

Spaldwick Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110690
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	337549
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Faysal Mikdadi

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Mellish
Headteacher	Rachel Prior
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at data, external evaluation reports and 76 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- attainment and progress especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the effectiveness of strategies put in place to enhance boys' writing skills and girls' mathematical skills
- the impact of leadership at all levels on improving provision.

Information about the school

Spaldwick is a small primary school. The school has a very small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. There is a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and this figure is rising because of parental preference for this school. About a quarter of the school population joined the school at different times in their school career.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Spaldwick is a warm, happy, busy school that provides an outstanding education for its pupils and makes an excellent contribution to its community. Pupils, teachers, parents and governors all speak highly of the headteacher's contribution to the way that their school has improved over the last three years. She has empowered colleagues to take responsibility for areas of the school's work and helped them to make a success of their work in a way that has had a remarkable effect on standards. Leaders rigorously monitor each pupil's progress and set ambitious targets which are regularly reviewed, and, where needed, amended according to the pupil's development. The result has been classroom teachers who understand data and use them productively to improve standards further. The school has an outstanding capacity for improvement. The headteacher is successfully aided and supported by the deputy head and an effective governing body, increasingly involved in the school's work. Pupils speak positively of their teachers. One typical comment made was, 'Teachers are kind, caring and let you say what you want'. Pupils feel valued and appreciate the many opportunities made available to them to take on responsibilities. The school, working closely with parents, has high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond very well.

There has been an upward trend in attainment and progress. The 2009 Key Stage 2 test results were high with every pupil attaining the expected levels in reading and science, which is significantly higher than the national average. Almost every pupil attained the level expected in mathematics. Although well above the national average, writing skills were relatively lower than other areas with boys doing less well than girls. Key Stage 1 results in 2009 were above the national average, continuing the upward trend. Girls did less well than boys in mathematics although these results were also well above the national average. The school has introduced a system of close monitoring, targeted support and intervention. All three are having a positive impact, especially on boys' writing. When children join the Reception class their prior attainment in language skills is below average. Attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been average over the last two years. Standards seen during the inspection indicate that attainment is currently above expectations and rising. It is particularly high in personal, social and emotional development but less so in the development of writing skills.

As almost all parents and pupils acknowledged, the quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers successfully focus on skills which pupils are then easily able to transfer from subject to subject. A main strand running through lessons is making

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learning enjoyable.

The school works hard to maintain contacts with parents which help pupils transfer in and out of the school. One parent, typical of a number of others, described how her son's transfer into the school was thoroughly 'painless – indeed enjoyable' and how he quickly 'settled down and thrived'. Spaldwick is a cohesive community where all feel that they belong and have a stake in all aspects of their school. Being an all white area, there are few opportunities for pupils to get acquainted with British cultural diversity although the school provides some opportunities to raise their awareness.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards further in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that they equate with the excellence evident in the main school by:
 - enhancing standards in writing
 - increasing the support available to parents to help them with children's learning.

- Ensure that pupils have more opportunities to learn about British cultural diversity by:
 - creating links with culturally diverse British schools
 - creating links with similar schools overseas
 - inviting members of the minority ethnic groups into the school
 - ensuring that curriculum planning includes, where possible, references to examples of cultural diversity.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Evidence gathered from observing lessons and scrutinising pupils' work during the inspection showed that pupils in the main school make outstanding progress and those in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. End of key stage attainment has been consistently well above average in Key Stage 1 and high in Key Stage 2. Over the last two years, attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been average, though current standards are above average and improving. Writing skills are slower to develop than personal and social skills. In Years 3 to 6, boys' writing skills lag behind those of the girls' as is the case nationally. The school has started a reading and writing programme for boys which has successfully led to enhancing writing skills using computers. In Years 1 and 2, girls' mathematical attainment also reflects the national trend of being behind that of the boys. Good leadership and the contribution of effective teaching have begun to improve girls' numeracy skills. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make equally outstanding progress to their peers.

Behaviour seen in lessons and around the school was never less than outstanding. Pupils are calm, courteous, pleasant and communicative. They take particular pride

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in their school and this shows in the way that they care for its fabric and for resources. There are no recorded incidents of racial bullying or any other form of bullying. Pupils understand health-related issues and speak confidently about what to do to maintain good health. They feel safe. They love taking on responsibility around the school whether it is in the school council, affectionately called ‘the Hooting Parliament’ by the pupils, or many other opportunities. They feel that they are taken seriously, listened to and so respond accordingly in a mature and positive way. They do a great deal to raise funds for charities. Pupils’ good command of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) prepares them outstandingly well for the next stage of their education. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and well promoted by all aspects of the school’s work. There are insufficient ready opportunities to raise awareness of a culturally diverse society.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	2
Pupils’ attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	1
Pupils’ attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

All lessons seen were good and half were outstanding. Teachers successfully keep pupils on task and interested through varying activities and through ensuring that tasks match the different abilities. They always make it absolutely clear what they expect their pupils to learn during the lesson and then regularly check on understanding and gauge progress. Excellent questioning strategies allow pupils to respond in some detail and with confidence. Marking is up to date and assessment helps pupils understand what they need to do next to improve their work further.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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Teachers' expectations of continued improvement are consistently high, with pupils responding positively.

The curriculum fully meets all the pupils' needs. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is increasing because of parental preference for sending their children to this school. In response, leaders have put in place a sufficiently flexible curriculum to cater for all differing needs including successfully setting work specifically targeted at helping pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The successful curriculum is supplemented by a rich variety of activities, including a combination of creative, sporting, cultural, intellectual and social opportunities with the overwhelming majority of pupils taking part. These activities also encourage pupils to work independently and collaboratively.

Pupils speak highly of the way that they are cared for and guided. They feel that teachers are helpful and that this helps to improve standards. They also appreciate the many opportunities to develop their independence. When they reach Year 6, they get excellent support in preparing them for the next phase of their education. The school also helps those in the adjacent playgroup by providing a smooth transition into the Reception class. The school's personal development programme has successfully helped produce responsible pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Strong, empowering and approachable leadership by the headteacher and her deputy, with a strong focus on enhancing teaching, learning and standards, has led to a situation where attainment is high and progress is outstanding. Self evaluation is rigorous and clearly leads to continuous improvement. The governing body knows the school well. Members work closely with the headteacher to maintain an ambitious and well understood strategic vision for the school. Over the last year, governors have also begun to take on a more active role in monitoring learning. There are excellent procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe, secure and well protected. Leadership has been successful in setting apt priorities and in ensuring outstanding value for money.

Leadership has created a highly cohesive community with pupils being given a full understanding of how to maintain their united community. Surveys are regularly

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carried out in the community and the school uses the results to maintain a strong impact on its local community. Teachers know the religious, ethnic and home backgrounds of their pupils and use these effectively to build on the school's strong community.

There are extensive partnerships which are effectively used to enhance pupils' learning. Parents are successfully involved in their children's learning and the increasing use of ICT has opened further opportunities for speedy and effective communication. Leadership is keen on ensuring equality of access and has successfully ensured that each pupil has many opportunities to achieve. Pupils are taught mutual respect and consideration. There are also some opportunities to enhance their understanding of a culturally diverse society. Planning is excellent, with regular opportunities for monitoring and revising plans in order to evaluate outcomes. This is a self evaluating school that clearly knows its strengths and weaknesses and that quietly gets on with its highly successful job of providing an outstanding education. This is done with considerable humility which accounts for the school evaluating itself as largely good with outstanding features. This was also done in order to 'leave room for improvement' within a context of high aspirations for all.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Over the last two years attainment has been in line with what would be expected nationally. Standards seen during the inspection were above national expectations which is the result of a recent drive to enhance standards. This is particularly so in the children's personal and social development including speaking and listening.

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Children’s writing skills are average and measures are in place to improve them further. Teaching seen was never less than good with children cheerfully on task. Teachers and other adults use questioning effectively to encourage and challenge children in successfully completing tasks set. There is real enjoyment in learning through play as well as in the more formal sessions.

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. It has clearly had a positive impact on improving standards in recent months. It has also made the best use of the outdoor area despite its relatively small size. Detailed records are carefully kept which allow for tracking of progress on a regular basis. The result has been a clear understanding of what each child is capable of doing and what s/he needs to do next to improve further. Links with parents are good and the school is aware that these need to be extended even further in order to ensure that all parents help with their children’s learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Almost every single parental survey return was positive. Parents who wrote in had nothing but positive comments to make about the school. The following was a typical comment: ‘A fantastic school in which my child has thrived.’ Parents felt that their children were ‘valued’ and successfully encouraged ‘to reach their potential’. A very small number felt that the school could do more to listen to them or to help them to support their children’s learning at home. The school is already working closely with parents, particularly of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspection findings do not support the other very small number of concerns expressed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at the Spaldwick Community Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 76 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 186 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	67	24	32	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	74	19	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	44	58	29	38	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	66	23	30	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	67	24	32	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	47	62	23	30	5	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	64	25	33	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	49	64	23	30	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	48	63	27	36	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	59	26	34	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	50	31	41	4	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	50	66	24	32	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	54	71	21	28	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.



18 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Spaldwick Community Primary School, Spaldwick, PE28 0TH

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome when we inspected your school. We were grateful to you for the way that you answered our questions and told us about so many things that you do. I am happy to tell you what we thought about your school.

Spaldwick is an excellent school. Your teachers do an outstanding job in helping you to learn and to succeed. You are excellent learners. Your school has a lot of strengths. We were impressed by the many enjoyable and exciting things that you could do in lessons and around the school. You also have really good opportunities to take on responsibilities. We could see that you have an excellent understanding of how to be and how to remain healthy. We know that you feel safe in the school and that you do a lot for your community. We agree with you that your teachers and other adults take excellent care of you. Your headteacher is outstanding and she is well supported by the governors, staff, your parents and by you.

To support your school in staying excellent, we have asked the headteacher to make sure that:

- all the children in the Reception Class do as well as those in the rest of the school
- you are given as many chances as possible to learn about other peoples and other cultures in Britain.

You can help by continuing to do your best in every lesson so that all of you carry on being as successful as you have been so far.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Faysal Mikdadi
Lead Inspector

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