacher was appointed and there were changes in staffing and in the make-up of the governing body.
- There is a breakfast and after-school club on the premises that is not managed by the school's governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in order to ensure pupils make rapid and sustained progress throughout all year groups by:
  - making consistently effective use of the recently introduced 'steps to success' in lessons which help pupils and teachers to gauge how well they are doing
  - creating opportunities for pupils to respond to the next steps in their learning which are identified in teachers' marking of their work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below those expected for their age. Due to stimulating activities and the high expectations staff have, they quickly learn to show sustained levels of concentration. Staff capitalise on this by encouraging a high level of purposeful talk. For example, children making shapes with play dough were using precise mathematical language to describe their shapes. This approach results in children making good progress, especially in their language, communication and mathematical skills.
- Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school. Consequently, attainment has improved and is at least in line with national averages and rising at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because the school carefully evaluates the type of support it provides. As a result, their needs are very well met.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good progress because planning takes into account their needs and lessons stimulate their interest. The funding provided is well spent on a range of initiatives that meet their individual needs. For example, individual tuition and catch-up programmes delivered by trained staff have had a positive impact on progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The provision for pupils in the specialist unit is very well matched to their needs and enables them to make good progress in their learning, both in the unit, and when integrated into mainstream classes.
- A keen focus on using precise language and standard English benefits all pupils and ensures those who speak English as an additional language achieve well.
- More-able pupils have their needs well met through a range of enrichment activities. Open-ended homework projects provide further challenges which stretch pupils' abilities and engage their interest.
- The school has successfully promoted a love of reading and pupils talk animatedly about the books they choose to read at home. This, along with well-stocked libraries that support the curriculum, ensures pupils have opportunities to read books covering a range of topics.
- In ensuring that all pupils achieve equally well, including those from different ethnic backgrounds, the school demonstrates its commitment to equality of opportunity.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The school is continually refining its provision and teachers are open to constructive feedback that helps them improve their practice. Consequently, the quality of teaching has remained good throughout the amalgamation of the two schools.
- Lesson planning takes careful consideration of the needs and starting points of the pupils in each class. This ensures that work is set at an appropriate level for all pupils so they can make progress in lessons.
- Teaching for pupils in the specialist resource unit is carefully planned to build on their previous learning, both when being taught in the unit and also when integrated into mainstream classes.
- Teachers skilfully ask questions which develop pupils' understanding and enable them to contribute effectively in lessons. For example, in an outstanding writing lesson on creating a recipe for a disgusting potion (part of an inspirational Roal Dahl day), pupils helped the teacher to construct the 'steps to success' by identifying the elements they would need to include when writing instructions. Their contributions included the use of colons and imperative verbs.
- Through discussions with teachers, pupils are involved in setting their own targets and are

consequently acutely aware of what they need to do to move their learning on. They regularly refer to their targets when checking their work and make amendments accordingly. This high level of awareness contributes to the good progress they make.

- Teachers create meaningful links between different subjects so pupils are able to develop key skills in mathematics, reading and writing in different contexts. For example, pupils create bar charts and graphs when conducting geographical surveys, use measurements accurately in science experiments and write letters as if they were evacuees when learning about the Second World War. Pupils keep all their writing in one journal and use their literacy targets to check every piece. This provides teachers with good evidence to show where pupils' strengths lie as writers and what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously. However, while pupils are involved productively in checking their own learning during lessons, they do not have enough opportunities to follow up the next steps in learning that are identified in teachers' marking.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils are courteous and considerate. Relationships at all levels are supportive and respectful. Playtimes are harmonious, lunchtimes are calm and pupils move around the building purposefully and sensibly. Almost all of the parents and carers who replied to a recent school survey agreed that pupils behave well.
- Pupils respond well to opportunities to shape their own learning. Their attitudes in lessons are positive and they contribute well in class discussions. They take an active interest in evaluating their own work and are usually accurate in their self-assessments.
- The school provides good support for pupils with particular behavioural needs. For example, a nurture group has been established where adults show pupils how to develop appropriate social skills and encourage them to reflect on how well they are managing their own behaviour. Using a structured programme of praise and rewards, pupils develop the necessary confidence and social skills to succeed in mainstream classrooms, with a corresponding rise in their academic progress.
- The school keeps its pupils safe, and pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. They take part in campaigns that explain road safety issues, understand the potential risks of social media sites and take care when cooking or conducting science experiments. The parents and carers who responded to the online survey stated unanimously that their child felt safe at school.
- Pupils are very clear about what constitutes bullying. They say it hardly ever happens at school but that, if it does, staff deal with it swiftly and effectively because they 'are always there for you'.
- Attendance is slightly above the national average. Both attendance and punctuality have improved since the appointment of a home–school link worker. Her role has strengthened links with parents and carers and enabled the school to take prompt action when issues are identified.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Leaders and managers all worked together to help the amalgamation process run smoothly and have successfully built a shared vision for the new school. The staff work very well together as a team and have quickly established efficient systems that give the school a sound footing on which to build.
- Leaders respond to what information about pupils' progress and attainment tells them. For example, following a dip in writing results, they introduced new materials which helped teachers to assess pupils' work using a range of criteria. Teachers were then able to fine-tune the way they teach writing to meet pupils' needs very specifically. Standards in writing improved as a result.
- All teachers are held accountable for the progress their pupils make. They meet regularly with senior leaders to check and discuss how well individuals and groups of pupils are doing. Highly

efficient systems enable this information to be collated in a range of different ways and leaders use it well to identify any patterns that might indicate a change of approach is needed.

- Leaders ensure that teachers continue to improve their skills by providing high quality training and support. For example, a senior leader has learnt how to use the 'steps to success' approach to good effect in lessons by explaining to pupils the precise stages needed in order to achieve good learning. As a result of sharing this good practice, pupils in some classes are becoming increasingly adept at assessing and reshaping their own learning to achieve greater success. However, this has yet to be embedded across the school.
- Leaders are committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all. They ensure pupils' varying needs are well met and have successfully narrowed the gap between the performance of all pupils nationally and that of key groups within the school.
- Leaders and managers ensure there are a range of opportunities for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These include assemblies where pupils reflect on matters of faith and morality, trips which enrich their cultural understanding and a curriculum which is broad and stimulating.
- The local authority has a good understanding of the context of the school and used this judiciously to support the school during the amalgamation. It continues to provide light-touch support to ensure that the improvements made during the first year are sustainable.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body played a key role in ensuring the smooth transition from two institutions to one cohesive community.
  - Governors have a clear understanding of the data presented to them and challenge the school to ensure that pupils' progress continues to improve. They keep a particularly close eye on how the pupil premium funding is spent to ensure that pupils who benefit from it do as well as other groups.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	125095
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	400252

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

<b>Type of school</b>	All-through
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	553
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pat Todd
<b>Headteacher</b>	Darren Harrison
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10–11 January 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01784 253311
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