

Springfield School

Central Road, Drayton, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO6 1QY

Inspection dates 14–15 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Students very much enjoy attending this happy and welcoming school in which the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong.
- Parents, carers and students express high levels of satisfaction with the school.
- Students make good progress in their learning. Their achievement in English and mathematics is a strength which prepares students well for the future.
- Teaching is typically good and sometimes outstanding. Very strong relationships between teachers and their classes enable students to become confident and keen learners.
- Behaviour in this school is outstanding. Students attend regularly and are mature, responsible and considerate to each other and to staff and visitors. They feel safe in their school.
- Leadership and management are a real strength of the school. The headteacher's strong and passionate leadership extends to all her teams and this has enabled the school to maintain its strengths since the previous inspection.
- Governors know the school exceptionally well and they challenge and support leaders to maintain high standards and make improvements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality and impact of written feedback to students does not always match the very best practice within the school.
- There are not enough opportunities in lessons for students to tackle open-ended tasks so that they are stretched to achieve their very best.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 46 lessons, some of which were observed with senior leaders, and also watched an assembly and visited tutor times.
- They held discussions with school leaders, governors and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors met with separate groups of students to listen to their views of the school and also talked to students around the school during breaks.
- A wide range of school documentation was read including the school’s own analysis of how well it is doing and the plans for improvement, monitoring documents, safeguarding records and governors’ minutes.
- Inspectors also examined a sample of students’ books.
- They considered a range of evidence from parents and carers, including 61 responses on Parent View, two letters and an email message.

Inspection team

Jacqueline Goodall, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Sean Thornton	Additional inspector
Helen Pennington	Additional inspector
Stephanie Matthews	Additional inspector
Carolyn Steer	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Springfield School is a larger than average size secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding) is well below the national average with most of these students being those entitled to free school meals. There were no students who were looked after by the local authority in Year 11 last year and there are few children from service families.
- Around 16% of students are disabled or have special educational needs and are supported at school action level, while just over 11% are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. Both of these proportions are above the national average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum levels expected for students' attainment and progress.
- A very small number of students attend a local further education college for one course.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding in all subjects by:
 - ensuring that teachers give students regular, high-quality written feedback so that students have a better understanding of how to improve their work
 - providing more opportunities in lessons for students to tackle more complex, open-ended tasks so that they can make greater progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school in Year 7 with broadly average starting points, apart from the current Year 11, who came to the school with slightly below average attainment.
- Students' results at the end of Year 11 are typically very good and most students progress well from when they joined the school. Achievement in English and mathematics is excellent due to the high priority given to these subjects by the school and the skills of the teachers.
- Students who have been identified by the school as having special educational needs also make good progress and achieve nearly as well as other students.
- Most students study their GCSE courses with success, although progress in some subjects, such as resistant materials, was not as good as last year, especially for boys. The school has reviewed the curriculum to adapt it to the changing needs of each year group and following this, has dropped the requirement for all students to study a technology course.
- A very small minority of students study a drama course at a local college and they achieve well in a safe environment.
- Those students who are given additional support through the pupil premium funding make good progress in English and mathematics. Last year, the average difference in achievement in English between those entitled to free school meals and those who were not was just under one GCSE grade. The difference for mathematics was just over one GCSE grade. For English, this represented an improvement from last year, while there was a slight increase in the gap for mathematics. Students from service families generally make similar progress to that of other students.
- The development of literacy skills throughout the school is strong in keeping with the high priority set on English. Good practice seen within the school will be featured in an Ofsted publication. The standard of handwriting and presentation skills, however, is not consistently high across the school, especially for boys.
- No students are entered for examinations earlier than the summer of Year 11.
- There are good opportunities for students to develop creative skills. Inspectors saw some excellent learning in a textiles lesson where students produced a range of high-quality products.
- Students are mature in their attitudes to learning and make the most of opportunities to improve and extend their learning. They enthusiastically participate in the rich and vibrant extra-curricular programme and in the well-designed 'Focus Days' and other additional curriculum activities.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across the school is typically good and there is some outstanding practice, especially in English, mathematics and humanities.
- Lessons are calm and purposeful. Students are motivated to learn and also trust and respond well to the high expectations of their teachers, because relationships are strong.
- Teachers focus sharply on enabling all students to learn key knowledge and to develop study skills. Activities are planned well so that the work set is at the right level for most students to make progress.
- Not all students, however, are making the progress of which they are capable, particularly the most able. This is because they are not given sufficient opportunities in lessons to plan and tackle more complex, open-ended investigations, so that they progress more rapidly.
- Students know their targets and are helped by their teachers to move on to the next level or grade. While some feedback in students' books is very detailed and helpful, for example in science and physical education, this is not the case for all subjects.

- Skilled teaching in English and literacy ensures that nearly all students, including those with special educational needs, can read and write well enough to make good progress in their other subjects.
- Students make rapid progress in information and communication technology lessons where teachers help them to learn how to use the technology available very skilfully and safely. Students use the virtual learning environment well, such as in Year 7 lessons, where students used special software to learn how to code.
- Students are helped to understand their world and to make the most of their lives. In geography, for example, inspectors saw Year 11 students studying the effect of earthquakes on human populations and Year 8 students gaining a good understanding of global warming.
- There are many opportunities for students to reflect and think about important issues. For example, they discuss sexual health matters maturely and are respectful to those of other cultures or faiths.
- The special activities arranged by the school to widen students' experiences are exceptional. Over 40 businesses support the school in a range of ways, including 'Dragon's Den' type challenges.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students in this school are very happy, mature and motivated. In all aspects of their behaviour, they give the message that they enjoy coming to school every day. This is reflected in their high levels of attendance.
- They know that everyone needs to behave well in lessons so that they can learn, and so they do. Their mature and confident approach to behaviour in lessons is a real strength of the school and contributes to their very good achievement.
- Around the school, students are courteous, kind and aware of the importance of their behaviour in a large community.
- The school has used interesting ways to encourage students to behave well. The 'Girls Answer Back' project was very successful in reducing conflict between student groups. The 'Prom Points' system to reward high levels of attendance and progress has been popular, as these represent a discount in their Year 11 prom tickets.
- The proportion of students excluded is low compared with the national average. When any bullying or other anti-social behaviour does rarely occur, students say that it is dealt with very well by the school and therefore students feel very safe.
- The very strong and respectful relationships within the school ensure that there is hardly any evidence of racial or other prejudice-based bullying and students know that the use of discriminatory or insulting language is unacceptable.
- The school has encouraged people from local businesses and industry to act as mentors for students. This has been very effective in raising aspirations, standards of behaviour and achievement for those students who benefit from the scheme.
- The school council has made a significant contribution to the standards of behaviour and safety within the school. For example, Year 9 students were set the task of improving the student toilets. They planned, designed and budgeted for the project and held discussions with the contractors. Following the improvements, the toilets have been kept clean and free of graffiti by students.
- Students, staff and parents and carers are very satisfied with the behaviour in this school and this extends to those students who attend off-site courses or other activities.
- In lessons, inspectors saw that teachers and students had a very high regard for safety, especially in science and technology lessons. Students very much enjoy practical work and being given responsibility to use equipment and machinery.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The very high standards in leadership and management have been set through the vision, direction, high expectations and dedication of the headteacher, who retires this term.
 - Since the last inspection, when the effectiveness of teaching and learning and standards were judged to be good rather than outstanding, senior leaders have increased and more rigorously developed the strength of middle leadership to focus more precisely on teaching core knowledge and skills. Teachers and leaders are robustly held to account for students' learning and achievement.
 - This drive for improvement has resulted in a notable rise in Year 11 GCSE results, particularly in respect of English and mathematics. While there is still some improvement to be made, records of lesson observations over time confirm that expectations and standards of teaching have risen considerably.
 - The drop in the GCSE levels achieved in a small number of subjects was caused mainly by the expectation on specialist schools to focus on their specialist subjects. School leaders have adjusted the curriculum away from this expectation, to allow students to study courses more in keeping with their interests and abilities.
 - Indications for GCSE achievement in 2013 are securely high, especially as this year group had lower prior attainment on entry to the school. This reflects the improving standards in teaching and changes made to the curriculum.
 - The headteacher, her senior and middle leadership teams and the governing body are very strong and skilled in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision. They have put carefully focused plans in place to ensure that there are equal opportunities for all students in all areas of provision.
 - Pupil premium funding is used very well to ensure that all students entitled to this funding make at least good progress in English and mathematics and also have access to the wide variety of activities on offer.
 - Keeping students safe is a high priority and all statutory arrangements for safeguarding and other key school aspects are in place.
 - The school has well organised and efficient arrangements for managing the performance of teachers. Teachers are rewarded for exceptional practice through accelerated progress on pay scales and where teaching is not yet good, programmes to improve teaching skills have been put in place. This is reflected in the stability of the loyal and dedicated team of staff and in the increasing levels of students' achievement.
 - The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of students is strong. Activities after school, Focus Days, visits and trips are exceptional and contribute much to the students' experiences and learning. Students told inspectors how much they enjoy practical activities, such as building a shelter out of wood and creating a book for a local special school.
 - Students experience a range of activities to prepare them for life in a multicultural society, such as the 'Step into My Shoes' project and links with schools in other countries, including Singapore and Africa.
 - The school has required no formal support from the local authority, although the Education Officer (School Improvement Advisor) is financed by the local authority.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body of this school is very experienced and has an excellent understanding of all aspects of the school. Governors enjoy challenging senior leaders and holding them to account to ensure that only the best will do for students. This includes keeping a close eye on the achievement of students with special educational needs and those whose support is funded through the pupil premium. Governors are experienced in managing the finances of
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the school to ensure that they contribute to students' achievement.

- Governors oversee the performance management system for teachers to make sure that standards of teaching are at least good. They ensure that every teacher has a target linked to key Teachers' Standards. They have a very clear understanding of how to link achievement data to standards of teaching and know how to make comparisons with achievement nationally. Governors also understand the need to remain well trained for their own roles and prepare themselves well.
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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

Unique reference number	116461
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	413315

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Derek Good
Headteacher	Lynn Evans
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2009
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