

Upton Westlea Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111100
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	310499
Inspection date	23 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Jeffery Plumb

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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	124
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rob Jordan
Headteacher	Mrs C Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2005
School address	Weston Grove Upton-by-Chester Chester Cheshire CH2 1QJ
Telephone number	01244 390054
Fax number	01244 380081

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards; teaching and learning, and the curriculum; the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception); and leadership and management. The inspectors gathered evidence from lesson observations, examination of pupils' work, assessment data, interviews and documents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a below average sized primary school. It serves an area that includes an army base from which a very significant number of pupils attend. Mobility of pupils is a significant challenge for the school as regiments come and go; in addition, many pupils have parents away from home in war zones. A resource base for pupils with autism was established in the school in September 2007. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. The number of pupils with a statement of educational need is high compared with the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Pupils come from mixed social backgrounds. The vast majority are White British and very few are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark, Activemark, the Artsmark Award and the Investors in People Award.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Pupils' personal development is outstanding as is the quality of care, guidance and support the school provides. This is shown particularly in the way the pupils with very complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities are included exceptionally well in all aspects of school life. The provision in the resourced base is outstanding. The headteacher travels to Northern Ireland to support pupils from service families who are to join the school and plans are in hand to visit Cyprus for the same reason. This reflects the exceptional care the school provides for all its pupils to ensure that they settle quickly into school life and are helped to overcome any emotional difficulties they may have. Parents greatly value the education and care their children receive. 'This is a fantastic school where children are very happy and make excellent progress,' was a typical parental comment.

From their individual starting points pupils make outstanding progress. Standards have improved year-on-year and are now above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. However, girls do significantly better than boys in writing. Achievement is outstanding overall, but progress is faster in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and governing body, provides the school with an extremely clear focus for school improvement. Decisive actions based on accurate analysis of performance data are making a difference in Key Stage 1, where the quality of provision and pupils' standards are rapidly improving owing to the setting of more challenging targets. Very effective and positive leadership gives the school outstanding capacity to continue to improve and raise standards further.

Overall, the teaching is outstanding and is largely responsible for the rapid progress pupils make in their learning. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to helping pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve very well. The very few pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language make very good progress. Those pupils with a statement of special educational need do exceptionally well. Very effective strategies are used to teach pupils with autism and consequently they do very well. The curriculum is good. It is carefully planned so that literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are taught across a range of subjects. The provision for art is outstanding and plays a significant role in raising pupils' awareness of cultural diversity.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils get on exceptionally well together. Overwhelmingly, pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They clearly enjoy school. Outward bound activities, exciting clubs and a wide range of educational visits go down exceptionally well and make exceptional contributions to pupils' well-being and enjoyment of learning. Pupils treat each other with dignity. Guests are welcomed as soon as they enter the door of the school by happy pupils full of smiles, bubbling with enthusiasm to tell of their school, of which they are justly proud. Attendance is satisfactory, but improving. The school is sympathetic and understanding when dealing with service personnel returning from lengthy periods of service in war zones who request to take their children on extended holidays. These holidays sometimes fall during term time. Pupils have a very acute awareness of why it is important to eat healthily and take regular physical exercise. As a result, they are very appreciative of and keen to take part in the many sporting activities the school provides for them. The school very successfully develops pupils' emotional well-being. Pupils' have a mature understanding of the importance of their own and others' safety. Pupils develop good basic skills to prepare them for the life of work.

Child protection procedures are robust. Risk assessments are thorough and detailed. Pupils say that they feel safe at school. Annual reviews for pupils with a statement of special educational need are conducted exceptionally well, and pupils are encouraged to be involved in determining their own care and learning objectives. Excellent use is made of external agencies to support vulnerable pupils and the children from army families who are frequently moving from one base to another. The tracking of pupils' progress is very good and data from this exercise is used very well to set targets to raise pupils' achievement. The targets set are challenging and underpin pupils' outstanding achievement.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and successfully involves all staff in whole-school planning for improvement. The school development plan is informed by comprehensive analysis of pupils' performance and the areas identified for development impact on raising achievement and standards even further. Monitoring and self-evaluation are extremely accurate. Subjects are very well led and managed. The management of the resource provision for pupils with autism is very good. Governance is a strong feature of the work of the school. The school continues to go from strength to strength. It provides outstanding value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

When they join the Nursery, overall children's skills are well below those typical for their age. Their speaking, mathematical and social skills are particularly limited. Throughout the Nursery children make good progress, but a very significant number of them do not continue their education in Reception, because of the very wide area the Nursery serves. Those who do remain and go on to the Reception class and those children who are new to the school make good progress. This is because of the outstanding quality of care they receive. By the time children reach the end of Reception their skills overall are still below those expected nationally in communication, literacy and mathematical development. However, from their starting points children achieve very well. Their progress in physical development and personal, social and emotional development is outstanding.

Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are outstanding. The curriculum is planned very effectively to meet the needs of each child and provide a range of interesting activities. Transition arrangements for those children who move from Nursery to Reception are skilfully managed. Teachers in the Foundation Stage operate as a very effective team and have a secure understanding of how young children learn. Children's positive attitudes underpin their rapid learning in the stimulating and bright environment. Their well-being is fostered exceptionally well and helps them gain confidence. Children are encouraged to develop as independent learners through initiating their own play. The outdoor play area is used very successfully to support their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing for boys in Key Stage 2.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Upton Westlea Primary School, Chester, CH2 1QJ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors who visited your school. We truly enjoyed talking with you and your enthusiasm for learning made a real impression on us. Your behaviour is outstanding. The care your school takes of you is excellent, as is the care you show to one another.

Your school is an outstanding school. You make outstanding progress in your work. The leadership of your school is very effective. All of you, whatever your particular needs, are included exceptionally well in all school activities. The teaching in your school is outstanding. Sport activities, clubs, educational visits and outward bound activities contribute well to your fun in learning and to your physical fitness.

We have asked your headteacher to make an improvement so that your school becomes even better. This is to improve the standards of boys' writing in Key Stage 2. We ask you to support your headteacher in maintaining your school as an outstanding school.