

Upottery Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113112
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	325755
Inspection date	4 December 2008
Reporting inspector	John English

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	77
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	6
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Young
Headteacher	Jillian Nickels
Date of previous school inspection	12 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Upottery Honiton EX14 9QT
Telephone number	01404 861292
Fax number	01404 861292

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a very small rural school, serving the village of Upottery, and a wide area around it. All the pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. Most of the children joining the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) have attended the adjacent private village pre-school. Each of the three classes caters for more than one year group. At present the school is being substantially rebuilt, causing some restrictions in the areas that can be used for learning.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The pupils are exceptionally advanced socially for their ages, are particularly caring towards each other, and are mature and sensible in their dealings with adults. This is because the care and support they receive from the school is outstanding. In this small school, everybody knows everybody, and the staff really listen to the pupils and respond to their needs. Many parents mentioned this as a key aspect of the school, with one commenting that, 'the happy, caring atmosphere of the school ensures that children reach their full potential in all areas'. All the parents had words of praise for the school, and inspectors were substantially in agreement.

Pupils enjoy school very much. They like the company of their peers, and they find lessons interesting because the teaching is good, so they feel challenged and stimulated by it. They have exceptionally advanced knowledge and understanding of how to stay healthy and safe, including when using the internet. They are thoughtful about others and think about complex life issues in a way that enhances their spiritual awareness. Although all the pupils are White British, they have a very good knowledge and understanding of those with other backgrounds and of other faiths. Their behaviour is exemplary. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.

Standards overall in each year group vary considerably, because of the small numbers involved. On entry, standards vary from below average some years to above average in others. By the end of Year 6, standards are generally above average. Most pupils meet the challenging targets set, and many exceed them, indicating good achievement. Throughout the school, progress in mathematics and science is particularly good, but in Years 3 to 6 it is not as good in writing.

The pupils are given excellent guidance in understanding how to improve their work. They talk enthusiastically and precisely about their targets. The curriculum is good, and even with the restrictions of the new build, the pupils still enjoy a wide variety of clubs, as well as interesting school trips. At present the curriculum does not provide the pupils with sufficient opportunities to practise extended writing.

Leadership overall is excellent, and has underpinned the significant improvements since the previous inspection. The headteacher's outstanding guidance ensures that all the adults understand their roles and are focused on achieving the highest possible standards. The system to track pupils' progress is at the heart of raising standards and provides for exceptionally sharp self-evaluation. The school is highly inclusive, in the way it values all pupils, and also because all groups of pupils achieve equally well. The school is a core part of the local community. Pupils make an exceptional contribution to the school and to their local community. For example, in liaison with local police and the parish council, they played a significant role in influencing attitudes to the impact of different modes of travel to school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The friendly, supportive and approachable staff know and care for the children exceptionally well. Pupils receive a carefully planned and delivered curriculum. Lessons are structured with well-established routines. As a result of this, pupils develop their self-confidence and feel very happy and safe in a secure learning environment. They build very strong relationships with each other and their teachers. Teaching is consistently good. Because of this, the majority of

children make good progress and most reach the challenging goals expected of them by the time they complete the EYFS. In a period when the learning spaces have been severely restricted by building works, the EYFS leader cannot be too highly praised for the imagination and effort she has put into limiting the impact on the children's education. Her leadership is outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils in Years 3 to 6 to practise extended writing skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards on entry to the EYFS vary considerably from year to year. They can be generally below expectations, in line with them, or above. As the pupils move through the school, the effect of those leaving and new pupils joining the school can, with such small numbers, considerably affect the standards of the year group concerned. However, the school sets challenging targets for every pupil from the EYFS onwards, and tracks their progress towards these targets. The analysis of these data shows clearly that the majority of pupils meet or exceed their targets, making steady progress in each stage of their schooling. Their achievement is therefore good overall. In the most recent tests at the end of Year 2 in 2008, standards were above average. In the tests at the end of Year 6 in 2007, the most recent year for which national data are available, standards were also above average, and pupils' progress was good. The provisional results for 2008 are broadly similar, and overall standards have been rising steadily since the previous inspection. Throughout the school, standards in mathematics and science are particularly strong, but in Years 3 to 6 writing is a relative weakness.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils very much enjoy coming to school, because of the good company of their peers and adults and also because they enjoy learning. As one pupil said, 'I would hate to be anywhere else.' They develop an exceptionally good understanding of others with different backgrounds and faiths, and they treat each other with great care and consideration. They feel very safe at school and respond very well to what they learn about how to live healthily and keep themselves safe. Behaviour at all times is excellent and attendance is above the national average. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school by taking on a range of responsibilities, and through the school council implementing improvements for the benefit of all. Their interest in, and contribution to, the local community is also outstanding. Good standards in basic skills, including information and communication technology (ICT) help prepare them well for future careers.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy lessons because the teachers make them exciting. Teachers' good subject knowledge and creative use of the interactive whiteboards ensure that their explanations and presentations of key ideas for lessons are put in a way that the pupils can understand and relate to. Some teachers go to exceptional lengths to base their planning on how the pupils have responded to the previous lessons. Because the pupils have an excellent attitude to learning, lessons take

place in a calm and orderly manner, and are not disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. Teachers set work at an appropriate level for all the pupils, whatever their level of development. As a result, the pupils feel challenged and stimulated by the tasks they are given, and they all make good progress, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teaching of mathematics and science is particularly good. Teaching is not as strong, however in literacy in Years 3 to 6 and this is reflected in the relative weakness in standards of writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well planned, with an emphasis on the development of key skills in English and mathematics. Specialist science teaching, French taught to the upper class, and the school's participation in music and sports activities jointly with other schools further enhance the taught curriculum. A particular strength is the attention given to the study of other faiths, and the lives of those from different parts of the world. There is a very wide range of clubs, visitors who come to speak to the pupils, and trips. The day before the inspection visit, pupils in one class had visited the Eden Project, and this was very well used as a resource to teach the pupils particular core writing skills. However, in general, the curriculum does not provide sufficient opportunities in Years 3 to 6 to stimulate extended writing, and as a result pupils do not achieve as well in this area of learning. Health and social education is good, and enables sensitive issues to be explored in caring and imaginative ways.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

In this small school, with its very strong community ethos, all the adults know the pupils very well, understand their needs and listen to their concerns. As a result, the care given to all the pupils is excellent, and in particular those who have emotional or social problems are very well looked after. Many parents spoke very highly of this side of the school's work. Where appropriate, the school uses the services of outside agencies very well to ensure that such pupils get all the care and support they need. All safeguarding requirements are met. Academic guidance is excellent. The school has given considerable thought to developing a whole range of ways of gathering information about how well pupils are doing in different aspects of their work. Teachers then discuss this with each pupil individually, so that the pupils have a very strong sense of how they are getting on in their studies, and what they have to do to improve. One young pupil led an inspector unbidden to the area of wall where he proudly displayed his, and others', targets for improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school responded very well to the issues raised by the last inspection. The impact can be seen in the considerable improvement in all areas, particularly the pupils' achievement, and their personal development. The data collected on pupils' levels of attainment as they go through the school are very thorough. This information is very well used to provide additional support to those who are shown not to be progressing as well as they should, and to identify any trends which need to be addressed through the school development plan. The headteacher now monitors the performance of the school in every aspect exceptionally well, so that she, the governors and all the staff have a very good understanding of where the school is in its

development, and what needs to be done to progress. The school is aware that more needs to be done to improve progress and standards in writing, and is already taking appropriate steps to improve the curriculum in order to address this. The headteacher provides outstanding direction so that the teachers and other adults form a cohesive team, very clear on their respective roles, and focused on improving standards and supporting the learning and personal development of the pupils. Promotion of community cohesion, particularly amongst the local community, is excellent. The school has outstanding capacity to improve further, demonstrated by what it has achieved since the previous inspection.

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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?	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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 learners' needs?	2
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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

5 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Upton Primary School, Honiton EX14 9QT

Thank you very much for your welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you, especially as you are obviously proud of your school and enjoy talking about your lessons and the progress you are making in your learning. Yours is a good school, and it is getting better all the time.

The way the teachers care for you and keep you safe, and help you understand how to get better at your work is excellent, which is one of the main reasons why you enjoy school so much. We were very impressed also by the way you treat each other with such care and consideration, and with the contribution you make to improving your school through the school council. Your interest in community matters, like the environmental impact of the different ways of travelling to school, is also very impressive.

You are making good progress in your lessons, and most of you achieve standards above the national average by the time you leave. Your standards in mathematics and science are particularly good, but in Years 3 to 6 writing is not as good. This is because the curriculum does not provide you with enough opportunities to do long pieces of writing which is what really helps to improve it. We have asked the school to provide more opportunities to do this and you can help by adding this to your list of targets. We were impressed by the many opportunities you have to join clubs and go on school trips.

The school has improved because the leadership of your headteacher and governors is excellent, and all the staff work together extremely well.

Good luck and best wishes to all of you for your future education.

John English Lead inspector