

Spring Vale Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104330
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	286911
Inspection dates	30 April –1 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Matthew West
Headteacher	Pauline Hill
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2002
School address	Kenilworth Crescent Parkfield Wolverhampton WV4 6SD
Telephone number	01902 556589
Fax number	01902 556590

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The majority of children enter school with attainment below that expected, particularly in language skills. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average. A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language and about 10% are at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average. A new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school in which pupils from a variety of backgrounds work harmoniously together and flourish. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One parental comment captures the views of many, 'I have always been impressed by the friendly, happy atmosphere in the school. My children love coming to school.'

Up to 2005, standards at the end of Year 6 were broadly average but then declined and were well below average in 2006. Senior staff identified that this resulted from the underachievement of pupils in Years 3 and 4. Decisive steps have been taken to successfully raise pupils' achievement in these classes. Changes to staffing and a rigorous training programme have improved teaching and learning and these are now good throughout the school. Procedures for assessing the progress of pupils have been strengthened so that any underachievement is identified early. Effective strategies are quickly put into place to provide extra support. A more rigorous approach has been taken to the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills, which the school's assessment data clearly show is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment in all classes.

As a result of these initiatives, pupils' achievement is good. Children get off to a good start and make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. They continue to make good progress until the end of Year 2 and this is now effectively built upon in Years 3 and 4. Consequently, teachers in Years 5 and 6 do not have to spend time helping pupils catch up on what they should have learned before. This is exemplified by the fact that assessment information shows that most pupils currently in Year 5 are on track to meet challenging targets and achieve above average standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to reach broadly average standards. Though progress in mathematics is good, achievement in this subject is slightly weaker than in English and science. This results from pupils not having enough opportunities to practise their basic numeracy skills in practical problem solving activities.

Pupils' personal development is good and most behave very well, being caring and considerate to others. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together in lessons to effectively meet the individual needs of pupils. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to extend their skills in writing and record their ideas in subjects across the curriculum. Relationships are very good and classrooms are happy and friendly places in which to learn. A wide range of extra-curricular activities and out of school clubs enriches the good curriculum effectively. Pupils say they especially enjoy their experiences on residential visits. Parents and pupils are appreciative of the good care, guidance and support that the school provides. As one pupil said, 'The building is secure and the teachers look after us.'

Good leadership and management are central to the improvements that have been made. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have quickly developed an effective working relationship and forged a strong determination amongst staff to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can. The school's recent track record shows there is good capacity for making further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their problem solving skills in mathematics.
- Boost writing skills by encouraging pupils to write at length in subjects other than English.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and pupils in Year 6 show standards that are broadly average. Progress in mathematics is slightly slower than in English and science. This is because there are not enough opportunities for pupils to refine their basic numeracy skills by being involved in problem solving activities across the curriculum. Children make a good start to their education in the Nursery class, with firm foundations laid for their future learning. By the end of the Reception Year, the majority of children are working within expected levels. Good progress is now maintained throughout the rest of the school, which is leading to improved attainment in each class, particularly in Years 3 and 4. The school's strategies to boost the learning of all pupils have been particularly successful in improving the achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils at an early stage of learning English also make good progress and achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say that they feel safe and secure within the school environment. They are clear that bullying is not an issue because all the adults who care for them look after them really well. At times a few pupils show challenging behaviour but staff manage this well to minimise any disruption to learning. Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development helps pupils to maintain positive relationships and to appreciate how they can make a positive contribution to the day-to-day running of the school. The school council members feel that they have made a real difference in improving how lunchtimes are run and the way pupils and adults care for each other. However, they lack the opportunity to share their own views on their learning and need to have greater say in curriculum development. Pupils make an effective contribution to the wider community with regular fund raising events and by helping to enhance the local environment. They have a good understanding of health related issues and of how to stay safe. Pupils show they are prepared well for life beyond school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan their lessons well with clear and precise learning objectives that are shared with pupils. Activities are carefully matched to the needs of the pupils. Good use is made of computers and interactive whiteboards to give pupils a clear idea of what they are going to learn and add interest to lessons. Extra support is targeted effectively to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Activities are adapted well to cater for the needs of those at an early stage of learning English so that they can participate fully in lessons. As a result, all pupils achieve well. At times, pupils are required to complete several worksheets as a way of recording their findings. This limits opportunities for them to make decisions about how to present their ideas and findings in subjects such as science. When pupils are given the opportunity to show initiative and take responsibility for their learning, they make very good progress. This was evident in an outstanding lesson in Year 6 in which pupils were learning to use decimals to solve real life money problems.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

In the Nursery and Reception classes the strong emphasis on developing children's personal and social skills enables them to quickly settle into everyday school routines and to make choices for themselves. A varied programme of visitors and visits to places of educational interest, such as the Toy Museum at Cannock, effectively extend the experiences available for pupils. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has been much improved since the last inspection and is now good. Because of this, pupils use their ICT skills well to enhance their work in other subjects. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop further their numeracy skills in problem solving activities. Also, opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English are limited. There are good links with other providers to extend pupils' learning. For example, a primary liaison teacher from the local secondary school comes in on a weekly basis to give extra support to extend the learning of more able pupils in mathematics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Child protection and risk assessments are thorough and effective procedures are in place to safeguard vulnerable pupils. Pupils feel well supported and are particularly positive about the 'worry boxes', which are used effectively to support them if they are upset, lonely or worried about any issues. The school has acted successfully to improve attendance and this is now satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are carefully supported, have pertinent targets for development and make good progress. Pupils at an early stage of learning English are provided with good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills and make good progress from their earliest days in school. There are good links with outside agencies to provide extra support for pupils who require it. Academic guidance has been improved over the past year and is good, enabling pupils to be set challenging targets to improve their performance. This is having a positive impact on their progress. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to evaluate for themselves how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve. This limits their effectiveness in taking on responsibility for their own learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's purposeful leadership provides a good model for others to follow. Senior leaders are not complacent after the improvements made in the last year. The monitoring of teaching and learning is being further refined to make clear to teachers they are accountable for the progress pupils make in their class. Training has been started to help staff involve pupils more effectively in mathematical problem solving activities. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and so the correct priorities for further development have been identified. As a result, some subject leaders are being given training to help them carry out their responsibilities more effectively. There are good links with others, such as learning support teams, to provide further support for pupils' learning. Governance is good. Governors are very supportive of the school and willing to ask relevant questions about the decisions made by senior leaders.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Springvale Primary School, Wolverhampton, WV4 6SD

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave us when we visited your school. You were so friendly and keen to tell us about what goes on in school. We really enjoyed our time with you and consider your school to be a good one.

Teaching is good, so you make good progress in your learning and reach average standards by the end of Year 6. Your personal development is good and nearly all of you behave well, although some of you say there are just a few who could behave better. You work well to make your local community a better place in which to live. You obviously enjoy school because your attendance rate has improved.

You told us you really enjoy the good curriculum, especially the out of school clubs and residential visits. We were really impressed by the artwork on display in corridors on the theme of Africa, especially all the animals. The school takes good care of you and you told us you feel safe and secure in school. The adults who are in charge of the school do a good job and are working to improve it all the time.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- Provide more opportunities for you to improve your skills in solving problems in mathematics.
- Encourage you to use your skills in writing more in subjects such as in history and geography.

Best wishes for the future and I hope you keep enjoying your learning.

Melvyn Hemmings Lead inspector