

# Urmston Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106314
<b>Local Authority</b>	Trafford
<b>Inspection number</b>	367375
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25-26 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Young HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	269
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Derek Seex
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Castaneda
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 April 2008
<b>School address</b>	Hereford Grove Urmston Manchester M41 5AJ
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<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	<b>25-26 May 2011</b>
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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited every class and saw every teacher in the school. They inspected 18 lessons and ten teachers. The headteacher and the lead inspector conducted joint lesson observations. Inspectors held meetings with school staff, groups of pupils, three members of the governing body and the School Improvement Partner. Telephone discussions took place with a number of parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of other evidence, such as development plans, safeguarding arrangements and self-evaluation documents. They also evaluated questionnaire responses from 71 parents and carers, 84 pupils and 18 staff.

## Information about the school

At this average sized junior school the majority of pupils are White British and live locally. The remaining very small numbers of pupils originate from a variety of minority ethnic heritages. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than the national average. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are similar to national averages. The school holds the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark. Since the last inspection, there have been a number of staff changes but not at senior management level. The school has met the government's floor targets for academic performance in each of the last three years.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety</b>	<b>2</b>
Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

## Key findings

- The school offers a satisfactory education. In recent years, pupils' performance has fluctuated and dipped. Leaders changed the curriculum, refined assessment methods and modified approaches to teaching and pupil support. These changes are increasing pupils' enjoyment and boosting their learning and progress.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. The new curriculum and various enrichment activities help them to develop a strong range of personal attributes and social skills that will help them in the next stage of their education beyond the school.
- Most groups of pupils make at least the progress expected of them relative to their favourable starting points. Girls achieve highly. But pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall because some White British boys and some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make slower progress. Pupils' attainments by the time they leave the school are usually above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics.
- Teaching has a satisfactory impact on learning, although some outstanding and good practice exists. Pupils thrived in the best lessons but their progress was restricted in lessons where the work was not engaging or demanding enough. Best practice is not shared resulting in variable planning, delivery and impact.
- Pupils, staff and parents and carers say behaviour is good and inspectors endorse these views. Pupils feel secure and there are good arrangements to assure their safety.
- The impact of senior leaders is satisfactory overall. They have taken steps to improve the school but not all of these have been effective. Their monitoring,

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evaluation and intervention strategies are not yet embedded. The governing body does not always challenge the school robustly enough.

- Inspectors have asked the school to address the concerns a minority of parents and carers have about how well the school communicates with them.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, and where leadership and management is no better than satisfactory, may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement during their time in the school so that they make at least good progress relative to their starting points and capabilities by:
  - giving pupils lots of opportunities to acquire and strengthen their reading, writing and mathematical skills in all the topics they study
  - improving the slower achievement of some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and some White British boys
  - ensuring the most able pupils consistently reach the highest levels.
- Improve the impact of teaching on pupils' learning so that it is good by:
  - ensuring all staff consistently produce high quality lessons which pupils find stimulating and challenging, with good levels of support
  - ensuring teaching is matched to pupils' specific needs and focuses sharply on improving their knowledge, skills and understanding
  - sharing and embedding the most effective practice in the school.
- Improve the impact leaders have in securing school improvement by:
  - embedding a more rigorous and systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation, and strategic intervention in all aspects of the school's work
  - the governing body holding leaders to account more robustly
  - addressing the identified areas for improvement by July 2012.
  -
- Address the negative perceptions of a minority of parents and carers about the extent to which the school communicates effectively with them by:
  - promoting existing channels of communication
  - developing new ways of communicating with parents and carers
  - ensuring the timeliness of communications with parents and carers.

## Main report

Over the past three years the school's academic performance has been inconsistent, ranging from very good to poor, with a sharp decline in 2010. A key focus for inspectors was to ascertain whether or not this was indicative of the diminishing impact of leaders, teaching, the curriculum, and the care, guidance and support the

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school provides for pupils. Senior staff recognised that inspection findings in relation to this key question would signify the school's overall effectiveness. Inspectors spent most of their time in classrooms evaluating the quality of teaching taking place, assessing pupils' work and talking to pupils about their learning and progress. They also looked carefully at the school's own data about pupils' progress, and official test results over time. Inspectors concluded that despite some on-going issues there was clear evidence that the improvement strategies introduced are showing signs of impact and that the declining trend had been halted.

Most pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. This is because when they join the school in Year 3, their attainment is usually already above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. By the time they leave in Year 6, their attainment in these key subjects remains higher but not substantially higher than average. This means that they made the progress expected of them but have not improved at a faster rate which would have resulted in outstanding outcomes. Within this general picture girls make particularly strong progress and achieve highly. Pupils' competence and confidence in reading and writing is being enhanced by the sharper focus on phonics, guided reading and extended and creative writing. Consequently, they are starting to make faster progress. Scrutiny of pupils' literacy and numeracy books showed a good volume and quality of work generally, although on occasion misspellings were not corrected. Although satisfactory overall, a proportion of White British boys and some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make slower progress than expected. A contributory factor to this slower progress is that some teachers do not match work and the support they offer well enough to pupils' particular needs. The school's recent strategies to tackle these issues have reduced the numbers in these groups who are underachieving. Not all of the most able pupils attain the highest levels. The school's performance data shows that most pupils in Year 6 are on track to hit their end of year targets while in other year groups progress is variable. Inspectors' evaluations matched this view.

Pupils enjoy school and demonstrate this through their above average attendance, their consistently good behaviour and their positive attitudes to learning. The school is a welcoming and orderly place and pupils feel safe within it. Pupils are considerate towards each other and the rapport between staff and pupils is good. There are few disruptive elements or incidents and bullying is rare. Pupils are confident any issues arising will be resolved by the staff who they say are kind and supportive. Inspectors observed staff managing pupils' behaviour effectively and the exclusion rate is very low. All of these factors underpin pupils' and parents' and carers' feeling of security which is reinforced by some strong partnerships the school has brokered with local authority support services for some of the most vulnerable pupils. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is actively promoted by the curriculum and various enrichment activities. Although historically the number and range of visits and visitors have been limited this has improved more recently following feedback from parents carers. They participate wholeheartedly in the range of personal development opportunities available to them. Acting as play ground leaders, representing the school in sport, singing in the choir and serving as school councillors gives them a

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sense of pride and accomplishment which builds their confidence. Pupils recognise unsafe situations and know how to keep themselves and others safe. A daily act of collective worship encourages them to be reflective. In religious education lessons, pupils have studied Judaism, Islam and Buddhism as well as Christianity.

The satisfactory quality of teaching and learning is reflected in pupils' predominantly satisfactory progress. This is despite some good and outstanding pockets of practice. In the best lessons, pupils know exactly what is expected of them and how well they are doing because staff give them very clear guidance, feedback, and success criteria. Staff are enthusiastic and work hard. They have excellent subject knowledge which they use skilfully to plan and deliver a range of learning challenges and activities that pupils find stimulating. Pupils are expected to problem-solve and to plan and discuss work with their peers. Questioning and class discussions are incisive, requiring pupils to think laterally. However, the best practice in the school is not systematically shared and a number of agreed practices, such as ensuring lessons are always challenging, tailored to pupils' specific needs, give pupils appropriate support, and engage pupils, are not fully embedded. Consequently, there is inconsistency in teachers' planning, delivery and impact on enhancing pupils' learning and progress.

The use of assessment to support learning is satisfactory but there is inconsistency in the application of agreed procedures. Marking and feedback is mostly sound with evidence of evaluative commentary which signposts how pupils can improve their work. However, in some books no action has been taken on the feedback received and targets have not been reviewed in light of pupils' progress. Assessment, monitoring and tracking procedures have recently been strengthened but everyday practice is still being refined.

The quality and range of curriculum experiences pupils receive support their learning. The new focus on linking their learning through a series of topics is helping them to recognise connections between subjects and consolidate their knowledge, skills and understanding of key themes and concepts. However, this is not fully embedded and there is scope to give pupils lots more of opportunities to acquire and strengthen their reading, writing and mathematical skills in all the topics they study.

The impact of leaders is satisfactory overall. They have had greater influence more recently, resulting in a resurgence in the school's performance, but equally they must accept some responsibility for the inconsistency and dip that has slowed the school's development since the previous inspection. To their credit they have now established a shared vision for the school among staff who are responding positively to recent strategies to improve all aspects of the school's work. Monitoring and evaluation has been tightened up but is still not rigorous enough. However, staff are being held more robustly to account for the quality and impact of their work with pupils. Leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses and are using the information to spearhead improvements. This is reflected in the major changes to the curriculum, assessment practice and teaching which are enhancing pupils' enjoyment, learning and progress. These changes are on-going and some are not fully embedded but there is clear evidence of success in all areas, and that the declining profile has been

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halted. Staff development, reorganising class management and some high-quality teaching support contributed to the mostly good teaching seen during the inspection.

Members of the governing body fulfil their duties suitably overall, but do not always challenge the effectiveness of leaders robustly enough. They have a range of relevant skills and experiences which equip them to evaluate the school's effectiveness, and to inform strategic planning and implementation. The school's engagement with the large majority of parents and carers is good and includes regular contact and consultation, family learning opportunities and guidance to support their child's learning. Parents and carers are happy with the school and the work it does on behalf of their children. However, a minority of parents and carers are disgruntled by the way they feel the school fails to keep them informed, responds to their concerns and helps their children to achieve as well as they can. Inspectors investigated these concerns, and found some evidence that the school does not always keep parents and carers informed in a timely manner of key changes to school practice, such as the introduction of the International Primary Curriculum.

The school's effectiveness in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination is broadly satisfactory, moderated by the uneven achievement of some groups of pupils. However, the school has bucked the national trend of some groups of minority ethnic pupils and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals underachievement. Indeed the performances of these are well above national averages. The school's promotion of community cohesion is suitable and pupils are gaining an appreciation that they belong to a more global and diverse community than Urmston. However, pupils direct experiences of, and exposure to, individuals, cultures and communities that are distinctly different from their own is limited. Their community spirit is evident though in their fundraising for the comic relief, Barnardo's, and Macmillan charities. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements with suitable procedures for child protection, risk assessment, the safer recruitment of staff and site security.

Value for money is satisfactory because resources are suitably deployed to ensure outcomes for most individuals and groups and the quality of provision are satisfactory. The school's capacity for sustaining improvement is satisfactory based on the success of more recent improvement strategies and the satisfactory and good aspects of the school's work. However, leaders are acutely aware that they need to improve the impact of their work if the school's overall effectiveness is to improve.



### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Urmston 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 269 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	45	63	25	35	1	1	0	0
Q2 My child feels safe at school	48	68	23	32	0	0	0	0
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	20	28	41	58	8	11	2	3
Q4 The school meets my child’s particular needs	16	23	43	61	4	6	3	4
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	34	48	37	52	0	0	0	0
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	23	32	39	55	7	10	0	0
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	17	24	50	70	1	1	1	1
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	14	20	46	64	7	10	1	1
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	21	30	38	54	4	6	0	0
Q10 The school helps me to support my child’s learning	17	24	43	61	6	8	2	3
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	19	27	38	54	8	11	2	3
Q12 The school is well led and managed	20	28	39	55	6	8	3	4

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	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](http://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"> <li>■ The achievement of all pupils.</li> <li>■ Behaviour and safety.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of leadership and management.</li> </ul> <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.</li> </ul>
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.**



27 May 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Urmston Junior School, Manchester, M41 5AJ**

Thank you for being polite and helpful to the inspectors when we visited recently. We learned a lot from observing your lessons and talking with you. We read with interest the views you, and your parents and carers expressed in the questionnaires.

After studying the evidence, we found that your school offers you a satisfactory education. We know that you and your parents and carers will be disappointed with this news because they think more highly of the school, and you told us how much you enjoy and learn at school. There are some good aspects. You have positive attitudes to learning, your behaviour is good and your attendance is above average. You enjoy the musical, leadership, sporting, fundraising and other personal development opportunities available to you. You also know how to keep yourself and others safe.

Although we saw some good and outstanding teaching during the inspection, the results from the national tests over the past few years; the information your school has been gathering about your progress since you joined the school; and our scrutiny of your books and other work; all indicate that the impact of the teaching you receive is satisfactory and most of you make the progress expected of you. However, some of you make slower progress. Your attainment is usually above the national average but has fallen recently. Your achievement is satisfactory rather than good because when you join the school your attainment is already above average. We found some evidence that some of you are making faster progress now but this is not the case in all classes or in all subjects.

In order for your school to become more effective we have asked staff to: ensure pupils make at least good progress, particularly those who currently make slower progress; ensure the teaching you receive is consistently good or better; ensure senior leaders are more effective in improving the school; ensure all parents and carers feel the school communicates well with them.

You can all play your part by continuing to work hard and attending school regularly.

Yours sincerely

John Young  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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