

# Springfield School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116461
<b>Local Authority</b>	Portsmouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	326403
<b>Inspection date</b>	5 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Smith HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	1108
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr D Good
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs L Evans
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 May 2006
<b>School address</b>	Central Road Drayton Portsmouth PO6 1QY
<b>Telephone number</b>	02392 379 119
<b>Fax number</b>	02392 388 784

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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

The team evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how well high-attaining students are challenged and achieve; the impact of academic guidance in raising standards; and the impact of leadership and management, at all levels, in improving the quality of teaching and learning.

They gathered evidence from interviews with governors, a primary headteacher, staff and students; lesson observations; analysis of documentation; and observations of the school during the working day. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the team found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Springfield School is a large, oversubscribed comprehensive school. Most students are of White British heritage, with a small but increasing proportion from minority ethnic groups. Very few of these students, proportionally, are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has increased over the last few years and is now slightly above average. The school is a specialist Technology College and was designated as a Leading Edge School in April 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an excellent school which provides an outstanding standard of education. Students say it is a stunning place to be; one, reflecting the views of many, said, 'They treat you like adults, and so we act like adults.' This mutual respect and the very strong positive atmosphere and relationships permeate the whole school. This means that students' social and moral development is excellent. Inclusion is of the greatest importance, so that all students achieve very well irrespective of their starting points, which are broadly average. Standards are above average. In 2008, all students gained at least one GCSE pass, with nearly all gaining five or more passes at GCSE. Particularly impressive is that two thirds of students reached the benchmark of five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics. This demonstrates the very good progress that all students make, and is the result of the outstanding academic guidance they receive. Students know that if they start to fall behind with their work, or if they are starting to underachieve relative to their challenging targets, highly effective additional support is put in place. This includes very good use of both school and business mentors.

Highly effective leadership and management, at all levels, are very well supported by the governing body. Senior leaders are not complacent, and continuously monitor the quality of provision within the school. When an area is identified as not doing as well as expected, it is quickly rectified. For example, when the GCSE results in English dropped slightly in 2007, actions were quickly put in place, so that in 2008 English results were back to their usual high standard. The school records show that the proportion of students expected to gain the very highest grades has increased. This is because of some very focused support for these students and additional lessons. The school has a very comprehensive self-evaluation, and this is used to formulate an improvement plan which clearly identifies how the school is going to carry on improving. Governors are actively involved in all elements of school life. They are very supportive and hold the management to account. This demonstrates an excellent capacity to carry on improving. The highly effective headteacher gives a very clear steer as to how the school is to develop, and gives a strategic direction to developments over the next five years.

The curriculum provides very good opportunities for students. The very strong emphasis on both numeracy and literacy for lower-attaining students and those with learning difficulties has ensured that they are able to access other areas of the curriculum with greater confidence. All students follow an appropriate language GCSE or vocational qualification, and a significant proportion study separate sciences.

The school is an integral part of the local community and utilises its specialist status very well to develop community links. Students play a very active part within the school, where they are members of a highly influential school council and monitor the make-up of its membership to ensure that it is truly representative of the school population. They work well with local schools, where they act as junior sports leaders. They help local residents with information and communication technology within the cybercafand;acute;, and the refurbishment of a local underpass. These areas have been particularly well received by local elderly residents, whom the school has identified as forming a larger proportion of the local population than is normally found. Students have a very good cultural awareness, displaying an excellent understanding of different communities and cultures within Britain. Students also work closely with schools in Vietnam and China, where they gain a good overview of the international element of community. The school's outstanding reputation for working with the business community makes it one of only 12 schools nationally being sought to work with a national utilities company.

A manager has been appointed to coordinate community cohesion within the area, and the governors closely monitor the way in which the school helps and supports the local community and evaluates its impact.

The school ensures that students know how to keep fit, and puts in place highly effective systems so that students can get support if in need. As a result, students keep themselves fit and safe. Students say very few smoke, and support is available to give up for those who do. Students take part in a wide variety of sporting clubs. Support is available for any medical issues, including sexual health, and the school ensures that suitable counselling is available for students who are under stress with examinations or other issues. This counselling is also available for parents if required.

A combination of excellent academic guidance along with good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching, ensures that students make excellent progress. Teaching has improved through very good support from both leading and advanced skills teachers. Lessons are well planned, with a good variety of activities. Relationships between staff and students are excellent, which results in exemplary behaviour. Many lessons show very good assessment, particularly by the highly effective use of targeted questioning, and also some very good peer- and self-assessment. Electronic boards are used very well in some lessons, especially when their interactive and dynamic nature is used to stimulate discussion or to demonstrate a specific teaching point. When teaching is good, rather than outstanding, it is often because students are not as actively engaged in their learning. This is sometimes because lessons lack opportunities for students to work independently, and also because the available electronic boards are only used to project work and are not used well to engage learners.

Students enjoy school, and this was confirmed by very supportive responses by parents in the returned questionnaires, and also by the comments made by students within school. As one parent wrote, reflecting the views of many, 'Our son loves school - he enjoys hands-on lessons mostly, and thrives on a challenge.' Students relish the challenges in lessons and understand fully the benefits of education for their own sake. Attendance is very high. Very good support is in place for when students arrive at the school, when they choose their subjects in Key Stage 4, and when they transfer to college or the world of work. Students are very well prepared for their futures by ensuring very high standards in the key skills and also a very good understanding of what is needed in the work place. This is evident from the very low numbers of students who leave school without going on to further education, employment or training.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by making better use of the available technologies and providing greater opportunities for students to be actively involved in their learning by working independently.

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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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

**Achievement and standards**

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

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

17 March 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Springfield School, Portsmouth, PO6 1QY

I visited your school recently with my colleagues; we met some of you at lunchtime, and talked to others during lessons and at break. We were very impressed with your friendliness and helpfulness, and how proud you are of your school. We agree fully with those of you who told us you attend a stunning school, which we judge as outstanding. The work you do in the cybercafand;eacute; and with the local community, along with your understanding of different cultures in Britain and Asia, means that you make an excellent contribution to the local community and beyond.

Staff care for you excellently, and you are very well prepared for each stage of your education, including for college or the world of work. Many of you benefit from a large variety of additional support, including after-school and holiday lessons.

Standards are high, and many of you achieve exceptionally well in your GCSE examinations. This is shown by the extremely high proportion of you who gain five or more GCSEs passes, and also by how many of you gain five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, including mathematics and English. You enjoy some good and often excellent lessons, and a curriculum that lets you follow a wide variety of courses. We observed some good teaching, but feel that lessons could engage you more by giving you more opportunities for working independently, and could also make better use of the electronic boards.

You know how to stay healthy, and you have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and of the dangers that you meet when out of school. The school provides a great deal of support, including suitable counselling when life becomes stressful.

Your headteacher and the senior management team are very determined that you will all do as well as possible. They are well supported by the governors. Together, they are constantly monitoring the work of the school to identify what can be improved further.

I wish you well in this excellent school, which many of you told us was very supportive. As one of you said, 'They treat you like adults, and so we act like adults.'

Thank you again for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully

Michael Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector