

Upton Meadows Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134653
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	360631
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Peter Kerr

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	251
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bob Spearman
Headteacher	Helen Hollwey
Date of previous school inspection	15 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 15 lessons and all 10 teachers were seen teaching. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at policies, documents, records of pupils' progress and 76 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Are teaching and pupils' progress consistent across the school?
- What is the quality and extent of pupils' writing across the curriculum?
- How well does the school cater for pupils joining at various times?
- How involved are parents and carers in the school and in their children's learning?

Information about the school

This is now an average-sized primary school following three years of rapid growth since the last inspection. Most pupils come from areas where the houses are still being built to form the new settlement of Upton. Pupils join the school whenever their family moves into completed houses so inward mobility is high and unpredictable. A significant number of new teachers have been appointed since the last inspection. More than one third of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is an above average proportion. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above average, although an average proportion have a statement of special educational needs. About one fifth of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and about one sixth speak English as an additional language. These are both average proportions. A pre-school breakfast club is run in the school by an outside agency; this is inspected separately. The school holds the Intermediate International Award and was recognised as a Bronze Eco School in 2009.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. The headteacher has guided the school well through a period of rapid growth since the last inspection and has established a strong leadership team. Self-evaluation is accurate and supports teachers in identifying where they can improve. Many pupils face considerable barriers to learning on entry to the school, including a range of behavioural, emotional and social needs. Outstanding care, guidance and support help them to manage their difficulties and concentrate on learning. In response to a growing number of pupils who join speaking English as an additional language, teaching assistants have been trained to provide skilled support for these pupils. By maintaining good progress and securing improvements in key areas of provision through these challenging times, the school demonstrates a good capacity for sustained improvement.

Learning and progress are good. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average because of below average attainment on entry for many pupils, but attainment is rising in each year group and examples of above average attainment in English and mathematics were seen in some lessons throughout the school. Teaching is good. Teachers use assessments well to plan work for pupils of all abilities. In the best lessons all groups are challenged well, including the most able pupils, but in some lessons tasks and questions are not sufficiently challenging for these pupils. Marking is thorough and often good. In the best examples it provides challenging pointers for improvement, but this is not yet a consistent feature across the school. Targets are an integral part of the school's planning but for newly arrived pupils they are not always ambitious enough to give early experience of success and encourage even quicker progress.

The curriculum is well organised, relevant to the pupils' needs and contributes well to their good progress and personal development. The group system used in all classes, for example, ensures that all pupils receive some individual attention from the teacher each day. It also develops the pupils' sense of personal responsibility as they are trusted to work independently for regular set periods. Their good behaviour contributes to them making the most of these opportunities. Pupils of all ages have an excellent awareness of how to keep safe and they do their best to stay healthy through a good diet and regular exercise.

The governing body provides an independent view of the school through first-hand observations and holds the school to account for the progress pupils make. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. Currently only a limited number of governors shoulder this responsibility, and not all members of the governing body are actively involved. All statutory requirements are met, with particularly robust procedures for safeguarding pupils and for ensuring equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment at the end of Year 6 to at least above average within two years of the inspection by:
 - setting ambitious but achievable targets for all pupils as soon as they arrive at the school to provide early experience of success and encourage even more rapid progress
 - consistently challenging the most able pupils in lessons so that more of them attain higher levels in each year group
 - using marking consistently well to challenge pupils of all abilities to work towards demanding targets for improvement.
- Improve the impact of the governing body by:
 - ensuring that the responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and holding it to account for pupils' progress is distributed more widely.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

All groups of pupils learn well in lessons, make good progress and achieve well. They work hard because they enjoy lessons and want to succeed. They develop good thinking and speaking skills because of the encouragement they receive to express their own ideas. For example, Year 6 pupils engaged in robust debates about deforestation, defending their arguments well against opposing views. The quality of pupils' writing, which was a key issue at the last inspection, is steadily improving and pupils write purposefully in different subjects. When lessons set high expectations the pupils respond with great enthusiasm and excel, reaching above average levels of attainment in English and mathematics on occasions. Just occasionally, not enough is expected of the most able pupils. When left to work independently pupils do so readily, whether alone or in groups, and they have good computer skills.

Pupils have a good appreciation of their place in the school and local community. They express pride in the achievements of the school and eco councils and have a good awareness of environmental and social issues, locally and globally. They are also developing a good awareness of what life is like for children living in different parts of the United Kingdom and other European countries through the Comenius project and links with other schools. Pupils of different ethnic heritages get on well and show both interest in and respect for each other's traditions and religions. The pupils' good levels of independence and personal responsibility, coupled with their rapidly improving skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology and their growing awareness of the wider world, prepare them well for the secondary stage of their education and the world of work.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

All of the lessons seen during the inspection were at least satisfactory. Most were good and a few were outstanding. Teachers' planning is based on good assessments of the pupils' previous learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work exceptionally well together to keep pupils focused on their tasks and in the best lessons extend their understanding through skilled probing questions. When learning is less rapid it is often because teachers miss opportunities to question and assess pupils as they work to provide more challenge. Teachers make very good use of modern technologies to enliven lessons and make learning more practical and relevant. For example, the use of an instructional video brought home to Year 3 pupils the advantage of this technology over written instructions.

The curriculum offers a wide range of interesting learning opportunities within and beyond lessons, including plenty of physical education and sport. The pupils appreciate the range of clubs on offer, which are well attended, and the fact that they all receive specialist music tuition. Outstanding support is provided for pupils with a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school works assiduously with a wide range of agencies to ensure that the needs of every individual are fully met. Outstanding work is done by the learning mentors to help pupils come to terms with bereavement and other traumas in their lives. This is greatly appreciated by parents and carers, who say it calms their children. Teachers also report that pupils are calmer and more attentive in class as a

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result of the help they receive. Transition arrangements are very good. Pupils say they feel very well prepared for secondary school and pupils joining the school are equally well supported, regardless of when they arrive during the year.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides confident leadership for the school but also delegates effectively. All members of the senior leadership team play a full role in setting the agenda for school improvement. Phase leaders work well together to ensure that transition through the school is smooth and so that pupils experience continuity in their learning. They have a good overview of standards and continuously challenge themselves to improve provision and progress, reflecting a strong sense of ambition. Parents and carers appreciate this and think well of the school. Much work is done to try to engage them, with some success. For example, during the inspection a number of parents and carers took advantage of an invitation to observe teaching and participate in some activities. The school recognises that it is not yet fully engaging some hard-to-reach parents and carers so that every child has the support at home needed to make maximum progress.

Good induction procedures have helped to quickly settle in the newly and recently qualified teachers appointed in quick succession to keep pace with the continuous and unpredictable increase in pupil numbers. Regular monitoring of teaching and of the work in pupils' books is used well to identify strengths and weaknesses and continually improve the quality of teaching.

Equality of opportunity permeates the work of the school and every pupil is considered a Super Star regardless of their starting point. The governing body and staff are proactive in monitoring this aspect of provision, and surveys lead to specific actions such as improving disabled access. Safeguarding measures also exceed requirements. All staff are well trained and day-to-day procedures in school are robust. The school promotes community cohesion well. It is at the heart of the developing local community, serving as a community centre while building of other community facilities in is progress. The Comenius assistant leads a project that has brought a very useful European dimension to the pupils' understanding of diversity in the wider world.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Reception classes provide a stimulating and orderly environment. Children join Reception from a number of different pre-school settings. Good arrangements are made to ensure that the children and their parents and carers are fully prepared for the transition, including an offer of a home visit for every child.

Clear routines and rules and high expectations for independence and good behaviour help the children to settle quickly and begin making good progress across all the areas of learning. Their emotional and social development and communication, language and literacy skills are particularly well supported through all the activities. Staff interactions with the children encourage them to be independent, to share when appropriate and to talk about what they are doing. Brief, purposeful inputs by the teachers focus the children's attention on particular aspects of their development, which also form the focus of many of that day's play activities. This was evident during the inspection when, for example, children were observed crawling through nets, climbing over obstacles and placing furniture in a doll's house following a lesson on positional language. These activities supported many aspects of their physical development. Their enjoyment and creative development were also supported well by a lively presentation of the Bear Hunt story, which the children then acted out. They particularly enjoyed going through the sticky mud! The displays and play activities also support mathematical development well, for example by providing opportunities to compare the capacity of containers when using the water tray.

The setting is led and managed well. The children's safety is given high priority and all staff are appropriately trained. The setting is secure and children are very aware of how they can help to keep themselves safe. Teamwork is good among the staff and regular assessments are made of the children's progress as they play. These are used effectively as the basis for future planning. Despite making good progress over the year, the

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children's attainment on entry to Year 1 is still below average in some key areas, especially in communication, language and literacy. Transition into Key Stage 1 is handled well. The children join assemblies and are encouraged to play with the older children as they gain confidence. Elements of choice are then included in all Key Stage 1 classes so that those children who need to can continue learning partly through play until they have achieved all the early learning goals.

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

Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire and those spoken to during the inspection expressed very positive views of the school. They are confident in the leadership and management of the school and happy with their children's overall experience. A few expressed the view that unacceptable behaviour is not dealt with effectively. The inspection team judged that behaviour is good and any instances of poor behaviour are dealt with swiftly and effectively. A few also feel that the school does not take sufficient account of their suggestions and concerns. The team judged that the school works hard to give parents and carers a voice and involve them in the life of the school and their children's education, but recognises that it is not yet fully successful.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Upton Meadows 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 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 76 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 251 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	53	30	39	4	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	46	61	26	34	4	5	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	34	45	39	51	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	42	39	51	5	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	41	43	57	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	42	41	54	2	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	34	48	63	0	0	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)	19	25	44	58	6	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	36	46	61	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	17	48	63	11	14	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	29	41	54	9	12	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	37	49	36	47	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	41	43	57	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



10 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Upton Meadows Primary School, Northampton, NN5 4EZ

Thank you for welcoming my colleagues and me into your school. Yours is a good school. You make good progress in lessons and you become responsible and independent learners. We were particularly impressed with the way you kept up your concentration when you were working independently in the Busy Bee groups. You have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and you try to stay healthy through eating sensibly and exercising regularly. Your behaviour is good and this helps you to get the most out of lessons.

Your lessons are interesting and often challenging, and they help you to learn the skills you will need for secondary school. Your headteacher leads the school well and the teachers and other staff look after you exceptionally well. If you have any problems, they help you to sort them out so that they don't stop you from concentrating in class. You have lots of activities and clubs to choose from beyond lessons, and you told us that you appreciate them.

Your attainment in English and mathematics is at about the levels expected for your age but we think you could do even better. To help you to achieve above average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 we have asked your teachers to:

- give you challenging targets as soon as you join the school and make sure you achieve them
- make sure that all of you, including those of you who learn quickly, are given tasks to do that make you work hard
- include more targets for improvement when they mark your work.

You can help by always doing your best and asking for harder work if you think your work is easy.

Yours sincerely

Peter Kerr

Lead inspector

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