

Upwood Primary School

Ramsey Road, Upwood, Huntingdon, PE26 2QA

Inspection dates

9–10 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils make good progress and attain above-average standards by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher and her team of staff have worked hard together to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This has been successful, and has raised achievement.
- Almost all teaching is good and some is outstanding.
- Achievement improved last year, particularly in writing at Key Stage 1 and in mathematics at Key Stage 2. Attainment in these areas had previously lagged behind that in other subjects.
- Pupils make good progress in reading throughout the school.
- Pupils' have extremely positive attitudes to learning, and show excellent relationships and behaviour. Their great care and concern for each other contribute considerably to the school's success, and to their enjoyment and safety.
- Children's enjoyment of school when they start Reception is greatly enhanced by the cheerful support of their 'buddies' in Year 6.
- Attendance is above average.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although they are catching up, a few pupils still have not made as much progress as they should, particularly in writing in younger classes, and in mathematics in older classes.
- Even in good lessons, there are inconsistencies that mean most teaching is still not outstanding. For example, occasionally work is not hard enough for some pupils, or marking does not tell them how to improve.
- Pupils do not have many chances to help assess each other's work.
- The organisation of the school's computers means that, usually, only a few pupils in the same class can use them at once. This makes it difficult for teachers to use computers to help pupils to learn in different subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed substantial parts of 13 lessons, and made several shorter visits to lessons to check on how pupils are taught phonics (how the sounds in words are represented by letters), to check the range of the curriculum, and to see how well support is provided to pupils who need extra help.
- Discussions were held with pupils, staff, with members of the governing body and with an officer of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of 35 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), spoke informally to a similar number of parents and carers at the start of the school day, and reviewed parental views in the school's own questionnaire, which focused on behaviour and safety. A few parents wrote to the team, or spoke to the lead inspector on the telephone, and their views were also considered.
- A range of documentation was examined, particularly that related to pupils' progress and to keeping them safe.
- Samples of pupils' work in their books were examined, and several younger pupils read to inspectors.

Inspection team

Steven Hill, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Margaret Lewis	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Upwood is a little smaller than average for a primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British, with a few from a range of different minority ethnic heritages. Hardly any speak English as an additional language. An above-average proportion of pupils start at the school other than in the Reception year.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is a little below average. The proportion who are supported at school action plus or who have statements of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is similar to that in most schools.
- The school meets the current government floor targets, which set minimum levels for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A private breakfast and after-school club takes place on the site. This is inspected and reported upon separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eliminate inconsistencies in teaching, so that more is outstanding, by:
 - setting different tasks for pupils of different ability more precisely, so that work in lessons is always challenging but manageable for everyone
 - improving marking in pupils' books so that they are told more clearly how they can improve, and ensuring that teachers' comments are always acted upon
 - giving pupils more opportunities to work together in evaluating each other's work, so that they can be more actively involved in learning from each other.
- Consolidate the improvements already made in pupils' progress, particularly by:
 - closing some remaining shortfalls in the attainment of a few older pupils in mathematics, especially through the system of carefully-tailored one-to-one and small-group support established in the last year
 - starting younger pupils on using a joined handwriting style at an earlier stage, and making sure they use this consistently in all their work as they get older.
- Implement current plans to upgrade and rearrange the computer equipment in the school, so that it is more easily accessible to all the pupils in a class, and can be used more effectively by pupils to support their learning in different subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start in Reception with skills and understanding that vary between individuals and from year to year but which, overall, lag behind national expectations. They make good progress, with many reaching standards much nearer those expected by the time they start Year 1.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress so their attainment is average by the end of Year 2. Pupils make a good start to their reading in younger classes because of successful teaching of phonics.
- For some time, attainment in writing at the end of Year 2 had been weaker than in other subjects. This gap closed considerably last year. This was helped by teachers making more use of pupils' phonic skills to support their writing, as well as by giving them more chances to discuss their ideas before putting pen to paper. However, pupils are slow to develop a consistent, joined handwriting style and this can impair their fluency in getting their ideas written down.
- Progress in Key Stage 2 has been good for a number of years, particularly in English. Older pupils build well on their good start in reading in younger classes, and read regularly and with enjoyment. Progress in writing has been consistently good.
- Achievement in mathematics at Key Stage 2 has tended to lag behind that in English, and results at the end of Year 6 were weak in 2011. A number of improvements to the mathematics curriculum, plus specifically tailored help to those who were falling behind, saw a major improvement in 2012, with attainment above average for mathematics as well as for English. This represents good progress in the light of this group's starting points. Data for pupils in other classes show a similar improvement in mathematics progress, although attainment for some older pupils has not caught up with their accomplishments in English.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special education needs make the same good progress as their classmates because they are given work that is challenging but manageable, and an appropriate level of support that helps them cope whilst developing their independence. Pupils who struggle to conform to the expected levels of behaviour are given extensive help. Their behaviour improves and, consequently, they soon begin to make the same good academic progress as their classmates.
- Pupils who are known to be entitled to the pupil premium are given support socially or academically if they need it, and achieve just as well as others. The few pupils from different ethnic groups, or who speak English as an additional language, make good progress.
- Overall results can be distorted slightly by those of pupils who join the school in other year groups than reception, including a significant minority who struggle either with academic work or behaviour. However, the school's good systems, including welcoming such pupils and catering for their needs, mean that this effect is minimised, particularly once pupils are fully settled and their progress improves.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers have very positive relationships with pupils who, consequently, respect them, work hard and behave extremely well. Classrooms are orderly, purposeful and productive. A good pace ensures high levels of interest and engagement. Teachers' enthusiasm for topics is often

transferred to pupils.

- Teachers generally use assessment data well to plan lessons that are matched to pupils' needs, often giving different work to those working at different levels. Very occasionally, this match is not tight enough, and some pupils are not challenged sufficiently for parts of the lesson.
- Teachers plan interesting activities, with high levels of practical engagement that enthuse pupils. This was seen in a science lesson with Year 5, when pupils demonstrated patience and good collaborative skills as they undertook an experiment to dissolve sweets under different conditions, observing carefully and offering ideas confidently.
- Teachers use a variety of strategies to actively involve pupils in lessons, with regular discussions often supporting pupils' thinking. Pupils frequently evaluate their own work, and are developing skills in identifying what they need to do next to make progress. However, opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to assess each other's work, and to collaborate in improving it.
- Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to enhance their explanations and to make lessons more interesting. Some good opportunities are taken for pupils to use computers to help their learning. However, because it is difficult for more than a small group to have access to computers at the same time, such opportunities are limited. Too often, the equipment that is available is under-used as a result.
- Pupils are told clearly what they are meant to learn, and given good oral feedback on their success. However, written marking of pupils' work is inconsistent, particularly in how well it shows pupils, in detail, how to improve in future. Too often, teachers' comments are not specifically followed up in subsequent work.
- Targeted help from skilled teaching assistants makes a strong contribution to pupils' good progress and to their personal development. Their involvement in lunchtime supervision ensures consistency in behaviour throughout the day.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school both socially and academically, and this is reflected in above-average attendance. They have excellent relationships and treat each other kindly and with respect. The work of Year 6 buddies in supporting the youngest children is undertaken with care and consideration, and leads to great enjoyment by both age groups. This positive role model, reflecting the example set by staff, is a major strength of the school.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding, both in lessons and around the school. They are keen to succeed in class and work hard. Their collaborative skills are very good, and they share ideas and equipment amicably. They are confident in asking questions if they are puzzled, and show initiative in offering suggestions in class. They have strong views on a variety of issues, which they are able to express both clearly and politely.
- Pupils themselves are very positive about behaviour and are confident that adults will address any minor lapses quickly and, more importantly, fairly. Pupils in Year 6 stressed how teachers always listen to both sides of any disputes, and resolve them to everyone's satisfaction.
- Pupils feel extremely safe in school and have a secure understanding of what they can do to keep themselves safe. They have learnt about different kinds of bullying and are clear about the differences between this and other misbehaviour. They say that bullying is extremely rare here,

and are confident that it would be quickly dealt with should it occur. Although a few parents expressed doubts about how behaviour and bullying are dealt with in school, these misgivings are not shared, either by the vast majority of parents, or by their children.

- Pupils have a strong moral and social sense, and are sensitive to other people's views and values, reflecting thoughtfully, for example, on the meaning of religious symbolism in art, and in Christianity and Hinduism.

The leadership and management are good

- The strong educational direction given by the headteacher has resulted in a shared vision for the future. The actions of all staff and the governing body are focused on improving pupils' achievement through helping teachers improve their practice. This has been successful because of the effective teamwork of all concerned.
- Careful tracking of the progress of individuals and groups contributes significantly to the good provision to promote equal opportunities and combat discrimination. Any pupils who are not making the progress they should are given extra help or challenge.
- In the last year, much more of this help has been given on a one-to-one basis, and there is a much greater focus on giving support that is tailored to individuals' specific needs, rather than slotting them into a pre-planned programme. This is proving very successful in raising attainment.
- The pupil premium is used well to fund the increased one-to-one support for pupils mentioned above, but also to ensure that all pupils are able to be involved in the full range of school life, including in the two residential visits which take place during Key Stage 2.
- The systematic monitoring of progress and teaching by all leaders means that mutual support and constructive criticism are helping staff to improve their practice. Performance management contributes well to this process, and is properly linked to a programme of further training to help teachers meet their targets. The targets set are a judicious balance between school priorities, issues linked to teachers' leadership roles, and each individual's own classroom practice.
- There is a wide-ranging and interesting curriculum that supports pupils' behaviour and safety as well as their academic achievement. For example, good progress was seen in lessons in art, science and dance because of the great enthusiasm engendered by exciting subject content. There are good links made between different subjects, for example, when Year 6 increased their understanding of the function of the ear, while improving their skills in writing factual accounts.
- Resources are generally used well, but full use is not made of pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects because of difficulties in accessing equipment. The school is currently consulting with specialists in the local authority to determine how this can most efficiently be improved.
- The local authority provides effective light-touch support to the school, and has weighed in with more intensive help when needed to enable the school to cope with particular issues.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - ensures that safeguarding procedures meet requirements
 - has a clear view of strengths and weaknesses, and so provides a good balance of challenge

and support to the school

- is greatly enhanced by the active involvement of many governors in the day-to-day life of the school.

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

Unique reference number	110693
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	403127

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	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Toran Whybrow
Headteacher	Sharon Whitelaw
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2008
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