

Unstone Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112642
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	357156
Inspection dates	29–30 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Stephen Walker

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marianne Rawson
Headteacher	Eileen Kelly
Date of previous school inspection	14 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited four lessons and observed three teachers. They also held meetings with the headteacher, the chair of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence, including the school improvement plan, the tracking system to monitor the pupils' progress, safeguarding documentation, and the work pupils were doing in their books. They also analysed questionnaires completed by staff, a sample of pupils and 16 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Are different groups of pupils making enough progress, especially in English and mathematics?
- How effective is the teaching in engaging the pupils so that they make at least satisfactory progress in lessons?
- What aspects of pupils' personal development are now better than satisfactory?
- How effective is the leadership and management in supporting improvements in the school?

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than the average junior school. The school has extensive grounds including additional land which is rented from the district council. The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with a very small number from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with national average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average.

There are four teachers in the school, including the headteacher. During the inspection, the headteacher and a temporary teacher were covering the classes of two teachers who were absent due to maternity leave and sickness. Pupils are normally taught in two mixed-aged classes, although Years 5 and 6 are taught in separate year groups for English and mathematics. The school has gained the Quality Mark Award and has National Healthy School status. It has very recently gained the International Eco Schools Award.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Unstone Junior is a satisfactory school. It has some good features. The headteacher is managing a temporary period of staff absence well so that there is stability in the teaching provision and a continued focus on the achievement of the pupils. Parents and carers speak highly of the school and the support for their children. One parent wrote: 'My children really enjoy going to the school and I know they are well cared for by the staff.'

Pupils make satisfactory progress given their average starting points and they leave with average attainment. The 2010 national test results for Year 6 pupils in English and mathematics demonstrate an improvement on previous years. More pupils are now gaining the higher levels in English and mathematics. Assessment records for the current year indicate that more pupils are making good progress, particularly in Year 6. The developing tracking system for progress identifies underachieving pupils, who then receive appropriate support through a range of intervention strategies. The school acknowledges the need to further raise standards and increase rates of progress in English and mathematics. It sets challenging targets for pupils to make good progress in relation to their prior attainment but too few achieve these targets.

The good quality of care, guidance and support is greatly supporting the improvements in the personal development of the pupils. Pupils enjoy their time at school and develop into friendly and helpful individuals. Behaviour is good and this contributes to a positive atmosphere for learning and personal growth. Pupils are respectful towards each other so that all feel valued in the family atmosphere of this village school. Pupils feel very safe in the school and have a good awareness of issues relating to safety. The large majority of pupils have a good understanding of how to adopt healthy lifestyles. They demonstrate this through eating healthily and readily taking part in outdoor and sporting activities. All pupils are involved in growing vegetables and fruit in the school gardens.

Teaching is satisfactory. In some lessons, teachers do not fully engage the pupils for the whole lesson and do not encourage them to take enough responsibility for their learning. Teachers do not always check pupils' understanding during lessons to ensure that all pupils are making the required progress. Curriculum provision is satisfactory and the school makes good use of the school grounds for practical learning and developing pupils' awareness of the environment.

Self-evaluation is accurate and the school is clear about the improvements needed. The school improvement plan sets challenging targets aimed at raising standards. The governing body is increasingly aware of the challenges of managing a small school and is informed of the areas for development. It is increasingly monitoring progress although it is not fully involved in strategic planning for school improvement. There have been some changes in the responsibility for subject areas so that most leaders are new in post and not fully effective in their supporting and monitoring roles. There are insufficient

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opportunities to agree and share the best practice in teaching and learning across the curriculum. However, the clear leadership of the headteacher, the developing systems of tracking pupil progress and the evident indications of improvements in pupil progress show the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the attainment and achievement of pupils throughout the school, especially in English and mathematics, by:
 - using the tracking systems consistently well to identify and provide additional support for underachieving pupils
 - ensuring that staff and pupils are working to achieve challenging progress and attainment targets which are based on pupils' previous performance.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning by making sure that all teachers:
 - plan a range of interesting activities and have high expectations of the pupils so that they sustain good levels of concentration
 - regularly check pupils' understanding of their learning during lessons
 - encourage more opportunities for independent work so that pupils take on more responsibility for their own learning.
- Develop the consistency of leadership and management and its impact on school improvement by:
 - developing the roles of subject leaders so that they provide effective support for teachers, and agree and share the best practice in teaching and learning
 - ensuring that the governing body develops the skills it needs to be fully effective in supporting school improvements.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Most pupils enjoy learning and make satisfactory progress. A growing number of pupils are making good progress due to more effective teaching. The school has rightly identified the development of reading, writing and numeracy skills as key areas for improving the rate of pupil progress. As a result, intensive support in writing and mathematics is raising pupils' attainment and helping to accelerate pupils' progress. Gender differences in achievement vary between the year groups but the school is presently providing additional support in reading and writing for a small group of underachieving boys in Years 4 and 5. Inspection evidence confirmed that pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities and those entitled to free school meals make satisfactory progress. The very small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds also make satisfactory progress, in line with other pupils in the school.

Pupils display interest and sustain good levels of concentration when activities are interesting and clearly matched to their learning needs. For example, Year 5 pupils made

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good progress in mathematics when working in small groups to develop their skills in problem-solving and calculation. However, the pace of learning and concentration drops in some lessons where work does not challenge pupils or capture their interest.

Pupils are confident that any issues of concern are addressed promptly and effectively. Attendance is improving and is now in line with the national average. The school council is active in the school and supports projects such as providing play equipment for the playground. Pupils raise money for a range of charities and make a good contribution to the local community, such as litter picking in the village and inviting the elderly to school events. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to take on responsibilities in school and all Year 6 pupils take their turn as playground buddies. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. However, they are not fully aware of the multicultural diversity of our society. Pupils' basic skills and ability to work with others are developing satisfactorily. As a result, they are adequately prepared for their secondary education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

The warm relationships between teachers and pupils ensure that there is a positive environment in lessons. Classrooms are attractive learning areas with good examples of pupils' work on display. Teachers' planning normally ensures that tasks are appropriate to the different age groups and individual abilities in the classes. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of the pupils and plan a range of interesting activities that

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are matched closely to their learning needs. In a number of cases, the activities do not fully engage the pupils for the whole lesson, and so pupils lose concentration. There are also times when the teacher does not fully check the understanding of the whole class. Marking is supportive and shows the next steps in learning, although opportunities are missed to reward good work or link marking to pupils' attainment targets.

The emphasis on the development of core skills in literacy and numeracy is gradually raising standards across the school. The school is refining schemes of work to remedy weaknesses in pupils' skills in writing and problem-solving in mathematics. All pupils have lessons in information and communication technology at least once a week, and this adequately develops their computer skills. There are a number of problem-solving days which show pupils the links between the different subjects and bring learning to life. Physical education is supported effectively by the sports school partnership and all pupils have the opportunity to learn to swim. The Year 5 and 6 residential visit to Buxton and the educational trips to Sheffield and Chesterfield enhance pupils' enjoyment and experience of school.

There are effective systems of individual support for all pupils, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable or who have difficulties with learning. Pupils are very well known as individuals and emphasise that there are always members of staff to talk to if they have a problem. Teaching assistants have been particularly successful in supporting positive play with identified groups of pupils. There are clear procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance and following up absences, and these have had an impact in improving attendance. Good working relationships between the school and external agencies benefit pupils, ensuring their social and learning needs are met through effective support programmes. Good arrangements are in place to support a smooth transition to the local secondary school in Dronfield.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides clear and reflective leadership so that staff work together on the continuous improvement of the school. She is very aware of the areas for development and is supporting the staff in raising standards in the school. She has demonstrated considerable flexibility in covering absent staff so that there is stability and continuity for the pupils. The school improvement plan is a comprehensive working document, which is particularly focused on improving pupil attainment and progress although the governing body is insufficiently involved in setting the plan's priorities. The robust procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and underpin the school's

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very caring approach. Members of the governing body regularly check that all practices and procedures fully meet health and safety requirements. The school has been particularly proactive in ensuring internet safety for the pupils.

There is a clear commitment to inclusion and equal opportunities for all that ensures that the school is inclusive in integrating pupils from different ethnic and social backgrounds.

Parents are given regular information about school events and the progress of their children. The school has satisfactory partnerships with external services, the secondary school and local cluster of small schools. The secondary school provides additional enrichment activities for the pupils. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion and encourages all parents and members of the community to feel welcome in the school. There are plans to develop a range of activities to enhance cultural awareness but these are still at the early stages of development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire are very positive about the work of the school and its impact on their children's learning. Responses included a number of detailed comments emphasising the supportive approach of the teachers and how much their children enjoy going to school. A very small minority of respondents suggested that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. During the inspection inspectors found that the school dealt well with the very few pupils who display challenging behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Unstone Junior 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 16 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 55 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	11	69	5	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	11	69	5	31	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	11	69	5	31	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	56	7	44	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	11	69	5	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	69	5	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	69	5	31	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)	11	69	5	31	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	63	6	38	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	63	4	25	2	13	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	63	6	38	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	11	69	5	31	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	63	6	38	0	0	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



1 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Unstone Junior School, Dronfield, S18 4AB

Thank you for making us so welcome and for talking to us during the inspection. We really enjoyed watching your lessons and looking at your work. It was also good to see you in the dining hall and during assembly. We trust that you have enjoyed the snow which was a real surprise for all of us this year!

Your school is a satisfactory school and has some good features. We found some positive things about your school.

You enjoy coming to school, and your attendance is improving.

You try hard in lessons and want to do well.

You are friendly and get on well with each other.

You have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles.

You appreciate the need to look after the environment.

You feel safe at the school.

The headteacher, teachers and support staff take good care of you.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governing body to do the following things to make the school even better:

- help all of you make better progress in English and mathematics
- make sure your teachers provide activities for you that engage you in the work and encourage you to take more responsibility for your own learning
- ensure that the governing body and subject leaders are fully involved in plans for school improvement.

You can help by behaving well and working hard. Keep enjoying the many things you do at Unstone Junior School. We would like to wish you success in your future education.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Walker

Lead inspector

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