

Underwood West Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133271
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	381484
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2012
Lead inspector	Kathleen McArthur

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	408
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eddie Liptrot
Headteacher	Jane Tomlinson
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Kathleen McArthur
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Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 24 lessons taught by 22 teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils and staff. The team observed the school's work, and looked at school and national data, pupils' workbooks, improvement plans, monitoring records and procedures for the care and protection of pupils (safeguarding). Responses to the 30 questionnaires received from parents and carers, and those completed by pupils and staff were analysed.

Information about the school

The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is over twice the national average. The number of pupils supported at school action and with statements of their special educational needs is well above average. The school meets the current floor standards set by the government which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. A breakfast club is provided each morning.

The school holds the Inclusion Quality Mark.

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

- This is a good school. It is not outstanding because, although pupils' achievement is good, their attainment in English and mathematics, while rising rapidly, is average rather than higher. Pupils enjoy school and the comment, 'learning is fun', was heard many times. Parents and carers expressed positive views in their questionnaires. All agreed the school keeps children safe and many commented that staff are approachable and helpful.
- Particular strengths of the school are the Early Years Foundation Stage, the outstanding curriculum and the care and guidance provided for all pupils.
- All groups of pupils achieve well over time. However, the proportion of pupils attaining higher levels is lower than that found nationally. Children get a good start and progress very well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils make good progress through the school. Consistent strategies for teaching letters and sounds in small pupil groups have proved effective in raising attainment in reading and writing.
- Teaching is good, and much is outstanding. Pupils enjoy their lessons, have good attitudes to learning and present their work with great care, as seen in their high quality 'Best Books'. Minor variations in teaching quality remain where assessment information is not always consistently used in planning tasks to provide suitable challenges for pupils of all abilities.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, resulting in good behaviour and attitudes. Pupils feel safe in school and cooperate well with classmates and staff. Consistent behaviour management ensures the school is a harmonious environment. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable receive highly skilled sensitive support in the Nurture classes.
- Inspired by the senior leaders, staff and governors are united in the drive for school improvement. Rigorous performance management and well-targeted

professional development have raised the quality of teaching, boosted attainment and accelerated progress throughout the school. Consequently, any remaining gaps are rapidly and securely narrowing.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise attainment in English and mathematics by:
 - making very precise use of assessment data to match work to pupils' needs, and especially to provide work with even greater challenge for more-able pupils
 - ensuring the existing outstanding practice in teaching is shared throughout the school.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

When children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage, their attainment is well below that typically found, especially in language and mathematics. Provision has improved over recent years and is now excellent. All areas of learning are linked through exciting themes chosen by the children so they capture and build on their natural curiosity. As a result, children progress very rapidly. Staff use every possible minute of learning time and take every opportunity to develop language and mathematical skills. For example, they promoted lively discussions as the children measured water on the pirate ship and counting in tens while moving into their small letters and sounds groups. By the end of Reception, pupils' skills are close to those expected for their age.

Inspectors agree with the responses in parent and carers' questionnaires that their children progress well. Lesson observations show pupils listen hard, behave well, take a pride in their work and cooperate happily with staff and their classmates, all of which supports their good progress. Well-organised support for pupils at school action, those with statements of their special educational needs and those who may be vulnerable due to their circumstances ensures any potential barriers to learning are minimised. For example, there is carefully targeted one-to-one support with reading. Consequently, they progress as well as their classmates.

Pupils' attainment is broadly average by the end of Key Stage 1, and broadly in line with national averages at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils currently in Year 6 are securely on course to meet challenging targets; one commented, 'We have had lots of support, which has helped us a great deal.' Good teaching and additional support meet most learning needs effectively, although more-able pupils are sometimes not fully challenged. School leaders' rigorous actions in response to differences in performance between pupil groups, including staff development and well-targeted intervention and support, have successfully narrowed gaps. Throughout the school, progress is accelerating, and data show pupils in all year groups are making better than average progress.

Attainment in reading is broadly in line with national averages at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Younger pupils enjoy the daily letters and sounds lessons which aid progress in reading and spelling, and 'sound out' and use the pictures to help them tackle new words. Older pupils talked enthusiastically about what they read at home and in school, and make full use of their reading skills, for example to research material for their 'Best Books'. Mathematics and writing skills support learning in all subjects, for example measuring the changes in ice cubes as they melt or writing instructions for making a 'biscuit bear'.

Quality of teaching

In all discussions, all pupils said, 'Learning is fun', and, 'We learn a lot'. This enjoyment, and positive, respectful relationships between pupils and staff, promotes good progress. Inspection findings confirm parents' and carers' views that teaching is good. Observations and school monitoring show an increasing proportion of teaching is outstanding, with examples in all stages and in the Nurture classes. These lessons feature a clear understanding of every pupil's needs and excellent subject knowledge, as seen in a science activity where Year 6 pupils were fascinated as they discovered how a sandwich is broken down in the digestive system.

Reading is taught well. For example, children in the Reception classes quickly acquire early reading skills through enjoyable activities such as 'trap the word' and 'sound talk'. Lessons make a strong contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through imaginative activities and the development of social skills. For example, discussing a parcel of artefacts from the People's Museum in a Year 4 literacy lesson extended pupils' vocabulary and enhanced their ability to work cooperatively and listen to each other's ideas. School strategies and procedures are consistently implemented and teaching assistants are skilled and well deployed to support learning. Pupils who have special educational needs and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable receive knowledgeable support, well matched to their particular needs.

Good quality assessment and tracking systems give teachers a clear view of pupil progress. Very occasionally, this information is not used in planning work for all abilities, especially for the more-able pupils, so teaching is less effective and progress slows to satisfactory. Workbooks are marked thoroughly and pupils say they understand and like the 'star and a wish' system that indicates success and what improvements are needed. Pupils know their individual learning targets and make full use of the daily 'early doors' sessions to review their work in relation to their targets.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils have positive attitudes to their work because the exciting, practical curriculum successfully captures and holds their interest, so they behave well in lessons. The large majority of parent and carers' questionnaire responses said behaviour is good and inspection findings confirm this. Although a few parents, carers and pupils expressed some concerns, behaviour is managed consistently well throughout the school and exclusions have dramatically reduced. The school places great emphasis on inclusion and offers very high quality care and support, for example through the Nurture classes for the very small minority of pupils who find it hard to manage their

behaviour. Consequently, these pupils are enabled to remain in school and any disruption to lessons is very rare. Pupils have a good understanding of the need for rules, say the school rules are fair and are keen to take home 'good news letters'. They trust staff to help if any problems arise, say they feel safe in school and that bullying is rare, commenting that, 'It always gets sorted out.' They are aware of different forms of bullying, such as prejudice based or cyber-bullying and the curriculum ensures they know how to care for their own safety.

Attendance is average and has improved significantly due to the school's sustained, strenuous efforts that have successfully reduced the number of pupils who do not attend regularly. The breakfast club provides a healthy and pleasant start for those who attend so they are well prepared for learning. Good liaison with all external support agencies has contributed to improvements in attendance and behaviour.

Leadership and management

Leaders, managers and staff fully support the ambitious vision and strong commitment to ongoing improvement. Leaders at all levels are acutely aware of what needs to be done to continue to raise attainment and boost progress. Meticulous self-assessment and data analysis identifies clear priorities leading to tightly focused plans, backed by rigorous actions and success criteria. Areas for improvement from the previous inspection have been carefully tackled. The proportion of good teaching has increased and there is much outstanding practice throughout the school. Well-planned professional development and performance management based on the outcomes of self-evaluation have rapidly boosted attainment and throughout the school progress is accelerating, although few pupils reach the higher levels. The governing body is very involved and knowledgeable. Committees meet regularly, and the raising attainment committee closely monitors and sharply challenges the impact of actions to raise standards. The highest priority is placed on equality of opportunity. There is no discrimination and the school's tireless efforts ensure all pupils can access everything on offer and benefit from their time in school.

The curriculum is outstanding because it has contributed significantly to the acceleration in progress and rising attainment and prepares pupils well for the future. Careful planning ensures full coverage of all basic skills, and writing in particular. Imaginative topics make meaningful links between subjects. For example, making 'rocky road' coconut cakes in Year 3 linked mathematics, literacy and science. The 'Super Learning Days', such as Diversity Day or Olympic Day are liked well by pupils, parents and carers, and are an important element in the very effective promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The wide range of clubs and enrichment activities are very popular and give pupils further good opportunities to extend their basic and social skills. Parents and carers' questionnaire responses show they feel well informed and are helped to support learning at home. Safeguarding arrangements meet all current requirements and give no cause for concern. Child protection training is up to date and the site is very secure.

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.



6 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Underwood West Primary School, Crewe CW1 3LF

The inspectors enjoyed visiting your school and would like to thank you for helping them. We send special thanks to the school council and to the other pupils who gave up some of their lunchtime to talk to us. We enjoyed listening to what you had to say, and were impressed by your good behaviour and the way you help each other and your teachers. Your parents and carers told us they are pleased with the school.

The inspection judged your school to be good. The Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a strong start. The leaders and managers keep you safe and care for you well, and you say the staff always help with any problems. Teaching is good so you progress well and reach the standards expected for your age when you leave the school, although we think that the school could do more to help more of you reach higher levels. You said you enjoy lessons and the Super Learning Days. We saw some splendid 'Best Books' which you must be very proud of.

To make your school even better, we have asked the school leaders and managers:

- to help you make faster progress and reach higher standards by providing more challenge for those of you who learn quickly, making sure all your work is matched to what you are able to do
- making sure all teaching is the best it can be.

I am sure you will be keen to help so watch out for more challenges!

We send you our very best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Kathleen McArthur
Lead inspector

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