

Ulverley School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	104078
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	377014
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2012
Lead inspector	Mary Davis

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	448
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helena Tuomainen
Headteacher	Stephen Poole
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2009
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	22–23 May 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Mary Davis

Additional Inspector

Enid Korn

Additional Inspector

Peter Lawley

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed twenty-two lessons and all 16 teachers, spending 12 hours in classrooms. They held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff, and spoke to parents and carers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at: policies; development planning; data related to the tracking of pupils' progress; senior leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning; safeguarding documents; pupils' work; and 119 questionnaires from parents and carers, together with those from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Ulverley School is an above-average-sized primary school. The great majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language is below the national average with the largest group being of Pakistani heritage. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. A below average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

The Fun Factory, which offers provision for before- and after-school clubs, holiday clubs and pre-school, is based within the school grounds and is independently managed. The Lyndon Children's Centre is located within the school grounds and is also managed independently.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Ulverley is a good school. Much of its work has improved strongly since its previous inspection. Overall effectiveness is not outstanding because teaching and learning are not consistently good or outstanding.
- Overall achievement is good. Attainment is above average, particularly in reading. Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and is improving in Key Stage 1. Rates of progress in Key Stage 2, above average in English, are now accelerating in mathematics. Pupils show great enjoyment in lessons, are keen contribute their ideas and to do their best.
- Teaching is good. Most teachers plan well to meet pupils' individual needs. There is inconsistency, particularly in mathematics and in a small minority of lessons, when tasks are not sufficiently finely tuned to ensure that pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs are sufficiently supported or those of highest ability appropriately challenged. The quality of marking of pupils' work is inconsistent across the school so they do not always know how to improve.
- Behaviour is good and often exemplary. Pupils are considerate and respectful. They say that they feel safe and understand how to keep themselves safe. They say that bullying is very rare and that adults provide effective support. Although most pupils attend regularly, attendance overall is average, partly as a result of families taking term-time holidays.
- Leadership and management are good. Leaders provide good support to enable teachers to improve their practice. This has been effective in English and is now beginning to show an impact in mathematics. The curriculum is good, providing relevant and memorable experiences that support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education well. Although leaders track progress effectively, self-evaluation sometimes lacks sufficient rigour to ensure that swift action is taken to address identified issues.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good or outstanding by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently plan tasks that match pupils' individual needs, particularly in mathematics, by ensuring that those of highest ability are sufficiently challenged and that pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs are sufficiently supported
 - establishing a whole-school marking and feedback policy and ensuring effective practice so that pupils have a clearer understanding of how to improve their work.

- Raising levels of attendance by:
 - communicating the importance of good attendance to all pupils, parents and carers, in particular the negative impact of term-time holidays on pupils' achievement.

- Improving the rigour of self-evaluation to enable swift action to be taken to address identified issues.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Nursery with levels of skill and understanding that are typically in line with expectations for their age. They make good progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage and establish good learning and listening skills. In recent years, although attainment in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 has been above average, attainment in writing and mathematics has been average. During the current academic year this has improved as a result of strong subject leadership which has established effective strategies to secure improvement. A systematic literacy scheme enables pupils to develop their reading skills so that they are able to read fluently and with expression. Attainment by the end of Year 6 has been consistently above average over recent years in both English and mathematics. However, in 2011 the proportion attaining the highest levels and the progress made by those of highest ability was below average in mathematics while being above average in English. Leaders have acted to address this imbalance and there is clear evidence that progress is now rising strongly in mathematics. A significant proportion of the current Year 6 pupils have already reached the highest levels. Attainment in reading of this current cohort remains well above average.

Pupils say that they enjoy their learning and inspectors observed them showing excitement at their achievements. They are set tasks that are purposeful and relevant to their understanding, with the result that they are engrossed in their learning. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson observed, pupils enthusiastically calculated the price of theatre tickets, compared the price of buying a

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family ticket and worked out concessions. Across the school, pupils work well together in groups, supporting each other and cooperating well. In the best lessons, they work in partnership with their teachers, showing a mature understanding of how to be good learners as well as learning about the topic they are studying. Almost all parents and carers rightly expressed the view that their children enjoy their learning. They also expressed positive views about their children's progress.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are generally well supported in literacy and numeracy lessons and most teachers provide appropriate tasks for them enabling them to achieve. In other lessons, when they are working as part of whole-class activities, this support and well-matched work is sometimes missing, so they find some aspects of the work too difficult. The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language and the few pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make equal progress to their peers as a result of the additional support they receive.

Quality of teaching

The majority of the teaching observed during the inspection was good and some outstanding practice was observed. Warm relationships between pupils and adults are evident throughout the school. Teachers are skilled at planning tasks that are fun and provide opportunities for pupils to be creative, to work independently and as part of a team, effectively supporting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Planning enables pupils to explore a topic in detail. For example, in one lesson observed, pupils wrote descriptions of their models of an Antarctic camp, at the same time focusing on how to use complex language that would secure a high level literacy response. Reading is taught effectively and pupils express an enjoyment of books. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and know how to build learning progressively through a lesson, allowing opportunities for pupils to practise their skills and knowing when to add an extra level of challenge. A minority do not plan with the same care, so learning objectives are sometimes unclear and do not build successfully on prior knowledge and understanding. Most teachers use questioning effectively to promote pupils' thinking skills and are quick to identify when pupils are ready to move on. A minority of teachers are not so skilled, expecting the most-able pupils to tackle the easy work first of all before being set something more challenging, instead of pitching the first task at their level. Teachers use assessment of previous work well to inform their lesson planning, for example, by displaying pupils' work to demonstrate a common misunderstanding and enabling pupils of all abilities to achieve success. Although some marking of pupils' work provides clear guidance, additional challenge and opportunities for pupils to respond and to practice or to improve, this is not consistent across the school.

Almost all parents and carers expressed the view that their children are well taught although a small minority expressed concern about the school's provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Inspectors explored this issue thoroughly and found that there were some inconsistencies in this provision that they have asked the school to address, but that these pupils are included well and

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generally well supported in lessons.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

A minority of parents and carers expressed their concern about poor behaviour and those pupils with behaviour problems whom they perceive to be disturbing their children's learning. Inspectors found behaviour to be consistently good. Pupils show empathy and understanding of the very small minority with behaviour problems and help to support them well. They told inspectors that behaviour is usually good and that each class has well-established routines for the management of behaviour that are understood and respected. Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors, and kind and considerate to each other. They show respect for those with different beliefs or backgrounds.

Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber bullying, and speak confidently about ways in which they would respond if such incidents occurred. They say they are well supported by adults. Pupils take pride in their school and in taking responsible roles and learning to be independent. Older pupils support younger ones as playground pals and buddy readers, and pupils discussed issues with inspectors in a mature and considered manner.

Although pupils enjoy coming to school, attendance rates have only been average over recent years, despite the high level of support provided by the parent liaison worker, who works with the families of children whose circumstances may make them vulnerable to improve their attendance. The school is working to reduce the number of term-time holidays to minimise the impact of poor attendance on pupils' achievement.

Leadership and management

All areas of the school's work have improved since the previous inspection and the school has a good capacity to develop further. The headteacher and the senior team have high expectations of the school's performance. Since the previous inspection they have ensured that the quality of teaching has improved, and have taken robust action in working to eradicate inadequate practice. Teachers are held to account for pupil's achievement through regular progress meetings and inexperienced teachers are well supported to enable them to improve their practice. Middle leaders are particularly effective in monitoring the teaching of their subjects, tracking progress, identifying underachievement and providing intervention strategies that support both teachers and pupils. They are rigorous in their analysis of the performance of different groups of pupils and ensuring equal opportunity and that there is no discrimination. Although the school knows itself well, self-evaluation has lacked sufficient rigour to ensure that weaknesses in provision have been addressed rapidly, for example, in establishing an effective whole-school marking policy.

The governing body is well-informed and increasingly holds the school to account,

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recognising where improvements can be made and undertaking training to enable them to challenge the school further. Safeguarding arrangements meet current government requirements.

The headteacher has been passionate in establishing his vision for the curriculum, enabling pupils to use their imagination and develop creativity. As a result, pupils are provided with a wide range of experiences that meets their individual needs and supports their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, a highly successful African drumming course is being provided to boost the self-esteem and confidence of a group of Key Stage 2 pupils. These pupils were observed not only confidently performing but also working effectively as part of a team as they rehearsed their performance. The curriculum also includes such experiences as Forest School and a wide range of sport and music. Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoy opportunities to be creative.

The parent liaison worker provides outstanding support for parents and carers, for example by organising events for fathers to work with their children and for those who need support to learn English. Parents and carers are well informed about their children's progress and how to support their learning at home. A very few parents and carers expressed concern that the senior leaders are not easily accessible: the school recognises this area of concern and is working to address it.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



24 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ulverley School, Solihull B92 8RZ

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school for its recent inspection. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing all that you do. I particularly enjoyed watching your African drumming workshop.

You go to a good school. You are making good progress and your attainment is above that of pupils nationally by the time you reach Year 6, although you are making better progress in English than you are in mathematics. You told us that you enjoy your learning and want to do well. The school is well run and leaders have worked hard to ensure that teaching is good and that you progress well. We have asked them to ensure that you always experience teaching of the highest quality. They can do this by making sure that teachers plan activities that match your ability; not too hard and not too easy. You can help by telling them when this is the case. Most teachers provide you with clear targets and give you opportunities to respond to the comments they make when they mark your work, so that you know your next steps in learning, but we have asked leaders to make sure that this is always the case.

You behave well, are confident that the school will keep you safe and you know how to keep yourselves safe. We were particularly impressed by the way in which you work together in lessons and support each other. Your attendance is average and so we have asked the school to improve on this, particularly by discouraging term-time holidays. You told inspectors that you enjoy your lessons because the curriculum is fun and enables you to develop your own ideas and be creative. The leaders are making sure you continue to learn well, develop well as young people and ensuring your safety. We have asked them to act more quickly when they identify that something needs improving. You can help them by continuing to work hard.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mary Davis
Lead inspector

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