

Springdale Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104303
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	324012
Inspection dates	12–13 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Lois Furness

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 on roll	
School (total)	261
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fran Tarantonio
Headteacher	Janice Hopkins
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2005
School address	Warstones Drive Penn Wolverhampton WV4 4NJ
Telephone number	01902 558810
Fax number	01902 558812

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

In this large junior school there is a resource base for pupils with speech and language or communication difficulties and consequently there is an above average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs. Although the majority of pupils are White British, 13 different ethnic groups are represented in the school. However, there are no pupils at an early stage of learning English. There is an after-school club managed by a private provider, which provides childcare facilities for pupils of the junior and the on-site infant school.

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 provides a satisfactory quality of education. It is a happy and friendly place, providing pupils with a safe and caring environment. Parents are appreciative of the school's work and the approachability of staff. 'All staff will listen and try to help our children,' is a typical parental comment. Pupils also recognise this strength and those spoken to say, 'our teachers are kind and look after us'. Although pastoral care is good, academic guidance is not as strong, and care, guidance and support is therefore satisfactory overall.

The school has introduced new systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. Information from these, together with inspection evidence, indicates that pupils' achievement is satisfactory given their starting points. Standards by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are broadly average. Satisfactory teaching and learning enable pupils to progress at a steady rate. However, assessment information is not always accurate and the rigorous use of assessment information to plan the next steps in pupils' learning is inconsistent. This means activities do not always fully meet the range of pupils' needs, especially those of the more able. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall. Those pupils who work in the resource base make good progress, however, as a result of good quality targeted support.

The curriculum is satisfactory, although the good range of clubs and the many visits and visitors enhance pupils' experiences. Pupils have opportunities to visit the theatre, be involved in music workshops and productions, and to learn a modern foreign language. This makes a positive contribution to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' good personal development is reflected in the way they work happily together, behave well and are considerate to others. This results in very calm and friendly classrooms. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They willingly adopt a healthy lifestyle, understanding the need for regular exercise and a healthy diet. They are eager to help others, either through the school council or through collecting money for 'children in need', for example. Although pupils are sensible and are eager to work together, teachers do not always use a range of strategies to ensure all pupils are involved in lessons. At times, there is too much teacher control which limits pupils' independent learning skills.

The headteacher provides clear direction and through accurate self-evaluation has identified the right priorities for development. However, leadership and management are satisfactory overall, rather than good, as not all staff with leadership responsibilities have a shared understanding of what needs to be done to improve. Also, although a variety of actions is planned to improve provision, evaluation of the effect of the actions taken is not sharp enough. Governance is satisfactory but governors have not yet fully developed their role of 'critical friend'. Pupils benefit from the good partnerships with a range of outside agencies. The key issues from the previous inspection have been rectified satisfactorily, and the school's capacity to improve further is also satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure accurate assessment information is used rigorously so all pupils, especially the more able, make at least good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve teachers' skills in involving pupils in all parts of the lesson, and in encouraging them to become independent learners.

- Ensure all those with leadership responsibility, including governors, have a realistic view of provision, carefully checking the impact of actions for improvement against pupils' standards and their achievement.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils enter school in Year 3 with standards that are broadly average, although this can vary year on year depending on the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Although progress overall is satisfactory, in the past this has been uneven between year groups and different subjects. As a result of strategies implemented, however, this is improving, and now current assessment information indicates that more pupils are on target to attain the expected level for their age by the end of Year 6. Standards are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory. Even so, at present more able pupils do not consistently make the progress expected of them in English, mathematics and science. Although those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receiving targeted support in the resource base make good progress. Overall pupils make satisfactory progress including in, those in the resource base make good progress because of the good additional support that they receive. Pupils' satisfactory basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology prepare them adequately for the next stages in their education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Good relationships are evident throughout the school, and parents are appreciative of the good standards of behaviour. Pupils enjoy school and this is confirmed by their above average attendance. However, although pupils have positive attitudes to learning and readily engage in lessons, they do not often take initiative or think for themselves, for example by asking questions. Even so, all pupils enjoy talking about their work and the things they like such as drama week. They are respectful of others and speak positively about the diverse nature of pupils within the school. They say they are proud to live in Wolverhampton. They know how to keep safe; all pupils spoken to said they feel safe in school and teachers take good care of them. Pupils make a good contribution to their community. They are proud to be school councillors and willingly help others, as shown by the enthusiastic response to collecting money during Red Nose Day. They know the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and pupils participate in and enjoy a variety of sporting activities both in lessons and through a range of extra-curricular clubs.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, though good lessons were seen in each year group, during the inspection. Planning is detailed as teachers become accustomed to using the new national frameworks for literacy and numeracy. However, as pupils are grouped by ability for English and mathematics, teachers do not consistently plan activities matched to the range

of ability within the group, meaning work is too easy for some and too hard for others. Nevertheless, there is better practice in mathematics than in English, especially writing. In mathematics, pupils know what they are expected to learn and, in some instances, how to achieve success. Behaviour management is good, resulting in pupils wanting to learn and staying on task during independent activities. There are times when teachers encourage pupils to share ideas, discuss their work together and make suggestions; for example, discussing the best way to measure in a science experiment. However, this fostering of independence is not strong. At times the whole class spends too long listening to the teacher, and teachers do not use strategies to ensure pupils are actively involved in all parts of the lesson.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and satisfactorily contributes to pupils' progress and to their enjoyment of school. In order to boost pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, links between different subjects are being made, so pupils have more opportunities to practise these skills. The emphasis on linking sounds and letters and the implementation of the 'Big Write' are recent initiatives designed to enhance pupils' vocabulary and literacy skills. Good emphasis is given to developing pupils' personal development and the good programme for personal, social and health education ensures pupils understand the importance of staying safe and keeping healthy. The curriculum is enriched by an interesting range of clubs, visits and visitors. For example, Year 3 pupils spoke enthusiastically about the 'gorilla man' who visited them during science week. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive appropriate curricular support through individual learning plans. The curriculum for the resource base pupils is good as staff carefully plan work that is specifically matched to their learning needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Good levels of care and pastoral support are strengths which ensure pupils feel happy and safe and enjoy their education. Parents agree their children are safe and well cared for. Child protection procedures and arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. The school works effectively with a range of agencies to promote pupils' safety, health and well-being and good arrangements are in place to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress. However, as yet, assessments are not consistently accurate and information about pupils' prior knowledge is not used well enough to inform next steps of learning. Nevertheless, this use of information is improving, through the recently introduced systems to sharpen up the tracking of pupils' progress. Pupils are developing an improved awareness of what they need to achieve through the use of individual learning targets and through the feedback from teachers when marking books. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school satisfactorily seeks to engage parents in supporting their children's learning by providing information about their children's progress and their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership of the school has been effective in ensuring good quality care of pupils but knows that academic guidance is in need of improvement. This has resulted in improved tracking

and target setting systems, but it is too early to judge the full impact on standards and achievement, especially of the more able. The headteacher is very clear about strengths and weaknesses and self-evaluation is accurate, providing a realistic picture of provision. However, not everyone with leadership responsibility fully recognises what is working well and what must be improved. Also actions taken to resolve weaknesses are not evaluated rigorously enough by school leaders in terms of the effect on pupils' learning and progress. Governors support the school well, but their role of challenge is not fully developed. Leaders have a firm commitment to promoting cohesion with satisfactory levels of success in the school, local and national communities. Links with outside agencies including local secondary schools and the sports college are good, resulting in pupils benefiting from specialist teaching in mathematics, science and physical education.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	3

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

16 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Springdale Junior School, Penn, Wolverhampton, WV4 4NJ

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and would like to say a special thank you to the school council and the children who gave up their time to talk to us. Your school is a satisfactory one. It enables you to reach broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science and your achievement is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although we saw lots of good things happening when we visited your classrooms. The curriculum is satisfactory and there is a wide range of additional activities provided for you to help you enjoy school. We were very impressed with your good behaviour and the way you show care and consideration for others. Well done to the Year 4 class who performed their Red Nose Day assembly very well indeed. It was funny and interesting whilst giving us all a valuable message about the importance of team work and helping others. You have a good understanding of how to keep fit and stay healthy. Adults look after you well and we were pleased to know you feel safe in school. Your parents and carers also think you are happy, enjoy school and are cared for by all staff.

Your headteacher and staff are working hard and we have asked them to focus on three things to make the school better for you.

- Teachers need to be sure of exactly what you know already and need to learn next. This information could then be used carefully to plan work that helps all of you make good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- You need more opportunities to become more independent - this means more opportunities to ask questions and make suggestions, to work together and discuss ideas. We think it is important you have these chances throughout each lesson.
- Although your headteacher knows exactly what the school is doing well and the aspects needing improvement, we have asked that all governors and staff with leadership responsibilities are very clear about improvement points, take action and then check how the action has helped you to reach higher standards and make faster progress in your work.

We know your teachers are eager to make these improvements and you can help them by continuing to do the best you can.

Yours faithfully

Lois Furness

Lead inspector