

Spring Grove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102500
Local Authority	Hounslow
Inspection number	308032
Inspection date	14 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Mike Thompson

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	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bill Blackledge
Headteacher	Ms Maureen Buckby
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2005
School address	Star Road Isleworth Middlesex TW7 4HB
Telephone number	020 8560 0965
Fax number	020 8758 1449

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Introduction

An Additional Inspector carried out the inspection. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- What does the school's tracking data show current progress and standards to be?
- To what extent has the wide range of planned improvements to the curriculum helped raise standards and increase rates of pupils' progress?
- How effective is the academic guidance provided for pupils?

The inspector gathered evidence from performance data, observations of teaching and the work produced by pupils. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, representatives of the governing body, and some members of staff also contributed to the judgements. The inspector did not investigate other aspects of the school's work in detail since there was no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These assessments have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

Spring Grove is an average sized primary school serving a culturally and socially diverse community. About three-quarters of its pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The largest of these, which comprises the pupils of Indian heritage, accounts for about a third of the number on roll. About a fifth of all pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is broadly average. The needs of these pupils are wide-ranging, and include behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, limited skills in speech language and communication, and specific learning difficulties such as physical disabilities. The school has a number of awards; most recently, these include the Activemark accreditation for its commitment to promoting physical exercise and school sport, the International Schools (Intermediate Level) Award and the Healthy Schools Award. The school has strong partnerships within an Education Action Zone (EAZ) of seven other primary schools and one secondary school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Spring Grove Primary provides a good education for its pupils. Its parents confirm this. Typical of the overwhelmingly positive comments received are, 'Spring Grove is a good school with a strong community feel. My children are secure and happy there' and 'I have nothing but praise for the headteacher and staff'. From broadly average starting points, pupils achieve well and make good progress overall. This occurs because teaching is good, and the pupils benefit from the wide range of activities that enrich the curriculum and receive good quality academic guidance. Pupils in the early stages of learning English, and those with LDD, often make particularly rapid progress. This occurs because their specific learning needs are carefully analysed and good quality help is readily available whenever they need it. For many years, standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 have been consistently above the national average. School assessment and test data relating to the current Year 6 show that this trend is likely to continue.

The driving force behind the school's success is the good quality of leadership. The headteacher gives outstanding direction for the work of the school. She receives excellent support from her deputy and the committed and highly professional staff and governors. Together, the team of staff and governors constantly looks for ways to improve even more. Currently, the team is focussing strongly on developing the curriculum across a range of subjects; this includes an emphasis on information and communication technology (ICT). The school has made good use of the EAZ partnership to help develop its ICT capability, and there are clear plans in place to ensure that the many benefits enjoyed by its pupils continue when the EAZ funding ends. However, despite significant on-going investment, there is still some way to go before the ratio of computers to pupils reaches the national average. Currently, this means that pupils do not yet have enough opportunities to use ICT as a daily, integral part of their learning. Discussions with pupils confirm this. They say that they do not always have time to complete their work, because they have to take turns using the machines in the ICT suite. In their classrooms, pupils also have limited opportunities to use ICT as a tool for learning in other subjects.

The school's ongoing commitment to developing the curriculum contributes to the pupils' good progress by increasing their motivation and enjoyment of learning. Older pupils listed the many special events planned by the teachers as amongst their favourite moments in school, saying, 'They give us opportunities to learn all sorts of new things'. For instance, a 'Sustainability Week' helped develop pupils' understanding of environmental issues and included a fashion show in which the pupils modelled garments they had made from recycled materials. The pupils also appreciate the enthusiastic involvement of all the staff in these special events. During the inspection the school effectively reinforced its message that 'Reading is Fundamental' by promoting the local library's holiday reading event. Both staff and pupils contributed to the enjoyment of the event by dressing as their favourite characters from books.

Many of the strengths in teaching, accurately identified by the headteacher, were evident during the inspection. For instance, teachers are good at providing activities that excite and interest their pupils, and have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. A good example of this was observed in a Year 2 lesson in which all pupils were expected to enliven their writing through the use of more adventurous adjectives, which they referred to as 'wow words'. The headteacher acknowledges that teaching varies in quality from satisfactory to outstanding, and is working hard to address inconsistencies in order to increase the proportion of excellent teaching.

A further factor contributing to the good progress made by pupils is the clear guidance they receive through teachers' marking of their work. In some instances, this is exemplary but, as in teaching, practice is variable. Consequently, pupils do not always benefit fully from the comments made about their work. For example, corrections are sometimes not completed by the pupils. The systems for setting targets for pupils to achieve are clear and well understood. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 particularly appreciate their individual 'progress meetings' with their teachers which give them a very clear view of precisely what they need to do next in order to improve.

The impact of the school's outstanding pastoral care is evident in the pupils' excellent personal development. Pupils relate very well to one another and to adults, and generally behave well. The average attendance rates do not reflect the pupils' outstanding attitudes towards their education. However, the success of the school's efforts to influence parents' attitudes and promote good attendance is evident in the steady, year-on-year decline in the rates of absences. The school's Activemark and Healthy Schools awards reflect effective provision to promote pupils' excellent awareness of healthy lifestyles. Pupils' knowledge of how to keep safe is outstanding. For example, they explained very clearly to the inspector the rules for using tools during design and technology sessions and the importance of safety in physical education lessons. Pupils are given an excellent grounding in good citizenship and in contributing to the community, through responsibilities such as being members of the school council.

The school is well placed to improve further through its strong commitment to continuous development, and has robust systems to help ensure that this happens.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The children get a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes and, by the time they move into Year 1, most achieve the goals expected at this age. Teaching reflects a secure understanding of how very young children learn. Teachers plan the activities well, and children have many opportunities to make choices and develop their social skills and confidence. The highly practical approach to learning, both indoors and out, effectively promotes all aspects of children's development. The involvement of adults in role play in the 'car repair workshop' in Reception and on a theme of 'travel' in the Nursery added greatly to the children's enjoyment. It also helped develop their skills in communicating and making simple mathematical calculations. The children's progress is very carefully monitored and assessed. However, the day-to-day assessments recorded are sometimes too descriptive and lack enough evaluative text. Consequently they are not as useful as they might be.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils have ready access to ICT resources and routinely use ICT as an integral part of their daily learning in all subjects.
- Improve the quality of the day-to-day assessments recorded in the Foundation Stage classes.

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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?	2
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

01 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Spring Grove Primary School, Middlesex, TW7 4HB

Thank you for being so helpful during the day I spent in your school. I particularly enjoyed your assembly and the very clever ways in which you and your teachers had transformed yourselves into characters from books.

I agree with your parents that you go to a good school. There is so much I like that I cannot mention everything, so here is a list of what I think are the most important things.

- You make good progress. By the time you leave at the end of Year 6, you are better at English, mathematics and science than pupils in most other schools. You should be very proud of all of this.
- You are friendly and welcoming, and your behaviour is usually good.
- You learn well because your lessons are often good and your teachers give you clear targets to achieve.
- Your teachers are good at planning lots of exciting and interesting things for you to do. They are particularly good at making learning fun.
- All of the adults in your school make sure that you are well looked after.
- The people who help run your school do a good job in making sure that you get a good education, especially your headteacher.

Even in a good school like yours, there is always something that could be better. I have suggested two things that I think will make a real difference.

- Your school wants to make sure that you have more computers so that you do not have to take turns in the ICT suite. I think that this is an excellent idea. I would particularly like your school to make sure that you use computers more often in your classrooms as well. I am sure that this will help you to learn even better.
- Your teachers in the Nursery and Reception classes are good at checking on how well you are doing in your work. I would like them to make these checks even better by writing down more precisely the things that you do well and those that you need some extra help with. This will make sure that you get exactly the help you need to become even better learners.

I am sure that you will continue to have great success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Thompson

Lead Inspector