

Inspection of Springwater School

High Street, Starbeck, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG2 7LW

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have very high expectations of how well staff look after the pupils in their care. Pupils are given highly personalised support by a team of very caring staff. Staff ensure that pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life.

The learning atmosphere in school is positive. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, try hard when in class. They are keen to join in and eager to learn new things. Pupils demonstrate how much they appreciate learning by laughing and smiling. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, react positively when staff interact with them. They follow routines and respond well to instructions and guidance from staff. Staff work closely with pupils to help them find ways to share their feelings and ideas.

Pupils interact with their peers in positive ways, showing interest and consideration. Staff ensure that pupils are well supported. They take appropriate steps to ensure pupils are kept safe. Pupils are able to focus on their learning.

Pupils benefit from the trips and residentials that the school run. For example, pupils go on an outdoor residential where they participate in a range of activities, including participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

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

Senior leaders have successfully worked alongside subject leaders to develop the curriculum. They rightly evaluate that, although the quality of education has improved, it is not as exceptional as other aspects of the school. For instance, approaches to assessment need refining so that they better identify small gaps in pupils' learning and understanding.

The curriculum enables pupils with diverse needs to gain knowledge and skills across broad areas of learning. These areas include creative arts, literacy, numeracy and understanding of the world. For example, over time, pupils develop their knowledge about where the school is located. However, the curriculum does not enable pupils to connect this broader knowledge with subject-specific geographical knowledge, such as compass points. The curriculum also enables pupils to develop their physical and emotional skills. For instance, pupils work with external dance teachers and football coaches.

Senior leaders have very high ambitions for how well all pupils communicate, including those with profound and multiple learning needs. Teaching staff work closely with expert speech and language therapists. As a result, they are highly skilled at initiating techniques that enable pupils to communicate and extending the range of ways in which pupils communicate. For example, they support pupils with profound and complex needs to use switches to indicate choices. Teachers and

assistants seamlessly weave targets from pupils' education, health, and care plans into the content they teach.

Leaders have introduced a new programme for teaching phonics. They ensure that staff receive training so that they can implement the programme well. Pupils successfully learn the sounds that are linked to letters. They also gain confidence in how to blend sounds together to read words. Leaders have rightly identified that pupils' reading books need to match pupils' phonics ability more closely. They have already set about rectifying this.

Provision in the sixth form is excellent. The vast majority of students join from other schools. Strong transition arrangements help new students make a flying start. The sixth-form curriculum is very well planned. It prepares students for adulthood very effectively. The curriculum includes life skills such as shopping and cooking, as well as important knowledge about how society works. Students also take courses that lead to accreditation. Students in the sixth form are incredibly positive about their experiences of school.

Staff and leaders have a holistic approach to managing behaviour, which is extremely effective. It includes working closely with pupils on how they communicate and manage their emotions. Staff are highly skilled at picking up signs that a pupil feels anxious or unsettled. This means that they can often prevent pupils from going into crisis.

Personal development is exceptionally strong, including spiritual, moral, social, and cultural learning. Leaders have identified the essential knowledge that pupils need for their well-being and safety. For example, pupils learn about how their bodies change as they grow up, as well as how to travel safely. Pupils remember this knowledge because the curriculum is carefully sequenced and revisited at the start of every new term. Pupils also take part in a wide range of lunchtime clubs. The work experience programme prepares pupils well for their next steps in employment.

Governors provide excellent support and challenge. They place the well-being of pupils front and centre when overseeing the school's work. Governors carefully check that agreed improvements uphold this core value. They keep a close eye on staff workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The designated safeguarding leader (DSL) ensures that all safeguarding concerns are followed up. Records of safeguarding issues and incidents are recorded appropriately. The DSL monitors the local authority's follow-up actions when he refers pupils to the authority's social care services.

Safeguarding training for staff considers the additional vulnerabilities of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The DSL has identified

communication as a major barrier to keeping pupils with SEND safe. To mitigate this, staff have worked closely with pupils who struggle to communicate to create an individualised safeguarding plan. This plan outlines the ways in which the pupil will communicate to adults that they are feeling unsafe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment does not enable teachers to identify any gaps that pupils may have in their knowledge and skills sufficiently well. Senior leaders and curriculum leaders should work together to improve assessment methods so that they enable teachers to clearly identify what pupils can and cannot do. Teachers should use information from assessments to decide what knowledge and skills they need to revisit.
- The curriculum does not currently enable pupils to build up their knowledge in specific subjects. Senior leaders and subject leaders should refine the curriculum for pupils so that it includes carefully chosen subject-specific content. Leaders should ensure that teachers use their expertise when introducing this content, so pupils are able to make meaningful links with their prior knowledge.

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	121776
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10212214
Type of school	All-through
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	97
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sean Pond
Headteacher	Sarah Edwards
Website	www.springwater.n-yorks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 – 11 December 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils with severe or profound learning difficulties, of which about one-third have autistic spectrum disorder. A small minority have moderate learning difficulties.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- There is an extended senior leadership team, comprising the headteacher, deputy headteacher and leaders of the primary, secondary and sixth-form departments.
- The school is a partner of the Red Kite Teaching Alliance.

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 received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors also met with the heads of department and staff responsible for work experience. Inspectors held online meetings with speech and language therapists who work with the school, and also with the local authority's school improvement partner.
- Inspectors met with pupils informally and formally.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in communication and literacy, including the early stages of reading, mathematics, physical development, and personal, social, and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed documentation relating to the school's curriculum, including the post-16 curriculum, along with the school's own evaluation and its development plans. Inspectors also sampled education, health, and care plans as well as school plans detailing the individual support these pupils require.
- An inspector conducted a telephone call with a parent.
- The single central record was checked, along with staff files. Two meetings were held with the designated safeguarding lead. An inspector also reviewed records of safeguarding training, concerns, and referrals.
- Inspectors considered responses made by free text as part of the Ofsted Parent View survey, the staff survey and a survey for pupils devised by the school, which was written in symbols and based on Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Sarah Hubbard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Pauline Rowland

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022