

Upton Meadows Primary School

The Square, Upton, Northampton, NN5 4EZ

Inspection dates 2–3 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' progress is getting stronger across the school. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen appreciably in English and mathematics. From their starting points, pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Children in the Reception Year achieve well, thanks to a well-planned and well-taught range of stimulating activities.
- Good teaching contributes effectively to pupils' good progress over time. Teachers and other adults maintain pupils' interest in their learning.
- Pupils are keen to learn and their behaviour is good. They get on well with each other and feel safe at school.
- Leaders and the governing body continue to secure improvement in teaching and pupils' achievement. As a result, the school has sustained rising standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and has strongly improved them at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The priorities set by senior leaders and the governing body are the right ones to take the school further forward. The senior leaders and the governing body are pursuing them with vigour.
- The range of subjects and activities planned for pupils contributes well to their achievement in basic skills, as well as broadening their overall learning.
- Most parents are satisfied with what the school does for their children.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The checks teachers make on pupils' progress in lessons are not always careful enough to help them to do better, particularly for a few of the disadvantaged pupils.
- Occasionally teachers accept written work that is not well presented and pupils' skills in writing longer pieces of work are not as strong as in other aspects of writing.
- The pupils who speak English as an additional language are not always helped to understand fully what they are reading.
- A few parents feel that they are not kept well informed about the work of the school and that their concerns are not always listened to.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 22 lessons or parts of lessons, including three lessons observed jointly with senior leaders. Additionally, inspectors reviewed a sample of last year’s written work to check the quality of teaching and pupils’ achievement over time.
- Meetings were held with a selected group of pupils and with senior and subject leaders. The inspectors met the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including the school’s tracking of current pupils’ progress, a summary of the school’s evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, planning and monitoring documentation, records of behaviour and safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors took into account 68 responses on the online Parent View questionnaire and communications received from parents during the inspection. Additionally, inspectors talked informally with 20 parents and carers in the playground at the start of the second day of the inspection.
- Inspectors also considered 36 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Krishan Sharma, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Keith Williams	Additional Inspector
Lynn Alexander	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The number of pupils has grown by 50% since the previous inspection.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small minority comes from a wider range of minority ethnic groups and a very small minority speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. This is extra funding provided by the government to support pupils who are known to be or have been eligible for free school meals and those cared for by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- The school has been receiving support from Hopping Hill Primary School over the previous nine months.
- The school has experienced many staff changes, particularly at the senior levels. The headteacher joined in September 2013 and the deputy headteacher took up her post a term in April 2014. The two assistant teachers and the leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage joined in September 2014. The Key Stage 1 leader took up her new position in September 2014. Three class teachers and three teaching assistants also joined at the start of this term.
- The new Chair of the Governing Body was appointed from September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers consistently:
 - keep a close check on pupils' learning and progress in all lessons, particularly for the few disadvantaged pupils who still have a little more catching up to do
 - insist on high standards of presentation in pupils' written work
 - give pupils opportunities to write at length and in different subjects
 - check that pupils who speak English as an additional language have a full understanding of the texts they read.
- Work with parents more closely, so they feel they are better informed and that their concerns are listened to.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has given the school a clear direction and ambition, which are reflected in its current priorities and plans. Senior leaders and governors remain focused resolutely on securing improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. The rising standards, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2, show that the school has good capacity to improve.
- Regular checks made by senior and other leaders on teaching and pupils' learning, including the tracking of pupils' progress, contribute fully to the school's accurate self-evaluation. They also result in extra help being allocated to pupils who need specific attention. The findings are shared routinely with governors, who find them highly informative and a useful tool in their monitoring of the work of the school.
- The use of the pupil premium is beginning to work more effectively because senior leaders and governors have now an accurate and deeper understanding of the task and their oversight is sharper. Teachers and additional adults are expected to provide all eligible pupils with suitable work that ensures faster progress to help them to catch up with others.
- The school has been reviewing its approach to the assessment of pupils' progress and attainment, in order to align it with the new curriculum. Teachers are continuing with half-termly assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics and termly formal testing, but are also considering, within the school and with neighbouring schools, other ways of measuring pupils' progress accurately and consistently.
- Subject leaders are developing a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects, or areas of responsibility. The leaders for English, mathematics, and the Early Years Foundation Stage, all new to the job, are working effectively with their colleagues to support the recent developments in assessment and the curriculum.
- Leaders' arrangements for managing teachers' performance recognise fully the need to link pay increases to the teachers' effectiveness in the classroom. Staff training is suitably informed by teachers' individual targets for improvement and the school's development priorities.
- The use of the primary school sport grant has increased pupils' participation in a wider range of physical, as well as competitive activities, within the school and locally. The deployment of external specialist coaches has improved the quality of teaching of physical education. Pupils' participation in physical activities is improving their stamina and agility.
- The school continues to offer a broad and balanced curriculum, which contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is focused appropriately on improving pupils' basic skills and their personal development and on enriching their learning through numerous extra activities. The school takes pride in broadening pupils' global awareness through its international links. It promotes respect and tolerance of cultural diversity and prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The local authority has helped the school by providing support from a local headteacher, whose work has strengthened the leadership of teaching in the school.
- Most parents are happy with their links with the school. However, a small minority feels that communication with the school is not regular enough and that their concerns are not always listened to.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body keeps itself well informed about the school's performance and how it compares to others schools nationally. It has a broad understanding of the school's strengths and weakness. As a result, it is able to challenge leaders to drive improvement.
 - The governors are aware of the overall quality of teaching and of how decisions on teachers' pay are linked to their effectiveness in the classroom.
 - The governing body has sharpened its oversight of the use of the pupil premium to boost the

attainment of disadvantaged pupils. It has a much better understanding of what the school must do to demonstrate that this group makes the best possible progress to catch up with others.

- The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet current national requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most parents, staff, and pupils speak approvingly of the standards of behaviour at the school. The management of the challenging behaviour of a very few pupils who find it difficult to behave well is increasingly effective and reassuring for other pupils.
- Pupils are keen to learn, apply themselves and get on with their work. They take on extra responsibilities willingly, within classrooms and in the playground, to ensure the smooth running of the school. Pupils understand school rules and believe that they tell them what is acceptable and what is not.
- Pupils take good care of the building and outdoor facilities and litter is extremely rare. They wear their uniform with pride. Pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Relationships are good. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well with each other in lessons and around the school. They are polite, courteous and show good manners towards each other and adults in the school. In lessons, despite the occasional lack of concentration by a very few pupils, low-level disruption is rare. Pupils take pride in their art work around the school and were keen to show it to inspectors during the inspection.
- Attendance has risen and is now average. As the school's management of challenging behaviour becomes well established, exclusions have decreased significantly. Similarly, as a result of the school's efforts, punctuality has improved.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All of the required checks on the suitability of staff and visitors and potential risks, for example during trips and visits, are made diligently. For their part, pupils understand clearly that there are risks around them and that they have a responsibility for their own and each others' safety.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms bullying can take, such as name calling, the misuse of the internet or that which is prejudice-based. Most parents and pupils agree that bullying is rare and is dealt with promptly and effectively. The parents say that the school takes good care of their children.

The quality of teaching is good

- Typically, the teaching maintains pupils' interest in their learning successfully and promotes positive attitudes to learning. Skilful questioning and teachers' explanations, particularly during the introductions to lessons, create a high level of interest and set the right tone for learning. Teachers and other adults build well on what pupils have achieved already. Consequently, most pupils and groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Additional adults are deployed routinely to give extra attention, often to help disadvantaged groups, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. As some of these pupils find learning difficult, the individual attention they receive suits them well and helps them to make quick gains. As a result, their learning improves over time.
- Across the school, teachers set work that is usually at the right level of difficulty for different groups of pupils. The most-able pupils are presented usually with work that is suitably more demanding. They rise to their teachers' high expectations and produce work of a high standard.

- Marking is done conscientiously. Teachers' comments are helpful in pointing out areas for pupils to improve. They also prepare pupils for checking their subsequent work on their own. Pupils' find these suggestions valuable and use them well to improve their work.
- Where learning is most effective, teachers keep a thorough check on pupils' progress. Teachers and the additional adults assess pupils' understanding and provide further challenge to those who are ready to move on. However, this does not always happen, particularly for some of the disadvantaged pupils, a few of whom do not make the fast progress they need to catch up with others, particularly in English.
- Effective teaching of phonics contributes to rising standards in reading. It enables pupils who speak English as an additional language specifically to use their phonics skills in making out unfamiliar words. Occasionally, not enough attention is paid to improving these pupils' comprehension of the text they read.
- The teaching of writing is well planned and provides clear guidelines to pupils on the steps to follow when writing independently. However, teachers' expectations of the presentation of pupils' written work are not consistently high. The teaching of mathematics is increasingly effective in helping pupils to become fluent in their calculations.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The standards reached in 2014 at the end of the Reception Year, in the Year 1 phonic screening check, and at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 show clearly an improving picture. They reveal good gains in reading, writing, and mathematics, reflecting an overall improvement on the previous year. Taken together with the performance of current pupils, this represents good achievement.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has recovered from a dip in 2013, particularly in reading and mathematics. In Key Stage 1, attainment was sustained, after rising at a faster rate than nationally for three years. As a result of improving progress, the current Year 6 and 2 pupils are currently on track to reach at least the standards expected for their age, with many exceeding them.
- Progress in reading is good. Pupils enjoy reading. The regular teaching of phonics strengthens pupils' necessary skills to read unfamiliar word and their confidence in tackling demanding texts. The results of the Year 1 phonic screening check have risen for the second consecutive year and now are above average.
- Writing is improving strongly, but not in all aspects. Pupils can organise their writing well because of the clear guidance they get from their teachers. They write for many reasons and in subjects other than English. Their skills in sustaining their ideas in writing at length are not yet as strong.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is a success story for the school. The recent emphasis on mental and written calculations shows up in rising standards in Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils enjoy calculating mentally and are becoming fluent.
- Most of the most-able pupils achieve what they are capable of. The work set for them is mostly challenging. The school's data show the proportion of pupils exceeding the progress expected for their age is growing across the school. A small number of Year 6 pupils gained the National Curriculum Level 6 in 2014.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is generally good. Most make good progress towards the specific goals identified for them. Most of the pupils who speak English as an additional language make rapid progress as they become more competent in the use of English. Occasionally, while they recognise the words they read, they do not always understand what they mean.
- In 2013 (the last published results), the attainment of disadvantaged Year 6 pupils supported by the pupil premium was lower than that of others in the school and other pupils nationally. The pupils supported by the pupil premium were about three terms behind in reading, writing and mathematics. They made less

progress than others in the school that year in reading and mathematics, but slightly better progress in writing. In 2014, the progress made by the eligible pupils was similar to other pupils in reading, writing, and mathematics and the gap has narrowed further. Across the school, most disadvantaged pupils are now making good progress and the gap is closing.

The early years provision

is good

- Children make a good start in the Reception Year. On entry, they start generally at levels below those typical for their age. Most children, from all ability groups and backgrounds, make at least good progress in all areas of learning. When children leave the Reception Year, they are well prepared for their entry into Year 1.
- Adults plan well for all aspects of children’s learning, including the use of outdoor areas, with opportunities to learn on their own as well as in small groups. Phonics skills (the sounds that letters make) are taught routinely. Adults are highly skilled in observing children at work and play and record their assessments for use in planning the next steps in the children’s learning.
- Children work in a safe and secure environment. They enjoy good relationships with their peers and adults. Children move around with care and learn to take turns. They enjoy taking part in physical activities.
- The new Early Years Foundation Stage leader ensures that the daily programme of activities involves all adults. Parents are encouraged to work with the school and they are kept well informed about their children’s progress.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	134653
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	449246

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	380
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rob Andrews
Headteacher	Sue Gardner
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2011
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