

# Uphill Primary School

Old Church Road, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 4XH

**Inspection dates** 26–27 September 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although pupils' progress is generally improving, achievement in mathematics is not yet good. Standards are at the national average, which is lower than might be expected, given the pupils' starting points.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1, while average, have fallen due to slower rates of progress for pupils by the end of Year 2.
- Teachers' marking and guidance for pupils on how to improve their work in mathematics are variable in quality.
- While teaching has improved significantly across the school, some lessons are over-directed by the teacher, which limits opportunities to challenge and support all pupils.
- Younger pupils in Years 1 to 4 are not as secure in their conceptual understanding of number and calculation strategies.
- Leaders' evaluations of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress are imprecise.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is committed to securing improvement and has good systems for tracking and analysing pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' achievement in English is good. They reach standards in reading and writing that exceed those seen nationally by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils enjoy school. They behave well in and beyond lessons. They show keen attitudes to learning and respect and courtesy to others.
- Children throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in all areas of learning.
- No form of bullying is tolerated and pupils feel safe and well cared for.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to assume responsibilities in school and to take part in a wide range of out-of-school activities.
- Governors provide a good level of challenge and support. Together with the headteacher, they have worked successfully to address weaker teaching and support staff professionally in developing their practice.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 28 lessons, some of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors also undertook two learning walks, which comprised a number of short visits to lessons: one to look at provision for pupils with special educational needs and the other to look at learning across the curriculum. Inspectors also observed two assemblies, one each for younger and older pupils.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, representatives of the governing body and local authority and with senior and middle managers.
- Inspectors took account of the 36 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and discussions held with parents and carers during the inspection. They also took account of the views of staff, including those expressed in 10 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Other aspects of the school’s work were examined. The inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school’s own data on pupils’ current progress, a set of pupils’ work books, planning and monitoring documentation, records related to behaviour and attendance, and the school’s central record of checks on staff.

## Inspection team

David Townsend, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

David Nebesnuick

Additional inspector

Louise Sharples

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Uphill is a larger-than-average primary school. It draws its pupils from Uphill village and beyond. There is a morning breakfast club which is managed by the governing body and an after-school club which is managed privately.
- The proportion of pupils identified as disabled or with special educational needs, who are supported through school action, is well below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. Their needs relate mainly to moderate learning difficulties, speech, language and communication difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- While most pupils are of White British heritage, an increasing proportion come from minority ethnic backgrounds. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium is below average.
- The school currently meets the government's floor standard, which is the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been a number of changes in teaching staff since the last inspection.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that, by July 2013, it is consistently good or better by:
  - improving the range of strategies used in all lessons to help pupils share, extend and review their own learning and thinking in more depth
  - using assessment information more precisely so that teachers plan tasks to meet the learning needs of all pupils successfully, especially the most and least able.
- Raise pupils' achievement and attainment consistently across the school, especially in Key Stage 1 and mathematics across the school, by:
  - ensuring all less confident readers in Key Stage 1 receive precise advice on how to identify words in their reading
  - improving the consistency in the marking of pupils' mathematics work and of writing in Years 1 and 2 so that pupils are clear about how well they are doing and the next steps in their learning
  - ensuring the school's assessment systems for mathematics have a fuller impact on promoting accelerated progress for all pupils.
- Sharpen evaluations of teaching by leaders at all levels to increase the impact of leadership on teaching and pupils' achievement in mathematics by:
  - focusing lesson observation judgements on how well the teaching promotes good learning and progress for all pupils
  - securing the consistent implementation of a robust policy for developing pupils' calculation skills.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- As pupils move up the school, the progress they make is variable due to inconsistent teaching, so that pupils' overall achievement requires improvement.
- Children's knowledge and skills, when children join the Reception class, are slightly below those expected for their age, especially in terms of boys' communication and language. They make good progress across all areas of their learning because the teaching team quickly assesses and addresses the learning needs of individual children.
- Children's social development and independence are promoted well. Children respond to the careful balance of adult- and child-led activities with good concentration, listening and cooperation. This is most apparent when children are engaged in investigative and creative activities, such as following a recipe to make porridge in the three bears' cottage role-play area.
- Pupils' rates of progress by the end of Year 2 are not yet good and this accounts for a drop in standards to broadly average levels in reading, writing and numeracy in 2012. This is primarily due to the legacy of some weaker teaching and changes in staffing leading to, for example, inconsistencies in marking and advice to pupils on how to improve their writing.
- Most younger pupils apply their knowledge of letters and sounds (called phonics) competently to decode unfamiliar words. A systematic programme is in place and, in one well-structured lesson, pupils made good progress because strategies were modelled well and the pace of learning was brisk. However, the skills of some lower ability pupils in Years 1 and 2 are less secure as a result of imprecise teaching advice on how sounds are pronounced and blended for reading.
- Pupils generally make good progress across Key Stage 2 in English, as a result of secure teaching of basic skills in Years 3 and 4, effective marking and feedback to pupils on how to improve their written work and regular opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum.
- Older pupils talked enthusiastically about reading and read fluently, showing good understanding of the text. Most pupils demonstrated good strategies for approaching new words.
- As a result of stronger teaching more recently, particularly in Years 5 and 6, achievement in mathematics is improving but requires improvement overall. This is because some younger pupils lack confidence in terms of their understanding of key number concepts, their use of appropriate calculation strategies and their problem-solving skills. Previous national test results and the recent unvalidated assessments for Year 6 show the proportion of pupils who meet or exceed the expected rate of progress is weaker in this subject than in English.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. This is because, while some good individualised and group support is given in most lessons, this is not yet consistently the case across lessons.
- Targeted tuition programmes for those whom the pupil premium provides support have had a positive impact on outcomes for these pupils, who are now attaining at levels similar to their peers. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are appropriately supported in class and make progress in line with all pupils.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The overall quality of teaching is not yet good because, although the proportion of good lessons has risen over time and weak teaching has been eradicated, there remains too much variation in practice.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive in all lessons and result in good attitudes to learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' effort and behaviour to which they respond admirably. The impact of this on pupils' social and moral development is clearly evident in pupils' work and in their cooperative learning.
- Assessments of pupils' reading and writing skills have become more accurate and in-depth

since the last inspection and this has helped to set effective targets for future literacy learning with pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6. These practices are not as advanced in mathematics. Although similar systems are now in place, it is too soon to see the full impact on pupils' learning and progress.

- Marking varies in quality, as confirmed by inspectors' work scrutiny and lesson observations. While some good guidance was seen in books as to how pupils might improve their work, particularly in English, this is not universally the case.
- The most effective teaching provides pupils with challenge and support for their learning in equal measure. In these lessons, teachers use good subject knowledge to model ideas clearly, move learning on briskly and use questions and well-structured tasks to challenge and extend all pupils' learning. However, where teaching is less effective, whole-class introductions slow the pace of learning, with pupils expected to sit and listen for too long. Also, the match between activities set and pupils' needs is imprecise and hampers learning, especially for the more and least able.
- Teaching in mathematics is improving but variability remains. In a good session seen in Years 5 and 6 exploring the calculation of decimals, pupils were equipped with clear strategies to approach their work, resources to aid their thinking and opportunities to explore, share and review their ideas together. Conversely, in other numeracy sessions, these approaches were less apparent such that less confident pupils were unsure of how to proceed and more able pupils finished quickly.
- Teaching assistants are adept at supporting individuals and groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, but, upon occasion, the tasks set are not as closely matched to the pupils' needs and this slows progress.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils behave well both in lessons and around school. Staff have high expectations of pupils' conduct. Pupils are very clear about the behaviour systems in place, which are applied across the school very consistently. Intervention support for pupils with particular behavioural and emotional needs is effective.
- Pupils are proud of their school and fully support its ethos. They are respectful towards each other and to adults and, from a young age, show good levels of cooperation when learning together. They move around the school and play together sensibly.
- Pupils get good opportunities to assume responsibilities; for example, trained 'peer mediators' are on hand to help others resolve issues amicably. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 talk warmly about the school's buddying system.
- The school actively promotes the importance of good attendance and punctuality. As a result of a concerted effort by the school and external agencies to work with parents and carers, attendance has risen to above the national average over the last year.
- Parents and carers report that they are confident that their children feel safe at school and well looked after. Bullying is very rare. Pupils, in discussion with inspectors, demonstrated a clear understanding of the different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying. They are confident the school would address any concerns they might have promptly and effectively.

### **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- The headteacher has maintained a clear vision of the improvements required, during a period of significant change. Inspection evidence confirms that the staff fully support her drive for improved standards. Expectations are high. Leaders recognise, however, that continuing inconsistencies in teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement is one of the reasons why the school's leadership and management are not yet good.
- Senior leaders and governors have secured further improvements since the last inspection, in terms of pupils' behaviour, the curriculum and the good rates of achievement in English. These gains and the stronger links forged with parents and carers, whose support for the school has increased markedly, demonstrate that the school has the capacity to sustain further improvement.
- Improved assessment systems and more fine-tuned tracking and analysis of the progress

being made by year groups and specific groups of pupils are providing a secure basis to continue improving the school. The headteacher and senior leaders have built up a clear picture of pupils' achievement.

- Since the last inspection, there has been an unsettled period and changes in staffing, as well as a restructuring of senior and middle leaders' roles and responsibilities. The headteacher and governors have needed to tackle inadequate teaching and have done so robustly. Staff are united behind the headteacher in her drive for raised pupils' achievement.
- Middle leaders, in teams, have been closely involved in monitoring and evaluating achievement in English and mathematics. Approaches that have worked in English, such as establishing whole-school policies for key aspects of teaching and assessment processes, are being implemented in mathematics, but it is too early to see the full impact of these on pupils' achievement.
- Systems for evaluating the quality of teaching are comprehensive. Teachers report that the process of lesson observations and subsequent opportunities for focused training have been beneficial to their professional development. These approaches have led to an increase in the proportion of good teaching seen across the school.
- However, the school's view on the overall quality of teaching was more generous than that of inspectors. Its records show that, while the headteacher's judgements were accurate during joint lesson observations, evaluations over time in school are not always sharply focused upon the impact the teaching has on the quality of learning and rates of progress for all pupils.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- is a strength
- is ambitious for the school, upholds its statutory responsibilities diligently and knows the school's strengths and weaknesses well
- holds senior leaders to account effectively and provides leaders and managers with a good level of challenge and support
- monitors and manages financial resources well to support improved provision and rising outcomes for pupils. This can be seen in the school's judicious use of the pupil premium.
- The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. 'Wow' days to start new topics, practical fieldwork such as the study of fossils, and the Great Wood residential trip engage pupils and spark their curiosity. A learning walk to visit a series of lessons confirms that the curriculum is broad and balanced, enhanced by special visitors such as the Royal Art Academy, peripatetic music tuition and a range of after school activities.
- Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet current government requirements and there are robust arrangements in place for checking staff and securing site safety.
- The local authority has provided appropriate levels of support over time to help develop teaching in literacy and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Further mathematics consultancy is currently being put in place, in recognition that, following an analysis of 2012 achievement data for the subject, more support in this area is required.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109095
<b>Local authority</b>	North Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	401301

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	307
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Stewart Castle
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chloe Langson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13–14 July 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01934 626769
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