

Upland Primary School

Church Road, Bexleyheath, Kent, DA7 4DG

Inspection dates 17–18 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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

- In too many lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers talk for too long, have insufficiently high expectations of what pupils can do, do not check that all pupils make good progress, and do not give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work.
- There are weaknesses in subject leadership, especially in English where standards in reading and writing have fallen.
- Prior to the arrival of the new headteacher, senior leaders did not deal effectively with pupils' misbehaviour. There are improvements this term, but children and a few parents and carers still express some concerns.
- The curriculum does not promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The governing body was not checking that senior leaders were putting measures in place to secure rapid school improvement, prior to the new headteacher's appointment.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher is taking a strong lead to drive rapid improvement in teaching and behaviour.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes do very well because teaching is always at least good and promotes children's learning and independence effectively.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs usually make good progress because of effective support and teaching that is matched to their needs.
- Partnerships with parents and carers are strong.
- Attendance has improved significantly and is well above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors had meetings with staff, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and vice chair, and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the school’s improvement plans; the school’s data for pupils’ current progress; reports on teaching; pupils’ workbooks; questionnaires completed by 15 staff; and documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 27 lessons, of which four were joint observations, and a few short visits to lessons, and listened to two groups of pupils in Key Stage 1 read.
- An inspector met some parents and carers informally at the start of the school inspection. There were 28 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Angela Konarzewski, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Joyce Lydford	Additional inspector
Kewal Goel	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Upland is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The new headteacher has been in post since September 2012.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is average, while the proportion supported at school action plus and with a statement is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for extra funding because of disadvantage is below average.
- The school meets the current floor standard which sets the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to good by making sure that all teachers:
 - have high expectations of every pupil
 - provide activities that are challenging, motivating and enjoyable for all pupils
 - create more opportunities for pupils to work independently
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to talk about their work with a partner
 - provide reading books which are well matched to pupils' reading levels, especially in Key Stage 1
 - provide marking and feedback that clearly helps all pupils to know what they need to do to improve their work, especially for writing.
- Increase the impact of school leaders on raising pupils' achievement by:
 - refining the school's performance management procedures to focus more on how well teaching helps pupils to learn and make progress
 - making sure that the curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development consistently well across the school
 - tackling weaknesses in subject leadership, especially for English
 - improving systems for recording incidents of bad behaviour and bullying, and checking the impact of actions for dealing with them
 - developing the skills of the governing body so that it can hold leaders fully to account for the school's improvement
 - checking the impact of extra funding for disadvantaged pupils on their achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Most parents and carers who responded to the online inspection questionnaire consider that their children are making good progress. However, inspectors found that, after a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes, pupils' progress across Key Stages 1 and 2 is too variable. Almost all make expected progress by the end of Year 6 but only a few exceed it because of weaknesses in teaching.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils who receive extra funding, and those with special educational needs, is generally better than their peers, because they are usually well supported through specially tailored programmes and by skilful and dedicated teaching assistants.
- When pupils leave at the end of Year 6 they achieve average standards in reading and writing. This represents a fall in standards in English, especially in writing, compared with previous years. In mathematics, although there has been a slight drop overall, standards are higher than in English, with a larger than average proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels.
- Children join the Nursery class with skills and abilities that are broadly in line with those typically seen for their age. Good and sometimes excellent teaching promotes their learning very well across the Early Years Foundation Stage so that, by the time they enter Year 1, they are reaching standards above those expected for their age.
- The achievement of boys and girls is now broadly similar, except in Year 6 where, as at the last inspection, girls outperform boys.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching in English and mathematics is not consistently well matched to the learning needs of different groups of pupils. The effective deployment of teaching assistants often compensates for this with pupils who have special educational needs, but the learning needs of other groups are not always well met. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and sometimes better. Across the rest of the school, it requires improvement and is occasionally inadequate.
- Teachers in Key Stages 1 and 2 regularly talk for too long in lesson introductions and over-direct pupils, so that there is limited time left for pupils to work independently.
- In some classes, teachers encourage pupils to talk to a partner in order to clarify ideas, develop good speaking and listening skills, and to ensure all children participate in lessons, but this good practice is not used by all teachers. Where discussion is not promoted in this way, only a few pupils put up their hands to respond to questions while others in the class 'switch off'.
- Phonics (linking sounds and letters) is systematically taught and benefits weaker readers in Key Stage 1. However, some of the reading books sent home with these pupils contain words that cannot be sounded out phonetically. This causes pupils to struggle with their reading and limits their progress. Similarly, some books sent home are too easy and do not therefore promote good progress in reading.
- Some outstanding teaching in a Reception class was seen when a teacher carefully guided children to understand the book, *After the Storm*. She asked open questions such as 'How do you think Percy was feeling?' to which children responded thoughtfully and appropriately in full sentences, for example, 'He didn't like the wind.'
- There are some examples of high-quality writing, especially in Year 6 where one pupil wrote, 'Serena's lungs felt as if they would explode as she sprinted, praying that she was running fast enough and hoping that the fire was a good distance away.' However, the quality of writing is mixed across the school. Marking does not consistently inform pupils

clearly about what they need to do to improve their work, and teachers' handwriting is not always legible.

- Similarly, in mathematics, although over half the Year 6 pupils attained the higher levels in 2012 because of effective booster classes, variations in teaching quality, including marking of pupils' workbooks in Key Stages 1 and 2, mean that pupils do not make as much progress as they could.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Pupils usually display positive attitudes to learning and they behave well in lessons where they are appropriately challenged and motivated. However, in classes where teachers talk for too long or activities are uninteresting, some pupils lose concentration and they misbehave.
- Although the vast majority of parents and carers believe that their children are safe and that they behave well in school, a few expressed concerns about behaviour and bullying. Children similarly reported that there are incidents involving bullying, but these are now being dealt with effectively.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and they have already had a special assembly about it this term, delivered by a visiting expert. They speak very knowledgeably about all aspects of the subject, including cyber-bullying.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to take responsibility and they suggested that they would like to have, for example, Year 6 house captains, rather than teachers fulfilling such roles. Similarly, pupils are not encouraged to develop independence, as teachers over-direct them, except in the Early Years Foundation Stage where their independent learning skills are very well promoted.
- Attendance has improved considerably since the last inspection due to the school's actions to tackle this issue, including rewarding regular attendance.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because neither teaching nor achievement are good.
- The leadership of the headteacher, in contrast with that of other senior leaders, is strong. She has prepared a rigorous programme for tackling the school's weaknesses, rightly prioritising the quality of teaching. One member of staff wrote on the questionnaire, 'The new headteacher is inspiring and dynamic and she is leading us forward.' All staff who responded to the questionnaires were very positive about the school and its new leadership.
- Performance management arrangements have not been sufficiently strong and, as a result, some teachers are being financially rewarded beyond what the quality of their typical teaching would indicate is appropriate.
- The school's curriculum requires improvement because it is not sufficiently creative or inspiring to engage and motivate all pupils, and it does not promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
- There are weaknesses in subject leadership, especially in English, where the subject leader has identified weaknesses but has not taken any action to address them. Consequently standards in English have declined.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors wisely sought the support of the local authority in recruiting a high-quality headteacher for September 2012.
 - Governors have not received the necessary training to be able to check that senior leaders

- are securing rapid school improvement, but they are now showing a better awareness of weaknesses and an improved understanding of their responsibilities in relation to them.
- The extra funding for disadvantaged pupils has been used successfully to provide one-to-one tuition where needed, coupled with extra support in mathematics and reading. In some cases, school trips have been funded. However, governors have not carried out a full analysis to find out whether the extra funding for disadvantaged pupils has made any difference to their performance.
 - The governing body has not taken sufficient action to strengthen the procedures for monitoring teachers' performance; these are not sufficiently robust to improve teaching. As a result, some teachers have been promoted higher up the pay scale than they deserve.
 - Governors ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities. All staff have been vetted and are trained appropriately to ensure pupils are kept safe and free from harm.
 - The governing body is committed to ensuring the school improves and is supporting the new headteacher effectively. Current plans reflect this commitment, acknowledging that there are areas requiring improvement.
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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	134118
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	402595

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	455
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Baker
Headteacher	Victoria Sengupta
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 March 2010
Telephone number	020 8303 2175
Fax number	020 8301 1635
Email address	head@upland.bexley.sch.uk

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