



# Springfield School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 104495  
**LEA** Knowsley  
**Inspection number** 277171  
**Inspection dates** 7 December 2005 to 7 December 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Bob Thompson CfBT Lead Inspector

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Cawthorne Close
<b>School category</b>	Community special		Southdene
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 19		Kirkby, Liverpool L32 3XQ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 5491425
<b>Number on roll</b>	87	<b>Fax number</b>	0151 5468995
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr A Disley
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 April 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr I Cordingley

<b>Age group</b> 2 to 19	<b>Inspection dates</b> 7 December 2005 - 7 December 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 277171
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Springfield school is designated as a school for pupils with physical difficulties, situated in Knowsley. However, it caters for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and those with moderate learning difficulties with additional physical difficulties. All learners have a statement for their learning difficulties. The proportion of learners eligible for free school meals is significantly above the national average. There are 86 pupils on roll. All are white British. The school has gained several externally accredited awards, such as the Healthy Schools Award, NAACEMark, Investors in People, Recognition of Quality Awards and School Achievement Awards.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It has the ambition to keep improving. The headteacher very accurately describes the school's effectiveness as outstanding and that it provides outstanding value for money. It promotes very good learning and personal development amongst a group of pupils who have good reasons for not realising their full potential. The partnership between the school and its providers and outside agencies ensures that

all children are fully included in exciting and beneficial educational and developmental programmes.

Perceptive and rigorous self-evaluation has ensured that the school has continued to improve well, even from the very high base at the last inspection.

Individually, young children under 5 and students over 16, make very good progress, because they receive very good teaching and care. Overall, achievement is outstanding; they are taught very well across the school, are provided with a well-balanced range of academic and developmental activities and are exceptionally well cared for in a safe and reassuring environment. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning and their enthusiasm to achieve success are outstanding. This is all made possible by the outstanding leadership and management of the school. There is a dedicated group of skilled individuals who share their expertise and experience for the

benefit of the pupils and the improvement of the school. Staff, pupils and parents are rightly proud of their school.

Accommodation is not conducive to enabling the children to make good progress; for example, there is a lack of suitable storage for pupils' equipment and one classroom where access can only be reached through another teaching room. However, teaching is excellent and children do succeed in spite of the conditions. Children love to come to

school and are determined to succeed; this is reflected in their very good attendance.

Leadership and management are outstanding; consequently the practice across the school is innovative, creative and exciting. The capacity to improve further is outstanding given the commitment of all staff to not to be complacent and rest on their

laurels.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 1**

Provision in the sixth form is outstanding. Sixth-formers make exceptional progress in their development of basic skills. Their gains in work-related skills, such as decision making and effective teamwork, equip them extremely well as they leave the safety of school and enter the adult world of work. A rich and dynamic curriculum builds their confidence and self-esteem as they develop essential life skills. They learn to shop on their own and cook a healthy meal.

They are given space to learn in a safe and secure environment and the quality of care they receive is outstanding.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

As an outstanding school the headteacher and governing body are clear about what needs to be done to improve the school further and there are precise priorities in the school improvement plan to manage this, including 'continue to improve the accommodation'.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

A wealth of data provided by the school points to pupils making very rapid progress.

Children make rapid gains in communication skills. By using switches and pointing with

their eyes, children with the most complex needs express what they want and what they

do not want. Others communicate choices by successfully and independently using pictures and symbols. The higher attainers talk confidently. Children with the most complex needs show anticipation and express excitement during sensory story time, others read pictures and symbols, whilst the higher attainers read text. Because of the severity of their learning difficulties few children are able to write fluently. However, the

highest attainers can write simple sentences.

As learners develop in confidence because of the very high quality of support they receive, their social skills improve significantly. Gains in independence are amazing, such as the way in which pupils and students shop for ingredients and prepare their own

healthy meals.

The outstanding opportunities that are provided for children to work alongside

mainstream children make a fantastic contribution to their confidence, learning and self-esteem. Throughout the school, children make very good progress in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), art, performing arts and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Learners with very complex learning difficulties, those who are looked after and high attainers, all make outstanding progress.

Children with severe physical or medical conditions are fully included in all learning experiences and their achievements, for example, being free from pain because of careful positioning in the hydrotherapy pool are celebrated.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. The pupils enjoy their lessons; often throughout the school are heard squeals of delight as the pupils learn. This attitude was summed up in one class by a small child who said to the teacher 'I love you.' Behaviour and attitudes to work are exemplary with no racial incidents or bullying reported. The pupils show great perseverance in their tasks. They help and encourage one another and try tremendously hard. It is impressive to watch. The pupils are busy. Self-esteem and self-confidence are high. The pupils follow opportunities, that foster safe and healthy lifestyles. The school holds the Healthy Schools award and the pupils have many opportunities both during school and after school to pursue a healthy way of life. Through 'team enterprise' the pupils take an active part in the world of work, working together to create a product and selling them at the local market. The school is committed to ensuring the pupils are well prepared for life after school.

Attendance is excellent. This shows how keen the pupils are to come to school. There is an active school council, which is a democratically elected body which works in a responsible way for the benefit of the pupils and the school.

The provision for the pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The pupils raise money through coffee mornings for Action Aid, a charity which supports the education of children in India. The pupils have a clear moral code. There are many opportunities in the school day when major milestones are cherished and valued by all.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Inspection judgements agree with the school's evaluation that teaching and learning in the school are outstanding. The key to this strong position is in a stable and highly committed multi-disciplinary staff, who are active in seeking and pursuing relevant

training to ensure that the changing needs of the pupils are very effectively met. They embrace change readily, enjoy their work and make sure that the pupils know they are safe, secure and valued. The quality of teaching and learning is of such a high standard that it enables the pupils across the school to make very significant progress in their work and personal development. Another key feature is in the close way that all staff work together to support and guide the pupils. The use of ICT in the classrooms has gained the school national recognition. Pupils are particularly engaged by the interactive whiteboards and computers, which stimulate their interests and allows them access to the whole range of National Curriculum subjects. The diverse needs of the pupils are met through detailed assessments. Careful tracking of their progress is watched closely and their work is very carefully matched to their exact need. Parents and carers are encouraged to be involved in the multi-disciplinary approach of the school and are particularly impressed by the commitment of the staff and the dedication they show to their children. Parents overwhelmingly support the school, and positive comments such as 'We have every confidence in all the teaching and medical staff because they take all aspects of my son's academic, medical, physical and personal needs on board so this gives us peace of mind when he is at school.', appear on many parental questionnaires returned to school.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The excellent curriculum is broad and relevant to the needs of the pupils. It is appropriate for the pupils and reflects the pupils' level of access. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection, especially for the older pupils. The principles of 'Excellence and Enjoyment' and 'Every Child Matters' are at the forefront of the curriculum with the visual and expressive arts very well represented. Pupils throughout the school benefit greatly from links with other schools and colleges. A wide range of work-related experiences is also provided for older students. This helps with the students' social development. There is a clear focus in the school to tailor the curriculum to the needs of the pupils and students. Excellent learning experiences are customised for each individual. There are many opportunities to enrich the curriculum through visitors to the school and visits to places of interest. Clubs and activities at lunchtime and after school are also popular and well supported. They make a highly effective contribution to pupils' social development and to their enjoyment of school life. Older pupils and students have good opportunities to pursue externally accredited courses such as Accreditation for Life and Living and Award Scheme Development & Accreditation Network, all of which prepare pupils and students well for life after school and independent living.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The dedication of all adults in the school makes a key contribution to the outstanding care, guidance and support which is a profound and significant feature of the work of

the school. Close working relationships between all staff contribute significantly to this outstanding provision.

There is a range of comprehensive strategies in place to support vulnerable pupils. Arrangements for the protection of pupils are well known to staff, and staff are vigilant. Regular risk assessments are undertaken and the pupils clearly feel safe and secure in school. The school works with an extensive range of agencies, both specialised and general, to meet the individual needs of the pupils. Assessments are key to the significant progress pupils make. Older pupils are very well supported by Connexions Careers Services to facilitate transition to the world of work. Parents value the school. One parent wrote on the questionnaire sent into school 'The school and the staff are fantastic.' whilst another reflected 'As a nervous parent. staff are always reassuring. and answer any fears I might have.' Daily home/school books are used as a valuable means to communicate information and to gather views and opinions.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership, management and governance are outstanding. The headteacher's vision and determination to improve the school, and the support from key staff and governors, have resulted in outstanding provision for the school. There is an atmosphere of enthusiasm and celebration, with the pupils' needs first and foremost. National achievement and inclusion awards gained by the school are merited. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have first-hand knowledge of the effectiveness of lessons.

The commitment to the highest achievement and best quality of care for all learners is at the heart of the headteacher's leadership. His vision is shared by all staff and together they have created and maintained a learning environment where every child is valued and given space and opportunities to blossom. Very effective teamwork ensures that this school runs efficiently. Outstanding links with mainstream schools, the local college and external agencies ensure that the needs of all learners and their families are very well met.

Systems for checking performance and taking action to bring about improvement are robust. The school makes effective use of the resources available to improve its accommodation and grounds, thus impacting very positively on pupils' achievements.

The school council contributes significantly to areas of the school, such as the 'coffee bar' where pupils decorated the social area, and played a part in providing play equipment for the playground.

The school has improved very well since the last inspection, particularly in ICT, where equipment, relevant staff training and pupils' progress have developed greatly.

The governors give good support and challenge to the school. They have an outstanding knowledge of the needs of the learners and what needs to be done to provide the highest quality education for them. The school gives very good value for money.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	1	

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	insufficient evidence

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

As you know we recently visited you to find out how well your headteacher, teachers and support staff are helping you with your learning.

Thank you for being so friendly and willing to talk to us. It was useful to know what you think about your school. We enjoyed meeting your school council, and listening to some good advice you gave us on healthy eating - eat more fruit and cut out chips.

There are some things that we think are really good about your school. These are:

- the enthusiasm from you and your teachers in wanting to do well
- the excellent progress you make in your work, particularly in ICT
- how well your headteacher and teachers know you so that they can plan exciting activities and lessons that will help you to improve even more
- those of you who need a little extra help in your work have someone to turn to
- your parents are very happy with the school and all it does for you
- your behaviour is excellent and you are learning to be safe and have healthy life styles.

We have asked your school to try to improve the accommodation in which you work.