Inspection of Springmead Primary School

Hillyfields, Welwyn Garden City AL7 2HB

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 July 2022

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Springmead Primary School access a well-designed curriculum. Many pupils talk at length about their learning. Pupils enjoy having their knowledge checked. They relish the challenge of teachers asking probing questions. Pupils respond well to the established high expectations. As a result, most pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Pupils live out the school's values of being brave, reflective and part of a team. They demonstrate what these mean in their day-to-day school life. Pupils show sensitivity and listen well to others.

A range of opportunities support pupils to become responsible members of the school community. For example, older pupils are reading buddies for the children in early years. The class ambassadors help organise whole-school challenges, such as pupils applying their learning by speaking French in the corridors.

Pupils are safe. On occasion, bullying is known to happen, but it is dealt with well by staff. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and are aware of the consequences when they do not make the right choices.

Pupils attend school trips regularly and listen to visitors, which complements their learning and broadens their experiences, for example by visiting a synagogue and a zoo.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have designed a curriculum that clearly maps out what pupils need to know and when. The content ensures that pupils build on what they already have learned. Staff understand what they need to do to ensure that pupils achieve well.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and use careful questioning to check what pupils have remembered during lessons. However, the way in which teachers check pupils' knowledge after a series of lessons does not always inform their teaching as well. This means that in some areas of the curriculum, over time, pupils forget the ideas and vocabulary taught in lessons. Leaders recognise this, but their plans to address it are yet to take effect.

Reading has a high priority. Most pupils read well for their age. The books pupils read are usually well matched to their reading knowledge. Effective training supports staff to teach phonics well. The focus on extending pupils' vocabulary through reading is having a positive impact on pupils' writing. There are a small number of pupils who have been correctly identified as needing additional catch-up sessions with reading. However, some aspects of the support do not ensure that pupils catch up quickly enough. For example, some tasks are not aimed at practising the sounds pupils do not know. This results in gaps in pupils' reading knowledge and fluency

continuing, which impacts on how well these pupils access the rest of the curriculum.

Leaders know the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Pupils' needs are identified swiftly, and support plans are in place. Pupils with SEND access the curriculum and wider school events alongside their peers. However, some of the pupils with SEND are those receiving catch-up support for reading, and this does impact on how well they achieve throughout the curriculum.

Reception children are being well prepared for Year 1. Staff teach concepts clearly and with an engaging style that encourages children's curiosity and independent learning. For example, children know the features of a town. They demonstrate this through model-making and writing about local visits to the town. This links well with the geography curriculum in Year 1, where pupils compare more features of the local area. Children take responsibility and show respect for their environment, for example by showing their friends how to tidy the resources away.

Pupils behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful and kind. Routines are well established, and the behaviour policy is understood by all and consistently applied. Leaders' work with outside agencies to help pupils access strategies to improve their behaviour is effective, for example through art therapy or nurture groups.

Through the personal, social and health education curriculum, pupils learn about healthy relationships and the benefits of an active lifestyle. Staff refer to this as part of the life skills curriculum. This introduces pupils to topics that pupils can relate to their own experiences and use to make links with broader concepts they will need to learn for their adult life. For example, in mathematics, Year 6 pupils learn about the world of work, including taxes and national insurance payments.

Through their own checking, governors are clear about the strengths and weaknesses in the school. Governors' relevant experience and expertise help them to carry out their statutory duties well. Trust leaders oversee this work effectively, holding governors and school leaders to account, where needed. Over time, support from the trust has reduced. School leaders and governors have worked well together to effect change in school and consider staff well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have robust procedures in place for reporting and responding to safeguarding concerns. Leaders are persistent in accessing support for pupils to be kept safe. Leaders work with outside agencies to keep pupils from harm.

Staff have received up-to-date training and are aware of local concerns to look out for, such as domestic violence, extremism and county lines.

Pupils learn about online safety and respectful relationships. The planned curriculum is reinforced through assemblies, outside speakers and circle time, when pupils debate and discuss ideas. Pupils use the 'things I want my teacher to know' box if they have any worries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The way in which teachers check pupils' knowledge at the end of a sequence of lessons lacks precision in some areas of the curriculum. This means that some pupils find it difficult to remember what they have learned, and teachers are not always aware of what knowledge pupils have remembered. Leaders must review their assessment systems, ensuring that teachers know how to use these to identify and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- Some of the catch-up support for pupils with SEND does not quickly address pupils' difficulties with reading and writing. This happens when work is not precisely focused on using sounds to build words linked to their gaps in phonics. As a result, some pupils with SEND are not having enough opportunities to practise and rehearse to become fluent readers. Leaders must train staff to arrange appropriate catch-up support, and they must monitor this carefully to ensure that it works well.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use Ofsted Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further guidance on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can complain to Ofsted.

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	145409
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10238311
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	299
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Professor Andrew Mayo
Headteacher	Karen Cayford
Website	www.springmead.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school has been part of the Spiral Partnership Multi Academy Trust since 2018.
- There is a breakfast and after-school club managed by the trust that pupils from the school can attend.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior teachers, subject leaders, staff and pupils. They also met with the chair of governors, three other members of the governing board and the joint chief executive officers for the trust.

- Deep dives were carried out in early reading, mathematics, science, French and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with the subject leader, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, talked to pupils about their learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke to teaching staff.
- As part of the evaluation of the school's safeguarding processes, inspectors reviewed the school's single central record, met with the safeguarding lead and looked at case files.
- Inspectors also reviewed a range of documentation, including behaviour logs, minutes of governing body meetings, governor and trust visit notes, school improvement plans and school policies.
- There were 112 responses to Ofsted Parent View, which were considered by inspectors alongside 112 free-text responses. The inspectors also reviewed 28 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the Ofsted pupil survey.

Inspection team

Isabel Davis, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Hemmings	Her Majesty's Inspector
Susan Sutton	Ofsted Inspector

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