

Upton Noble C of E VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123782
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	380729
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Janet Dinsmore

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	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Kiddell
Headteacher	Mark Solomon
Date of previous school inspection	28–29 April 2009
School address	Upton Noble Shepton Mallett BA4 6AU
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Age group	2–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 15 lessons taught by seven teachers, held meetings with pupils, staff and governors, and talked to parents and carers. They looked at documents for self-evaluation, school policies, improvement plans, assessment data and minutes of the governing body meetings. Questionnaires were received from 76 parents and carers and these were analysed alongside others completed by staff and pupils.

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

- The teaching of mathematics at Key Stage 1 and the resulting progress that different groups of pupils make.
- The progress of middle-ability pupils, particularly in writing and reading at Key Stage 2.
- The effectiveness of the school's actions to improve the management of teaching and learning and the use of assessment data to improve outcomes for all groups of pupils.

Information about the school

Upton Noble is a slightly smaller-than-average-size primary school, serving a wide, largely rural area. The majority of pupils travel to school by bus. A small minority joins the school at other than the usual starting points. There is a slightly higher-than-average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and average numbers of pupils are known to be eligible to receive free school meals. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. There is provision for children aged two and over on site in the Tree House pre-school run by the governing body. The school has the Healthy Schools Plus 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

Pupils at Upton Noble are developing into confident and caring young people who work together very well and take responsibility in the school and wider community. They enjoy learning outdoors, participate in many opportunities for exercise and eat very healthily; this has contributed to the Healthy Schools Plus award. The school's excellent partnership with parents and carers begins in the Reception class and for some in the on-site provision for two-year-olds. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and say that their children have learnt an enormous amount academically and socially, that staff are very approachable, and that it 'feels like a family'.

The energy and enthusiasm of the headteacher are appreciated strongly by parents, carers, governors, and staff and galvanise the school community into working together very effectively. That has helped to secure the improvements made in teaching and pupils' progress since the last inspection. Good self-evaluation and leadership and management at all levels show that there is good capacity for sustained improvement. Pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection and is now good; the school system for tracking this is used effectively. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is average overall. Pupils join the school throughout the year and some pupils arrive with gaps in their learning; although this can limit their attainment, they make good progress nonetheless. There are groups of pupils achieving above the levels typically expected for their age across the school, especially in mathematics at Key Stage 2, but this has not yet become consistent for all in English at the final key stage. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are now achieving well in mathematics as well as in English. All groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their starting points.

Teaching is now good across the school, resulting in good progress. The school has used advice and training opportunities well to improve the teaching of reading and writing across the school. Teachers' use of assessment is good and ensures that all pupils, including middle-ability pupils, continue to make good progress, especially in writing. One reason for that is that they are given clear success criteria for activities. Reading activities are well planned and good questioning is now securing good progress. In a few lessons where pace is slow, too much time is spent in whole-class teaching and there is insufficient time for pupils to be involved in learning actively. Pupils' social, spiritual and moral understanding is good. However, although they participate enthusiastically in a range of artistic and sporting activities through the local cluster of schools, their direct experience of people from other cultures is more

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limited.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure consistently good achievement throughout the school by good or better teaching in which:
 - all lessons move at a brisk pace and include sufficient challenge for all groups of pupils
 - sufficient time is given for pupils to be engaged in learning activities actively, matched to their abilities well, in all lessons.
- Improve pupils' direct experience of a range of cultures within the United Kingdom and other countries.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children arrive in the Reception class with skill levels in some areas lower than typically expected for their age, especially in writing. The school enables pupils to achieve well, with imaginative purposes for writing and good use of role play that develop pupils' language skills in both key stages. On a few occasions, learning is not as rapid, for example, when pupils are not clear about what they are expected to do. Pupils apply mathematics skills well, for example, in using money in a Key Stage 1 class and calculating area in Key Stage 2. Pupils are keen to learn and work very well together in pairs and groups. Behaviour is good, especially in lessons, and pupils are confident to talk to adults. They have a good understanding of right and wrong, how others feel, and how to treat everyone equally. Assemblies are used well to promote pupils' social and emotional awareness and regular visits from the local vicar ensure that they have a strong spiritual understanding, which contributes well to the Christian ethos of the school.

Older pupils take responsibility for organising games in the playground and assisting younger pupils. They have opportunities to develop enterprise skills, making healthy products for sale at local pre-schools, through good partnership activities with a national bank. The school council is effective in making improvements to the school and was involved in the appointment of the headteacher. The pupils' contribution to the wider community is highly valued, as, for example, when they hosted a community tea party for the recent royal wedding and when contributing to local parish newsletters.

Pupils feel safe and know how to stay safe using the internet and on roads. They arrive and depart on the school buses safely and sensibly and know that adults help them to do this. Attendance is above average because the school has good systems in place to promote this. Pupils facing circumstances that may make them vulnerable know that staff provide excellent support; pupils comment that there is 'always someone to talk to'

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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	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
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	1
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?

In good and outstanding lessons, good pace and well-matched activities provide challenge for all groups of learners. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use visual support well to improve pupils' vocabulary and writing, for example, with continually updated word cards. Teachers demonstrate good examples of how to write and plan engaging activities that motivate pupils to extend their writing. Pupils know their targets for writing and the 'star and wish' marking scheme is used consistently across the school, showing them how to improve their work. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support groups of pupils for a variety of well-planned activities that ensure that all make good progress in lessons; also, they carry out observations that contribute well to the assessment of learning. In a few lessons, pace is slow and pupils are not engaged actively in learning activities that are matched well to their abilities. Pupils' progress is now tracked well and interventions are put in place to accelerate progress. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are making good progress in mathematics because of well-planned activities, teachers' good assessment, modifications to tasks in lessons and good questioning.

There have been improvements in the teaching of writing, which are now evident in lessons, pupils' work and good progress. Imaginative opportunities are planned, linking subjects within the good curriculum, for example, devising a script for a modern version of the Christmas story, using information and communication technology to extend learning when researching the role of charities. Interactive

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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whiteboards are used well to provide excellent visual support for learning. Writing opportunities are linked well throughout the curriculum, for example in describing young hedgehogs, First World War experiences and Antarctic exploration, which was also role played effectively on a stormy windy day. Resources are well prepared and stimulating activities are planned; for example, using priced items, real money, three-dimensional shapes in real buildings, and coordinates on the playground, as well as designing a pond. Such activities ensure that pupils’ practical application of mathematical skills is secure.

There is good care, guidance and support and examples of outstanding practice in the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, through the use of well-trained teaching assistants. Pupils are known well as individuals and the school works very successfully with a range of agencies, including social care and health professionals, to ensure that they are well supported. Transfer to secondary schools is good, as a result of close working and common procedures adopted by all the schools in the local cluster of schools.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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?

Ambitious targets for pupils’ attainment, combined with a school improvement plan that is well directed to achieve this, mean that leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, are focused sharply on continuing to make improvements. The leaders’ ambitions for the school are communicated to all staff effectively. The school uses a good range of monitoring activities, including lesson observations and pupil-progress meetings, to ensure that teaching and the resulting achievement are good. The governing body supports the school well and its members are regularly involved in visits to monitor the work of the school, especially new teaching initiatives, such as the systematic teaching of the sounds of the English language. They provide good challenge. They carry out their role in safeguarding well, through being well trained and meeting with the headteacher regularly. Safeguarding is good, especially in relation to the organisation of school transport, the training of all staff and risk assessments. At the pre-school building, signing-in and signing-out procedures ensure children are safe and all statutory requirements are met in the day-to-day running of the provision.

The school promotes equality of opportunity well and ensures that all groups of

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pupils make good progress.

There are strong partnerships in the local cluster of schools that enable teachers to share good practice, for example in the provision of sessions on extension work in mathematics and anti-racism workshops. Combined purchasing arrangements result in good value for money. Joint training opportunities are used well, for example, to promote outdoor learning.

The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. The school has audited this aspect of its work and is well aware that pupils have limited direct experience and understanding of people from other cultures.

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	1
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

Children make good progress from their different starting points and almost all reach the level of skills expected as they enter Year 1. They do particularly well in developing letter and sound links, writing and calculating skills. There is onsite provision for children from the age of two in the Tree House pre-school; the effectiveness of this is demonstrated in the positive attitudes to learning demonstrated by children entering the Reception class. That means that transition to full-time education is seamless; all staff work together well and have a good knowledge of learning and development of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children enjoy learning greatly and play together well and safely. They engage in creative role play, for example, making a bus and counting the passengers before going on an imaginary journey. They are confident to engage in conversation with visitors and explain what they are doing. Adults’ questioning and interaction with children use every opportunity to promote individuals’ development and

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assessments are recorded well, with opportunities for parents and carers to contribute. Learning opportunities are well planned, so that children make accelerated progress in their writing, learning letters and sounds, number and creative development. The children’s secure calculating skills were demonstrated in active engagement in number songs and scoring and subtraction games, which reinforce their learning well. There are strong relationships in both settings and leaders and managers plan effectively for continuous improvement of the provision as they evaluate children’s progress.

In the pre-school, activities are well planned, using assessments of children’s progress and following their interests so that children can continue to develop their skills. For example, a good range of craft activities is provided, promoting fine motor skills and multisensory play. The ‘key person’ system is well used to collate observations. Children enjoy the hot, healthy lunches provided and know how to stay healthy. They enjoy making dens and playing with sand and water outside, but children’s free access to the wider outdoor area is limited by gates and staffing. Parents and carers are supportive of the work of the pre-school, saying their children ask to go and ‘love it’.

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

All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agree that the school keeps their children healthy and safe and informs them of the progress they are making. There was an above-average response to the questionnaire. The vast majority agrees that their children enjoy school, teaching is good, the school meets particular needs and helps them support their children’s learning. A very small minority feels that the school does not prepare their children well enough for the future or deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspection evidence indicated that pupils are well prepared for the future and that their behaviour is good. Parents and carers comment that, despite the majority of pupils travelling from home by bus, the school communicates with them well through reading diaries, regular letters from teachers and the school newsletter. They comment that teachers know their children well, make learning fun for them, and there is a ‘great balance of activities and studies’.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Upton Noble C of E 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 inspection team received 76 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 195 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	67	88	8	11	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	62	82	14	18	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	43	57	33	43	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	57	31	41	0	0	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	47	62	26	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	49	64	25	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	54	71	22	29	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)	40	53	24	32	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	44	58	31	41	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	53	30	39	3	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	49	35	46	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	57	75	17	22	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	60	79	15	20	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	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 8 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 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Upton Noble C of E VC Primary School, Upton Noble BA4 6AU

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school and telling us about all that you do. We agree that you go to a good school. You are exceptionally healthy because of all the time you spend outdoors and you know the importance of a healthy diet. Your parents and carers, also, know how well you are doing and all that happens in school.

Some of the other good things are:

- Teachers make learning fun and interesting.
- The staff care for you well and keep you safe.
- You behave well, working well in pairs and groups in lessons, and you play together well.
- The headteacher and all the staff are working hard to teach you new skills in writing and reading.
- You take responsibilities in school to organise games at play time and look after younger pupils.
- The school council has good plans for improving the school grounds.

To make the school even better we have asked your teachers to:

- make sure that you spend more time in lessons doing challenging activities
- give you more experience of people from other cultures and countries.

We know that you will continue to work hard as you move on to your next school and we wish you the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Janet Dinsmore
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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