



Springwell Community School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112966
LEA DERBYSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 279065
Inspection dates 14 September 2005 to 15 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. Bob Roberts LI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Middlecroft Road
School category	Community		S43 3NQ
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01246473873
Number on roll	935	Fax number	01246281899
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs. Karen Bonnett
Date of previous inspection	15 November 1999	Headteacher	Miss. Teresa Roche

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 16	14 September 2005 - 15 September 2005	279065

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two contracted inspectors.

Description of the school

Springwell Community School is a mixed 11-16 comprehensive school. With 935 pupils it is of about average size. The school has grown slightly since the last inspection and is currently over-subscribed. Staveley is an area of socio-economic deprivation and has been the focus of a government renewal strategy since 2002. Over 98% of the pupils come from white British backgrounds. The number of pupils with special educational needs is higher than average and the number eligible for free school meals is also higher than average. The school became a specialist arts college in September 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school is providing satisfactory education overall, and some aspects of its work are good. There have been considerable improvements since the last inspection. In particular, the overall achievements of pupils have risen. Attendance has improved steadily and now is at national average levels. The behaviour of pupils has also improved. This progress is clearly recognised in the local community. The parent questionnaire used as part of the inspection generated a large response that was very positive. There is a purposeful and confident air about the school, and this has been given added impetus by the school's recent designation as a specialist arts college. The care and guidance provided for pupils are good and pupils are happy to come to school. The curriculum provided is good. Although standards are low in comparison with national averages, pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. However, overall progress in maths and English is not good enough. The school tends to be too generous in its evaluation of its work. The school thinks the quality of teaching is good but the inspectors judged it to be satisfactory. Although the school has many ways of monitoring its work, there need to be greater consistency and rigour in identifying areas for development. The school has the capacity to improve further and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the standards of achievement overall in maths and English. - Improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school. - Strengthen the consistency and effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation processes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The overall achievement of pupils is satisfactory. When pupils join the school in Year 7 their average attainment is close to national expectations. However, there are relatively few high-achieving pupils. The standards reached by pupils at age 16 are well below average. At age 16 Springwell pupils get as many GCSE passes as those in other schools, but with lower grades on average. The main issue is that results in GCSE mathematics and English are very low and only a quarter of pupils achieve the national target of five GCSE grade A*-C passes when English and mathematics are included. By contrast, at age 14, results are in line with national expectations for English and science, though they are below average in mathematics. The school has a well-established system for setting itself challenging targets for overall performance at ages 14 and 16 and these targets are mostly being achieved. However, the school has not set sufficiently challenging targets for GCSE mathematics and English. Pupils make satisfactory progress during their time at the school. Progress is good up to age 14 in English and science, but is not good enough at age 16 in English nor in mathematics overall. The school helps its pupils to achieve significantly better GCSE results than pupils in similar circumstances elsewhere because the weaknesses in core

subjects are partly balanced by good results in other subjects such as drama, music, applied science, applied business, RE and citizenship. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress. Achievement is consistent among different groups of learners. Most make satisfactory or better progress in relation to their capability and starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils is good. The pupils have good attitudes to their education. They behave well in lessons and around the school. They show respect for each other and respond well to their teachers and other adults. Their attendance and punctuality are good and have improved significantly in the last five years. In lessons where teaching is good pupils enjoy taking part actively, working well in pairs or groups and being responsible for their learning. Pupils take on responsibilities within the school, such as acting as 'buddies' to younger pupils or giving advice on issues through the school council. The school's strong emphasis on social and moral issues has a positive effect on pupils' personal development. Teachers have high expectations and pupils try hard to achieve them. They understand how they should behave towards each other. They are very aware of what to do if they are bullied and feel that any incidents are dealt with effectively. They participate enthusiastically in cultural activities based around the performing arts. Although there is good provision for pupils to develop their spiritual awareness through religious education, the school does not meet its statutory duty in relation to collective worship. Pupils demonstrate good awareness of healthy lifestyles. They have contributed to the introduction of more healthy choices in the canteen. They value the opportunities to discuss life choices and safe behaviour offered by speakers from the health, youth and other services. Pupils take on roles of responsibility in the school community and are increasingly contributing to wider community activities. They understand the expectations of employers and are well prepared for decisions about their further education and careers.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The school's own view, that teaching overall is good, was not one that inspectors could confirm. In the best lessons, teachers plan well and are clear what they want pupils to learn. Activities are varied and stimulating and the lesson builds in opportunities to reinforce and test what has been learnt. However, in many of the lessons seen by the inspectors, there was not enough variety of activities to keep learners interested. Teachers were planning the tasks but were not clear what they wanted pupils to learn or how they were going to check the learning. Teaching assistants were often not being used effectively. Classroom behaviour is good. Teachers manage their classrooms well and often use praise

effectively. Pupils enjoy the opportunities that do occur to learn for themselves and they make good progress in these lessons. They respond well to working in group situations and show confidence. The majority of pupils know the standards they are achieving in their work and what they need to do to improve. However, more thorough analysis and more regular monitoring of their work will help pupils to progress more quickly.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum is good. It is well balanced and fits the needs of the pupils closely. Good support is provided for new pupils, whether it is extra help with maths and English, or more challenging work for the higher ability pupils. All pupils have the opportunity to learn two foreign languages. The amount of time provided for English and maths is good. In years 10 and 11 the school offers a good range of options, including vocational courses provided by nearby colleges. The improved attendance and progress on these courses indicate that pupils enjoy and benefit from them. There are some good examples of work-related learning in the curriculum and opportunities to take part in enterprise activities, although these areas need further development, so that all pupils can benefit. Effective collaboration with outside agencies helps pupils in their preparation for life after they leave school. Pupils are offered a wide variety of activities outside lessons, and opportunities are particularly good in the arts.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school is good. There are good procedures for identifying pupils who are at risk or in need of support. These pupils are helped through well-focused advice and guidance from a range of teachers and other adults. There are good relationships with other services outside the school, which contributes effectively to the school's ability to meet the needs of pupils. The school's Child Protection policy is clear, widely known by staff and used effectively. The school also has a high profile approach to dealing with bullying. Pupils are confident that they can report incidents and that they will be dealt with effectively. The process for ensuring that pupils transfer successfully from their primary schools is good. The decision to use one teacher with a small group of pupils in Year 7 has proved successful. Their confidence has grown and they make good progress. Pupils feel secure and confident because of the good relationships that they have with teachers and other adults. Teachers set clear expectations of behaviour, attendance and uniform which are consistently followed through. Pupils feel that they can talk to teachers and that they will be listened to. They are able to express views about the school and are consulted through a questionnaire. The school council discusses important issues and meets representatives of the governing body at least once a year.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. Her drive and commitment have been important elements in the improvements since the last inspection. The senior leadership team has recently been in a state of transition but is now in a position to move forward. There is a positive ethos across the school and a clear commitment towards improvement. The school has strong partnership arrangements that clearly benefit pupils, especially with local schools and colleges. A number of mechanisms have been developed to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. Some of these are effective but, as the school has recognised, some of them are not. There is a great deal of information available but the school has not always accurately identified key areas for development. In many respects, the school's evaluation of its progress is generous. Middle management is satisfactory, as curriculum leaders are accepting responsibility for the quality of teaching and learning within their departments. Curriculum leaders and their staff are not all fully familiar with relatively new checks used to determine the quality of teaching and other aspects of their work. As a result, the strength of subject leadership is mixed and there is not always a clear and precise view of what needs improving. Observations of lessons are not sufficiently robust. Governance is satisfactory. Governors perform most of their responsibilities efficiently. They keep themselves as well informed as possible but their role in challenging the school is limited partly by the scope and depth of the information they receive. Finances are managed very well.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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, your school was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. First of all, however, I would like to thank you all, on behalf of the inspection team, for your courtesy and cooperation during our visit. You were a great credit to the school. The inspection found a good deal that the school can be pleased about. The overwhelming majority of the pupils are happy to come to school, and your parents clearly think that the school has improved since it was last inspected. We agree with that view. There is a friendly, positive atmosphere. The performance of pupils in examinations has gone up considerably in recent years. Attendance at school and the behaviour of pupils have both improved. The facilities and the resources provided have also got better. The new arts block is excellent and will obviously be a centre for exciting work. There are many more opportunities for you now than there used to be. The choice of courses within the timetable is wider and the range of extra-curricular activities is good. The school is clearly on an upward trend, and the fact that it has recently become a specialist arts college is evidence of that. There are some aspects of the school's work that need to get better. At the moment, pupils are not making enough progress in two of the most important subjects: maths and English. We also believe that, although the quality of teaching you receive is satisfactory, more could be done to improve it. Teachers need to be very clear what they expect you to learn, and to find ways of checking whether you have all learnt it. You yourselves can make an important contribution here, by thinking about what you are learning and continuing to be positive and constructive in the classroom. The school uses surveys well, and we read about your own views carefully. The school is keen to consult pupils in other ways as well. In fact, there are many opportunities for you to contribute to the development of the school in the coming years. We are confident that the school can continue to improve and we wish you well for the future.