

Inspection of Spring Meadow Infant School

High Barns, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 4RB

Inspection dates: 3–4 March 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to attend Spring Meadow Infant School. Pupils, parents and staff appreciate that it is a safe, nurturing place with a strong sense of community. Pupils have exciting opportunities to help them learn about their city of Ely and take part in community events. They read widely from the well-stocked library. They talk enthusiastically about their favourite books and authors. However, the curriculum and the teaching are not supporting pupils to achieve as well as they can.

Pupils get along well during lessons and at breaktimes. They are mostly kind to each other and teachers sort out any worries quickly. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They enjoy sport and after-school clubs, such as cookery, street dance and choir. Pupils enjoy their extra responsibilities. For example, the school council has done some research to find ways to help support classmates with disabilities.

Pupils are considerate of others' needs. They understand and respect each other's differences. They recognise that some classmates need extra support because they can sometimes find school difficult.

The school's assessment unit offers strong provision for pupils with complex needs. Leaders' precise identification of both needs and support helps the pupils achieve as well as they can.

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

Changes within the local community have meant that pupil numbers are on the decline. This has had repercussions on staffing. Uncertainty within the school workforce has meant that staff confidence has been low. The headteacher's shared vision has helped to improve this. She has provided appropriate training and support, which are valued by the majority of staff. The headteacher and governors have an accurate view of where the school is on its journey. Together, they demonstrate a strong capacity to raise standards. Parents are very supportive of school leaders. Parents engage well with staff and value opportunities to be involved in their children's learning.

Curriculum plans do not yet fully reflect leaders' high expectations for what pupils know and can do. The headteacher has restructured the teaching team. This has meant that some middle leaders are new in post. Curriculum plans for some subjects are in the early stages. For reading, phonics and mathematics, there is a clear structure that is mostly implemented well. This is not the case in some other subjects.

In key stage 1, reading books are well matched to pupils' phonic skills. The teaching of reading is well structured, and pupils develop effective comprehension skills. By the end of Year 2, almost all pupils can read fluently and with expression. Children in the Reception Year learn very quickly how to write words by applying their phonic

skills. However, across the school, pupils do not develop their writing skills as quickly as they should. In some subjects, such as writing, presentation is weak.

In writing, leaders have not ensured that teachers' assessment of pupils' learning supports individual needs. This is particularly the case for pupils who already have strong skills and abilities for their age. Teachers have not considered what these pupils already know. Teachers are not considering precisely enough what pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) need to do next. This is preventing them from achieving as well as they should.

Leaders identified that pupils were becoming confused between different concepts. This was because teachers were not planning to deepen pupils' learning well enough so that they develop understanding and retain knowledge. Some curriculum leaders do not know how well their subjects are being taught. They do not know well enough whether pupils are learning more or remembering more over time.

Children skip enthusiastically into the Nursery and Reception Years at the start of the day. Children fully engage with the activities in the well-resourced classrooms. The school's values help pupils to be kind, brave and curious. From the Nursery Year to Year 2, pupils develop skills to work independently or within groups. Pupils are articulate and reflective, and can say what they find difficult in their learning.

School trips, for example to London and the zoo, are used well to enhance pupils' learning and introduce new topics. Pupils talk proudly about Ely Cathedral and their local community. They can discuss different faiths and are keen to share their learning and talk about the different people who visit.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that pupils' welfare is given a high priority. Leaders carry out all checks on staff to make sure that they are suitable to work with children. Staff receive regular safeguarding training. They are aware of the signs that pupils may be at risk of harm and they report any concerns to leaders. Pupils have an appropriate awareness for their age about the potential dangers when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all curriculum subjects are sufficiently developed. This is preventing pupils from receiving a good-quality curriculum that helps them develop their understanding of the world around them.
- Teachers are not using what they know about pupils' learning to plan activities that will develop learning further. This means that pupils who have skills and

knowledge above the curriculum on offer are not having their needs met well enough. Teachers across the school must ensure that they are building on what pupils already know.

- Pupils' writing across the school is not well enough developed. Some pupils' work does not reflect what they are capable of. Leaders need to ensure that the writing curriculum builds on what pupils already know so that pupils can achieve as well as they are able to.
- Leaders of some subjects are new in post. They do not know whether pupils are achieving well enough through the curriculum. They need to ensure that their monitoring is rigorous so that they can hold teachers to account more precisely for the quality of teaching and learning.
- In some subjects and year groups, pupils are not encouraged to take pride in their work. Leaders need to ensure that there is a consistency in the presentation of pupils' work across the school.
- With the exception of those in the assessment unit, pupils with SEND are not achieving as well as they should. Targets to improve are not clear and therefore learning is hindered. Teachers need to draw on the good practice and expertise from adults working in the assessment unit to make sure that pupils in classes receive their full curriculum entitlement.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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	110760
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10121351
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	250
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Michele Gemelos and Leigh Garland (co-chairs)
Headteacher	Annette Blewett
Website	www.springmeadowschool.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Pupil numbers have fallen significantly since the previous inspection.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for up to 10 pupils with SEND, with a range of complex needs.

Information about this inspection

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

- During the inspection, we met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and teachers from all year groups. We also spoke to several groups of pupils to talk about their learning across the curriculum. We met with three members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- We did deep dives in the following subjects: reading, writing, mathematics, geography, science and physical education. We spoke to leaders of these subjects. We visited lessons, spoke with pupils and teachers, listened to pupils

read, and looked at pupils' work and documentation to understand the quality of education.

- We looked at the school systems and processes for checking adults' suitability to work with children. We spoke with teachers, staff and pupils to check safeguarding arrangements.
- We considered the 72 parent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 49 responses to Ofsted's free-text survey and 26 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff. We spoke with staff and pupils to gain their views of the school. We also spoke with parents on the playground at the beginning of the day.

Inspection team

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