

Unstone St Mary's Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112643
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	357157
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Geof Timms

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	57
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Adlington
Headteacher	Stefanie Creer
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Nine lessons taught by four teachers were observed. Meetings were held with the school council, representatives of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of assessment data, policies and planning. In addition, 31 parental questionnaires were analysed.

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

- The effectiveness of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- How well the school provides for its higher attaining pupils.
- The effectiveness of target setting in helping pupils to understand what they need to do to improve.
- The accuracy and effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation.

Information about the school

This is a very small school compared to primary schools across the country. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The vast majority of the pupils are from a White British heritage. A small number of pupils are from a range of other backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average overall but very high in some year groups.

The school has a number of national awards including Health Promoting School status, a Basic Skills award, Activemark, Eco Green Flag, an Anti-bullying award and an International School Intermediate 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?**1****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****1**

Main findings

This is an outstanding school and it provides the pupils with a high quality education. The strengths found at the last inspection have been maintained and other areas built on further. Although a very small school, the very rigorous self-evaluation systems used by the governing body and the senior staff ensure that all have an accurate and honest understanding of how successful the school is and what needs to be improved further. This promotes an outstanding capacity to sustain the improvements made and to create an even more successful school in the future.

The small numbers of pupils in each year group and their varying attainment on entry to the school mean that attainment varies year-on-year. It is broadly above average, and the progress made by pupils in the different year groups is excellent. Those with learning difficulties make outstanding progress from their often lower starting points. In 2010 Year 2 standards dipped even though the year group made excellent progress. The current Year 2 pupils are on track to reach significantly higher standards again with above average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.

The teaching and support staff make an excellent team. They approach their teaching and other work with pupils with humour, professionalism and an exceptional level of care. The outstanding teaching is the result of careful planning, often on an individual basis, and of the deep knowledge staff have of the pupils and families in their care. The curriculum is also exceptionally well planned by teachers with imagination and on an individual and small group basis. Excellent flexibility is shown by staff as pupils move between age groups to access learning at an appropriate academic level. Even so, there are times when opportunities are missed to challenge the highest attaining pupils through giving them more independence and opportunities to solve problems. The progress made by pupils is also evident in their outstanding understanding of how to stay safe and healthy and the contribution they make to their community. However, a small number of parents and carers do not support the school's efforts to promote high attendance and this has a negative impact on the attendance figures.

The school is exceptionally well led by the headteacher and, during her recent sabbatical, this excellent leadership was continued by the acting headteacher. The staff and the governing body share a common vision for the school based on doing everything possible to provide the pupils with high levels of care and quality of learning. All staff strongly share their pride in being a member of staff at this school. There is a clear and shared ambition to do the best possible for the school, the pupils and for the local community.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure highly challenging activities involving problem solving and more independence are more consistently provided for the most able pupils.
- Review and strengthen current efforts to promote high attendance by all pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils make exceptional progress in their learning from their starting points, many of which are below those expected. In lessons, Year 1 pupils wrote good instructions for making a sandwich. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson they showed high levels of attainment in their knowledge of fractions. An above average proportion of the pupils are on track to reach the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2. There are no significant differences in the progress of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress in their learning due to the individual attention they are given and the very effective support from staff. Data and other evidence show that these pupils develop important basic skills to a good level and this supports their future learning exceptionally well.

The pupils' learning is exceptionally well supported by their excellent behaviour. They are very attentive, and greatly enjoy their work and their time at the school. The school provides excellent opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding in a range of different ways. They care about the environment and are proud of the school's Eco award. They learn a great deal about others' faiths and cultures. Pupils can talk knowledgeably about keeping themselves healthy and safe through eating and exercise. The teaching assistant trained in 'positive play' makes a significant contribution to pupils' feeling of security. For example, through supporting some pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable through difficult emotional times. This has a clearly positive impact on their learning.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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 exceptional progress evident throughout the school is achieved due to good and outstanding teaching and learning that is consistent over time. Teachers know the pupils' individual needs well due to the clear and accurate assessments made of their attainment. Target setting is done on an individual basis and this helps pupils understand what they need to do to improve. Resources, including new technology, are used extremely well and imaginatively to interest and inspire pupils. Teachers plan the curriculum on a subject basis but with a strong focus on basic skills including the linking of sounds and letters, which is helping prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education. A major strength is the flexible way teaching groups are organised to provide the best individual attention for the pupils and to provide them with a curriculum that is usually extremely well-matched to their needs. The very few pupils who speak English as an additional language receive appropriate individual help and make very rapid progress. Though opportunities in lessons are occasionally missed to challenge the most able, there is a wide range of enrichment activities and clubs, use of visits and visitors to extend pupils' experiences.

The school's exceptional levels of care are indicated through the 'parent partnership' work. A trained teaching assistant provides an excellent link and means of communication with parents and carers especially at the start and end of the day when the headteacher is with her class and so is less accessible. Families are known well to the staff and this helps the care and support extend beyond the school walls and into the local community. The school

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has been successful in raising levels of attendance, and continues to work to raise them further, through reducing the holidays taken in term time. Most parents support the school's efforts well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and her senior staff have provided the school with outstanding leadership since the last inspection. There has been a complete lack of complacency and a continual seeking for improvement. Outside expertise is sought and advice taken when needed. Governance is outstanding. Governors have high levels of insight and the governing body is extremely well organised. There is a shared vision and ambition for the school that fully involves the governing body. This is driving improvement very successfully. The vision includes full inclusion and this is evident in the excellent leadership provided for the provision for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The outstanding safeguarding provision not only ensures that all necessary statutory requirements are met but exceptionally strong care is provided for the potentially most vulnerable pupils. This is done through the schools detailed and focused work with these pupils and their families, and also through the partnerships with other agencies. All pupils are fully included in all school activities and the excellent monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning ensures that all individual pupils are tracked so none fall behind. The school has outstanding links with schools in a range of countries and is very strong in developing community links locally. Links through email and post have helped pupils gain an excellent understanding of how others live.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Since the last inspection a lot has been done to improve provision and resources, and to make the outcomes better in the Nursery and Reception classes. Excellent leadership has been shown by the early years' coordinator. The Nursery children start the day in a calm but excited way, quickly settling and taking part in a range of activities. They particularly enjoy the story times and linking their work to the text used. For example they showed a good understanding of the life cycle of a butterfly following the reading of a story about a caterpillar. Links with parents and carers are excellent and they are able to communicate with staff very well at the start and end of the day.

The data shows that this excellent progress is maintained in the Reception class. Much improved use of the outdoors has been the successful focus since the last inspection. Resources are excellent and used imaginatively, especially, for example, when helping the children to grow plants and vegetables in a limited space. Excellent observations and assessments of children's learning are used to record their 'learning journey' and to highlight their progress against the areas of learning. The focus on personal, social and emotional development in the Nursery is supported by the increased focus on communication and language skills, and mathematical understanding, in the Reception class. This prepares the children well for their transition to Year 1.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Around 54% of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The vast majority have a view of the school that is very positive and this is supported by the inspection evidence. All of those who responded said that the school kept children safe, that teaching was good, that the school taught children to stay healthy, is led and managed effectively and takes account of parents' and carers' suggestions and complaints. There were no significant issues raised in disagreement with this positive picture.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Unstone St Mary's Infant 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 31 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 57 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	81	5	16	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	77	7	23	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	24	77	6	19	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	84	4	13	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	81	6	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	71	8	26	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	77	7	23	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)	18	58	11	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	71	9	29	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	55	13	42	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	61	11	35	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	68	10	32	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	87	3	10	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



23 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Unstone St Mary's Infant School, Dronfield S18 4AL

I am writing to thank you for the warm way you welcomed us to your school recently. I especially enjoyed meeting the school council and hearing what they had to say about the school.

Like you, we think yours is an outstanding school. The teachers and other staff all work very well to teach you new things and to help prepare you for the junior school and beyond. You help by being excellently well behaved. Keep it up!

We enjoyed seeing you at work. You are especially good at writing at the moment and the Year 1 pupils can write long and interesting stories. They are very good at making sandwiches as well, and then writing the instructions down. Year 2 pupils also have an excellent understanding of healthy living and keeping themselves safe.

The school is extremely well led by the headteacher and other senior teachers. They know what is needed to help you learn new things and they make sure you are exceptionally well cared for.

To help make the school even better there are two things we think need to be done.

The school needs to keep helping your parents and carers see how important it is that you attend regularly.

Teachers need to find more ways to make sure what they give you to do is interesting and challenging enough for those of you who find learning easier.

Thank you again for your help. Enjoy your time at Unstone St Mary's and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms

Lead inspector

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