

Springwell Community College

Middlecroft Road, Staveley, Chesterfield S43 3NQ

Inspection dates

26–27 April 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- In recent years, the attainment and progress of pupils in a number of subjects have been too low from their relative starting points.
- Checks made on the performance of pupils and groups of pupils are not carried out frequently enough and the response to the information gathered is too slow. Leaders do not know whether work they are doing to improve outcomes is having an impact.
- Leaders are generous in their evaluations of the quality of teaching. They are not always clear about what teachers need to do to improve.
- On occasions, pupils lose their focus in lessons or engage in low-level disruption. This happens when the lessons are not interesting enough to hold pupils' attention.
- The quality of teaching is too variable. Not enough teaching meets the needs of different groups of pupils because not all teachers use the school's assessment policy consistently.
- The school's marking policy is not applied well enough by all teachers. Pupils are not always expected to act on advice given to them about how to improve their work.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do, especially the most-able pupils, are not always high enough; consequently, pupils are not challenged to achieve as well as they could.
- Too often, teachers do not ask searching questions of pupils about their learning so that they deepen pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils attend well and are punctual to school and to lessons.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- Processes to keep pupils safe at school are good. Pupils feel safe and are kept safe in school.
- Governors know the school well and are committed to working to improve pupils' outcomes.
- The information, advice and guidance given to pupils are effective in helping them make decisions as to their next steps in education and employment.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities that broaden pupils' experiences.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the effectiveness of leaders and managers in improving the attainment and progress of pupils by ensuring that:
 - there are more frequent checks on pupils' performance and that the information obtained is analysed and acted on more quickly
 - they monitor the performance of different groups of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability, more rigorously so that they know the impact of any extra help provided for them
 - they rigorously and accurately check the quality of teaching more frequently and, where it is not good enough, they are clear about the improvements that need to be made.

- Improve the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by making sure that:
 - all teachers make effective use of the assessment information that they now have to plan lessons that fully meet the needs of all groups of pupils
 - the school's marking policy is consistently and rigorously applied so that pupils know how to improve their work
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of all pupils, especially the most able, both in lessons and in the work that pupils produce
 - all teachers question pupils effectively to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding
 - all lessons are interesting and hold pupils' attention so that they do not engage in any off-task behaviour.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Although leaders want the best for the school and communicate high aspirations, they have not made sure that necessary improvements in the quality of teaching have been made rapidly. The quality of teaching is too variable. Leaders are over generous in their evaluations of teaching and are not always clear about what teachers need to do to improve. The performance of teachers is not checked often enough.
- Leaders are now collecting a range of performance information about how well pupils and groups of pupils are doing in their subjects but they are not collecting it often enough. The analysis of the information has not been thorough or acted on quickly enough to ensure that individual pupils and groups of pupils do not fall behind their peers.
- In recent years, the predictions about pupils' attainment and progress have not been accurate. Leaders have now implemented much more rigorous systems for checking on the accuracy of the school's performance information, including working with other schools and examination boards. They are now much more confident of its accuracy, which is supported by senior personnel from the local authority.
- A number of leaders of subjects are relatively new to their posts. They have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, including monitoring the quality of teaching and progress of pupils in their subjects. The leaders who have been in post the longest are starting to have an impact on improving teaching and outcomes for pupils in their subjects. This is the case in English and mathematics.
- The school uses additional funding provided to support pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and offers a range of extra activities and support for them. Teachers are given extra time during the school day so that they can focus on the progress of these pupils. The school's evaluation of the impact of the spending of this funding requires significant improvement. A recent external review shows that outcomes are improving and gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are narrowing over time, but school leaders are unable to articulate this.
- The additional funding used to help Year 7 pupils who did not achieve a Level 4 in reading or mathematics at the end of key stage 2 has been spent on extra help for these pupils. There has been some improvement in their skills in English and mathematics as a result.
- The curriculum is planned well to meet the needs of all pupils and the school has responded well to government changes to the national curriculum. Leaders have developed clear assessment systems to work alongside the new content and revised expectations in subjects. In individual lessons, however, there are still occasions where teachers' planning does not meet individual pupils' needs.
- Performance management of teachers has been strengthened and is now being used to good effect, with targets being explicitly linked to pupils' performance with a particular and appropriate focus on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- The curriculum is making a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly through religious education and personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils are being well prepared for life in modern Britain. They are provided with opportunities to learn about other faiths and cultures through their lessons in school and on trips and visits outside school.
- There is a rich and varied range of activities running outside the school day and these are well attended. They include clubs, trips and visits which enhance pupils' personal development and cultural understanding.
- The school has good systems in place to monitor attendance and staff intervene quickly when pupils' attendance drops. As a result, attendance has improved and is above the national average.
- The school makes efforts to ensure that parents and carers are kept fully informed about their child's progress and there are several opportunities over the course of the year for them to have formal contact with teachers to talk about their child's progress. There is good attendance at these events.
- The headteacher is well regarded by staff, parents and pupils, who report that there have been significant improvements in the school since he has been in post. One parent commented, 'My son absolutely loves this school and is making excellent progress,' and a member of staff stated, 'The school has made huge strides in the last two years'.

- The school's plans for improvement are thorough and accurately identify the areas that require significant work. There is a sense of urgency written into the plans. Leaders clearly recognise the need for rapid improvement. The plans are monitored regularly by senior leaders, who report to governors on progress towards meeting the objectives set out in the plans.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are very committed to the school and have the interests of the pupils at the heart of everything that they do. They have acted robustly on the recommendations of an external review of governance and now have appropriate committees in place which hold the headteacher and senior leaders to account for the work that they do. They are clear that teachers will not be rewarded for poor performance, and a high number of eligible teachers did not receive pay progression last year based on examination outcomes.
 - Governors are honest in their assessment of the school and are aware that outcomes have not been good enough. They can articulate the school's strengths and weaknesses and they keep a check on what the school is doing to make the necessary improvements. They are clear that targets set for pupils must be aspirational but realistic.
 - Governors are fully committed to their own training and are regular visitors to the school. They make sure that they carry out all their statutory duties, including those related to safeguarding and financial management.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are highly effective. Rigorous background checks on all staff are undertaken and all policies related to safeguarding are regularly reviewed and updated. Staff receive regular, up-to-date child protection training and the school responds well to any local issues related to safeguarding.
- The school makes sure that pupils who receive part of their education elsewhere are kept safe. Staff at the school are in regular contact with parents, carers and other agencies to ensure that pupil safety is a high priority.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching has not been consistently good or better over time and too much teaching requires improvement. As a result, pupils and groups of pupils have not made good progress.
- Some teachers do not make the best use of the assessment information that they have on pupils' attainment and progress in order to target their teaching on individual pupils and groups of pupils. This means that in some lessons, pupils are all doing the same work, and rates of progress vary too much. The support provided by other adults in the classroom is sometimes not effective in ensuring that pupils who have special educational needs or disability are able to make good progress.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils are sometimes too low. Pupils are not challenged to achieve at the highest levels possible, given their starting points. This is particularly true for the most-able pupils, where work set does not enable them to achieve at the highest levels. Teachers sometimes accept poorly presented work and too little work, especially from less able pupils. These low expectations result in pupils making progress that is below that expected of them.
- The school's marking policy is not applied consistently well by all teachers. All work is marked, and often pupils are given good advice on what to do to improve their work. Some teachers do not always make sure that pupils have acted on the advice that they have been given. Where the marking policy is used consistently well, pupils are making good progress in their learning.
- Some teachers do not ask questions of pupils in lessons that deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding and enable them to make rapid progress. Often, they step in too quickly to guide pupils to answers rather than letting them work them out for themselves.
- In the best learning seen, pupils are keen and motivated and show a real love of learning. Lessons where this happens are characterised by lively delivery by the teacher, high expectations and a range of different tasks and activities for pupils to take part in. In a Year 9 drama lesson, for example, pupils worked in groups to produce a piece on 'comedy grotesque'. They showed confidence and enjoyment with minimal input necessary from the teacher. One pupil said, 'drama is literally my favourite lesson'.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge. Relationships between teachers and pupils and between pupils are good, and there is generally a positive learning atmosphere in classrooms. It is when pupils are not

challenged in lessons that they lose focus or engage in low-level disruption.

- Pupils speak highly of their teachers and know that they want them to do well.
- There have been recent improvements in teaching, as shown in checks on teaching made by the school and the local authority. Teachers have received training and coaching to help them improve their classroom practice. They all have targets to meet related to the progress of the pupils that they teach and specifically for disadvantaged pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils feel safe and they say that bullying is very rare. The school places a high priority on anti-bullying strategies and a group of pupils are anti-bullying ambassadors. Pupils agree that the ambassadors are helpful in resolving any potential conflicts between pupils. Pupils are confident that any bullying is dealt with swiftly and appropriately.
- The school's work to teach pupils about keeping safe, especially on the internet, is good. Pupils appreciate the fact that they get frequent information and advice related to this and they know that the school responds quickly to any local issues that might put their safety at risk.
- The school provides good support to pupils who are vulnerable and have significant emotional needs. Staff work closely with their parents to support their well-being.
- The school's careers education, advice and guidance programme is good and is ensuring that pupils are making good choices about the next stages in their education, employment or training. The numbers of pupils who do not progress into further education, employment or training are low.
- The school makes daily checks on the attendance, behaviour and welfare of pupils educated elsewhere for part of their education.
- There is an open and accepting culture at the school which places importance on the pupil as an individual. The values of mutual tolerance and respect are clearly modelled by staff and pupils alike.
- Parents are positive about the confidence that the school fosters in their children and about how well they are looked after and kept safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Where teaching requires improvement, pupils' behaviour is characterised by a lack of involvement and some low-level disruption. Where teaching is good, pupils are keen to answer questions and are completely focused on their learning. There is no low-level disruption in these lessons.
- Behaviour around the school site and at break and lunchtime is good. Pupils get on well together and show respect for each other and for adults. The use of sanctions related to poor behaviour, including exclusions, have reduced each year.
- Pupils are polite and demonstrate good manners. They look smart and wear their uniform with pride.
- There is no litter around the school site and the buildings are well treated.
- Pupils attend well. Attendance is above the national average.
- Pupils are punctual to school and to lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils generally enter the school with below-average levels of attainment in the basic skills of English and mathematics. In recent years, the proportions of pupils making expected progress in English and mathematics at the end of key stage 4 have been below the national average.
- Outcomes have not been good over the last two years, as judged by pupils' attainment and achievement in their GCSE examinations. This has been the case in a range of subjects, including science, the humanities subjects and languages.
- The gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers has been too variable over

time. The leadership of the work that monitors the progress of these pupils has not been good enough to make sure that strategies used by the school to narrow any gaps in performance have been evaluated properly to see what is working well. Despite this, gaps are now closing.

- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability have not made sufficient progress relative to their starting points. Performance information on this group of pupils has not been used well to make sure that they are making good progress. There are signs of improving progress for current pupils.
- Specialist support for pupils who need to catch up with their peers in reading and mathematics has had some impact. Extra classes have been provided for these pupils as well as extra support in lessons.
- The most-able pupils have not achieved at expected levels in a range of subjects. The numbers of pupils gaining top-grade passes at GCSE in a range of subjects are too low. This is because the expectations for what they can achieve in lessons are too low and they are not always challenged to do more difficult work.
- The targets that the school now sets for pupils in their subjects are highly aspirational and pupils of all abilities are expected to exceed expectations. Pupils say that this is helping them to do well and recognise that their teachers are ambitious for them. One Year 11 pupil said, 'It's good to know that your teacher thinks you can get an A when you thought you could only get a C. It spurs you on'.
- The school's current performance information is based on a more rigorous system of assessment. Staff compare their assessments with those of teachers at other schools and work with examination boards to make sure that their assessments are accurate. Current performance information shows that outcomes will improve this year. Improvements are set to be most significant in English, but will also improve in mathematics, science and a range of other subjects.
- The outcomes for pupils currently at the school show sustained improvement across a range of subjects and for all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs or disability and the most-able pupils. Where there are any projected dips in performance, leaders are taking action to ensure that these are rectified through extra support for pupils to accelerate their progress.
- Pupils who receive part of their education elsewhere attend well and take part in courses which are suitable to their needs. They are making good progress towards achieving qualifications.
- Children looked after by the local authority are supported well by the school to make progress relative to their starting points and individual needs.
- The school has worked successfully to narrow previous gaps in the performance of boys compared with that of girls. The gaps between the progress of boys and girls is now lower than the national gap.

School details

Unique reference number	112966
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	1011725

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	788
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kay Bonnett
Headteacher	Ian Wingfield
Telephone number	01246 473873
Website	www.springwellcc.org
Email address	headteacher@springwellcc.org
Date of previous inspection	12–13 February 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. These pupils are supported through pupil premium funding, which is additional government funding.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is higher than the national average.
- There are nine pupils who receive part of their education at Jigsaw or at Chesterfield College.
- The school does not meet the requirements for the publication of information on the length of the school day and details of what pupils are studying in their lessons in each subject.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 11.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2013.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 40 lessons, eight of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. During lesson observations, inspectors sampled pupils' books and talked to pupils in order to evaluate the quality of their learning. Inspectors also attended assembly and form time.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils at break and lunchtime and as pupils moved around the school.
- Inspectors held a number of meetings with senior leaders, leaders in charge of subjects, teachers, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with pupils from most year groups. These pupils were chosen at random.
- Inspectors scrutinised, in detail, a range of pupils' books in a range of subjects. These scrutinies were carried out with leaders of subjects and senior leaders. Inspectors carried out a focused work scrutiny on a range of books for Year 10 pupils as they were out of school on work experience during the period of the inspection.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of the school's documentation, including meeting records, action plans, records showing how leaders check on teaching, policies, information on pupils' progress towards their targets, the school's own evaluation of its performance, and records of how the school supports vulnerable pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 66 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire and the 61 responses to the online questionnaire for staff. There were no responses to the online questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

Denise Newsome, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Vondra Mays	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Mitchley	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Mosley	Ofsted Inspector

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