

Upper Arley CofE VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135037
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	381780
Inspection dates	28–29 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Clive Lewis

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Canon Owain Bell
Headteacher	Ian Smith
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who observed eight lessons taught by four teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including a sample of pupils' books, teachers' planning documents, and tracking and assessment information. Questionnaires from 29 parents and carers, 49 pupils and nine staff were analysed.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- To what degree do pupils make consistent progress across the school?
- What are the quality and rigour of the school's tracking and assessment systems?
- What impact are subject leaders for English and mathematics having on teaching and learning?

Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average rural primary school. More than half its pupils come from out of the catchment area. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average and there are currently no pupils with a statement of educational needs. The school has gained Healthy School status and the Eco Green Flag 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Upper Arley CofE is a good school. The headteacher provides a clear sense of purpose and direction, clearly linked to school improvement. The effective teamwork of the headteacher, teaching staff, governing body and the local authority has ensured that teaching and learning have improved leading to raised attainment. Similarly, clear priorities have been set for further improvement. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. They like the positive family atmosphere and typically say: 'My children are extremely happy at this caring village school where expectations are high and staff are dedicated. I wouldn't choose to send my children anywhere else.' Staff want the best for each child and, through working closely with families, strive to achieve this goal.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress, particularly in their personal and social development, their communication and language skills and their understanding of number. Attainment is above the national average at Year 6 and exceptionally high in reading; which constitutes good achievement for pupils. Attainment in mathematics is not as high as that in English, particularly at the higher levels, because pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to use and apply their numeracy skills across a range of subjects. Arrangements for the evaluation and monitoring of teaching and learning are good and lead to good teaching.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and of the need for healthy lifestyles. Parents and carers say their children enjoy coming to school and pupils agree enthusiastically. This is reflected in their above average levels of attendance. Most pupils work hard, both independently and co-operatively, and this has a positive effect on the good progress they make in lessons. The curriculum ensures that pupils receive a good variety of exciting activities and experiences and is enriched by visits, residential stays and visitors to school. Pupils enjoy the good range of after-school activities and clubs, including physical activities. Pastoral care of pupils is good. Pupils are tracked very carefully and this information is analysed rigorously to ensure any pupil falling behind is identified quickly and support is provided. The school has good links with groups and schools in the local area, but has limited links further afield, in this country and overseas. The small size of the school ensures that all pupils and families are known very well by staff. The school has a good capacity to maintain and sustain improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment in mathematics, particularly the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels, by providing more opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills across a range of subjects.
- Improve the school’s work to promote community cohesion and broaden pupils’ understanding of the range of cultures represented within the United Kingdom by strengthening and developing links with other schools and organisations more widely beyond the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils make good progress in their time in the school. The quality of learning in lessons and work in pupils’ books confirm pupils are making good progress across the school. In one good literacy lesson, where pupils were writing a description of a character from their history lesson on the Romans, the teacher encouraged very high levels of motivation by her energy, enthusiasm and good use of humour. A good pace was set and maintained throughout and tasks were closely matched to pupils’ ability so that all made good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the good support provided by class teachers, teaching assistants and outside agencies. Their individual education plans are child-friendly and appropriate. This helps these pupils to learn successfully.

Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and Year 6 pupils stated that they will be sorry to leave the school in the summer, one pupil saying: ‘I want to turn myself back into a Reception and start again!’ Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes an unsafe situation and are confident that issues they raise will be dealt with promptly by the school. Their good behaviour makes a strong contribution to the good progress they make in lessons. They behave considerately towards each other and respond quickly to any additional guidance from staff about how to conduct themselves. Pupils are interested in the school’s health promotion strategies and understand the main threats to their health and how these can be avoided. Through the school council and the Eco council pupils demonstrate their pride in their school community and take their responsibilities very seriously. Coupled with their well-developed basic skills, this prepares them well for the world of work.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Strategies for managing the behaviour of pupils are very effective so that lessons are calm and purposeful, and pupils work hard. Carefully-targeted questioning draws out pupils' ideas and develops their thinking and reasoning skills. Teachers assess learning carefully and are skilled at providing work at the right level to match pupils' different learning needs and abilities in the mixed-age classes. Pupils who need extra help are supported well and those who find learning easy are given more challenging tasks. In a small minority of lessons, however, after a good start which motivates pupils well, the pace of learning slows because pupils are not given clear time-targets for completion of their work, with the result that a few pupils start to become restless. Support by teaching assistants is well focused and makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning. Staff work together well to ensure that pupils know how to improve. Clear targets are set to help them reach the higher standards of work.

The curriculum meets pupils' different needs and interests successfully. Carefully-adapted activities ensure that all groups of pupils in the mixed-age classes experience success and staff are beginning to link subjects to make learning more meaningful. The curriculum is enriched with a good range of visits and visitors, together with a wealth of extra-curricular activities, all of which are much enjoyed by pupils. Collaboration with other schools and extended services support the development of the wider curriculum well. This is particularly important in ensuring that pupils have the opportunity to experience gymnastic activities – the school does not have a hall and pupils are transported regularly to a local school to make use of their facilities. The school's good and well-organised arrangements for the care of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, contribute to their good development and well-being and support their learning well. As a result, the school is a happy, harmonious community in which to work and learn.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides strong leadership for a very well-motivated staff team which demonstrates a shared sense of responsibility and commitment to continuing to improve provision. The headteacher has identified, and successfully tackled, areas requiring improvement. As a result, most aspects of the school are now good. Subject co-ordinators are steadily developing their skills and improving their role of overseeing their subjects across the school. The effectiveness of the governing body is good. It is influential in determining the strategic direction of the school and is closely involved in evaluating its work.

The school's very positive relationship with parents and carers and its good links with a wide range of partners contribute significantly to improvements in pupils' achievement and well-being. Equality of opportunity is promoted well in all the school's work and discrimination is tackled effectively. As a result, the school is a happy, harmonious community in which to work and learn. Through rigorous analysis of the school's regular and accurate information on pupils' progress, staff are alert to any variation in achievement and are active in devising initiatives to overcome any weaknesses. Systems for the safeguarding of pupils are good and there is a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues among the governors and staff at all levels. The school identifies dangers, fosters a realistic understanding of risk and helps pupils to keep themselves safe. The school promotes community cohesion within its own and the local community very effectively. Its audit has revealed, however, that pupils' understanding of those living in contexts which are different from their own is not developed well enough, for example through links with schools in more contrasting urban environments in the United Kingdom. The school is devising actions to tackle this shortcoming.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2

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The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

At the time of inspection, Reception children had only been attending school full time for a few days. They had quickly settled into the classroom routines, clearly enjoying school and playing happily together and individually. Historic data shows that, although overall attainment varies from year to year due to the small age-groups, most children join the class with expected levels of attainment for their age and make good progress in their first year in school. Children behave well and are enthusiastic in all that they do. Staff work hard to achieve a strong partnership with parents and carers. Pastoral care and welfare arrangements are effective and help the children to be safe, well cared for and aware of how to be healthy. Adults provide a wide range of interesting learning activities, giving children opportunities to work on things that they choose themselves as well as by taking part in more formal group-work activities with adults. Since the last inspection, the school has developed a spacious and secure outdoor area which is directly accessible from the Early Years Foundation Stage classroom. This is used to its full advantage to encourage children to explore their learning independently. There is a good focus on helping children with their speaking skills and ensuring that they develop an ability to work with others in a friendly and purposeful way. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly, well supported and integrated well into all activities.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers responding to the questionnaire was below that typically received. All who responded, however, feel that their children enjoy school and all agree that the school keeps their children safe. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers agree with all other statements in the questionnaire. They say

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they are happy with their children's experience at the school, that the school informs them about their children's progress, that teaching is good, that the school helps their children to have a healthy lifestyle and believe that it is led and managed effectively. A very small minority, however, believe that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. The inspection team found that the school deals appropriately with instances of unacceptable behaviour when they occur and found pupils' behaviour across the school to be good and frequently outstanding.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Upper Arley CofE VC Primary 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 inspectors received 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 96 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	76	7	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	62	11	38	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	14	48	14	48	0	0	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	55	12	41	0	0	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	18	62	9	31	0	0	1	3
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	16	55	12	41	0	0	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	55	11	38	0	0	1	3
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)	13	45	13	45	0	0	1	3
The school meets my child’s particular needs	14	48	13	45	0	0	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	38	10	34	2	7	3	10
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	52	10	34	1	3	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	15	52	12	41	0	0	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	20	69	8	28	0	0	1	3

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



30 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Upper Arley CofE VC Primary School, Bewdley, DY12 1XA

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for talking to us about what you do there. Upper Arley CofE is a good school. Those who lead your school do so well and all the adults take good care of you. It was good to see that you clearly enjoy school and that you have a good understanding of how to keep safe and how important it is to eat healthily and take regular exercise. It is to your credit that you behave well, and get on well with each other and with all the staff. Your levels of attendance are above average. As a result, you all make good progress and your attainment is above average. Teachers work hard to help you to learn and to make sure you enjoy being at school. It was good to hear from the school and Eco councillors about how you are helping to improve the school. You told us that you like your school very much and there are lots of things to do and enjoy.

We have asked the staff and governing body to do two things that we feel will help to improve your school:

- make links with schools outside the United Kingdom so that you can learn more about the lives of children from different countries and backgrounds to your own
- give you more chances to use your mathematical skills in other subjects so that your attainment in numeracy can improve further.

You can all help by always doing your best and making sure you know your targets.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Clive Lewis
Lead Inspector

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