

# Uplands Junior School

Finchfield Road West, Finchfield, Wolverhampton, WV3 8BA

**Inspection dates** 14–15 November 2012

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The academic standards that pupils reach have been high for a number of years. Pupils who receive extra government funding and other pupils of the same age in the school attain similarly.
- Pupils achieve well. The proportion of pupils making expected and better-than-expected progress compares well with that in other schools nationally, especially in reading and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils make good progress because of the commitment of staff to ensure every pupil is given the right amount of support to achieve well.
- Pupils enjoy school and are well motivated, enthusiastic learners. They behave well and show respect to each other and to adults.
- The school is well led by the headteacher and her team. Leaders and managers know the school well and have a clear vision and plan of action to move it forward.
- As a result of good leadership and rigorous monitoring of performance by the headteacher and governors, teaching and pupils' progress have improved over time.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teaching requires improvement. There is not always sufficient time for pupils to learn by finding things out for themselves.
- Although the school improvement plan identifies the right areas for development, measurable criteria for judging success in reaching the targets set for pupils' achievement are not always precise enough.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons including one observation with the headteacher. In addition other shorter observations of lessons were carried out with the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, subject leaders, staff and pupils. Inspectors met with representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and scrutinised their work in books and on display.
- There were 25 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View); inspectors spoke informally to several parents and a letter was received from a parent.
- A number of documents were scrutinised including the school's improvement plans, school data on pupils' progress, the school's records of checks on teaching and learning, staff questionnaires, minutes of the governing body's meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Patricia Hunt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Georgina Beasley	Additional Inspector
David King	Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school
- The proportion of pupils that receives extra funding through the government's pupil premium (pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children or those with a parent in the armed services) is below average.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The remainder are from a number of different minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expected standards for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Pupils are educated onsite. There is no regular alternative educational provision offsite.

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

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring pupils:
  - have regular opportunities to plan their own activities and learn independently
  - understand what is expected in lessons by presenting learning in smaller chunks
  - have time to complete planned tasks and activities during lessons
  - are further involved in assessing their own work and that of others and so take more responsibility for their own learning.
- Improve further school leadership by:
  - ensuring the school improvement plan has targets that can be measured precisely against pupils' achievement so leaders, including governors, are fully informed about all aspects of achievement
  - developing the skills of all middle leaders and managers to the same high level to improve teaching and pupils' achievement.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils make good progress across the school. They make best progress in lessons where they take responsibility for their own learning because their interest is captured and they are able to learn from each other. The proportion of pupils making expected and better-than-expected progress in English and mathematics from Year 3 to Year 6 is higher than the national average.
- All groups of pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and those for whom the school attracts extra funding for pupil premium are achieving well from their starting points.
- Pupil premium is being used wisely. Evaluation of the impact of the pupil premium on pupils' performance shows that these pupils are achieving in line with their peers and reaching similar standards.
- The school's rigorous tracking and checking on progress identify any underperformance of individual pupils, and appropriate steps are taken to help them catch up. As a result, all pupils who receive individual support outside lessons make good progress.
- The school made sure that pupils did well to reach the higher Levels 5 and 6 in the national tests in 2012 in mathematics. More reached Level 6 than did so nationally. Many pupils were seen to be confidently working towards Level 6 during the inspection.
- Pupils, particularly the more able in Year 6, are very clear about the academic targets they are set and are very aware of what they need to do to move onto the next stage of learning.
- Achievement in reading is good. Pupils read fluently and accurately. Pupils said they read widely across the curriculum, for example, in their project work on the Second World War and the study of the 1960s.
- In all subjects across the school, pupils make good progress – particularly in history, art and science. They enjoy the practical nature of learning in these subjects and have good opportunity to research, plan and carry out investigations on their own and in small groups. In these subjects, pupils have greater opportunity to develop and practise skills in information and communication technology. Pupils were seen to learn best when given a good range of opportunities to learn independently.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. In science, pupils investigate and solve problems that they have raised themselves. This has increased pupils' ability to ask and answer questions about why and how things happen.
- Lesson planning is detailed and gives pupils good learning opportunities. Teachers use a good range of methods to capture pupils' interest and motivate them to learn. When pupils are given the opportunity to plan and guide their own learning, they are more successful in remembering and using what they learn.

- Learning was less successful when teachers talked for too long and failed to break down the learning into smaller chunks. Pupils' learning was sometimes too closely directed. In these situations, teachers provided too much guidance and, on occasions, gave pupils too little time to work independently or in groups, and to finish work that had been set. The lack of structure to break down the learning intended into manageable chunks occasionally made the process unnecessarily complicated and unhelpful to pupils' opportunity to work more independently.
- Teachers set pupils demanding work, particularly the more-able. Work was usually well matched to the different abilities of individuals and groups of pupils. Teaching assistants have an accurate view of the abilities of the pupils they work with and what they needed to do to help them make good progress. As a result, pupils receiving extra help are more able to answer questions and join in class discussions.
- Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that all pupils make, at least, steady progress and most do better than this. For any whose progress slows, help is made available to enable them to overcome their particular difficulties. Pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium, do well on these special improvement programmes because tasks and activities focus on what each pupil has to learn and adults work closely with them to make sure that they achieve what they should.
- Marking of pupils' work is mostly good. However, teachers do not always give pupils the opportunity to judge the quality of their own work or give them clear guidance on how to improve it. When guidance is clear pupils are not always given time to reflect on the teacher's comments and to make the improvements for themselves. Consequently, pupils do not always produce a piece of work of higher quality in the next lesson.
- The well-designed curriculum is starting to develop a more stimulating approach to learning. In lessons about the 1960s, pupils in Year 6 are experiencing a range of innovative approaches to learning. As a result, pupils are taking a greater interest and responsibility for their learning.
- The school has greater focus since the previous inspection on developing pupils' computer and other technological skills. Opportunities to use a range of technology are well planned in some subjects where they are well practised.

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

- Behaviour in lessons, in assembly and around school is good. Pupils are thoughtful, polite and respectful towards each other and to adults. Pupils like the rewards system because it is fair and fosters a positive learning climate.
- Attitudes to learning are positive and pupils want to do well. Sometimes teaching hampers the drive for pupils to take more responsibility and pupils are not always given opportunity to take risks and learn from their mistakes.
- Records of behavioural incidents are comprehensive and well maintained. Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that poor behaviour and bullying are dealt with well. Pupils with challenging behaviour are dealt with sympathetically and a great deal of care is employed to engage these pupils in learning.
- Attendance has been high for a number of years. Pupils are punctual.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Personal, social and health education across the school supports personal development effectively through a strong focus on building pupils' awareness, particularly of the dangers of drugs and how to live a healthy lifestyle. Pupils empathise with the feelings of others. For example, they have good opportunities to explore social history through art and history, and created Rangoli patterns to celebrate Divali.
- Pupils have good opportunity to take responsibility for school events such as: charity fundraising, school council, house captains, librarians and peer mentors.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher and her staff have high aspirations for the school's improvement. The staff questionnaire unequivocally shows how the staff respect the leaders of the school and share their vision for its improvement.
- Rigorous systems to check on teaching quality and the rate of pupils' progress are applied well. All teachers are held accountable and take responsibility for the progress of the pupils. Meetings to check and confirm progress in year groups are held regularly and any underperformance is identified. Appropriate strategies are then applied to improve performance. The school checks the impact of the extra help which some pupils receive so that any gap between their progress and achievement and that of their classmates is rapidly closed.
- School self-evaluation is accurate and key issues for improvement identified in the school improvement plan are appropriate. However, criteria set to measure improvement against the overall targets set for pupils' achievement are not precise enough. Consequently, while the school leaders and staff talk knowledgeably about all the improvements that have been made – and achievement is clearly good – leaders are less precise in measuring the impact on pupils' achievement.
- Subject leaders check and evaluate pupils' progress in all subjects by lesson observations, analysis of pupils' work in books and close examination of data on achievement. The impact of the checking done varies between subjects. For example, some subject leaders do not take pupils' views into account when reviewing teaching to find whether the pupils, themselves, think work always matches their different abilities and interests. In contrast, there is good practice in science. After hearing from pupils that they were not involved enough in exploring and investigating scientific questions, the subject leader made sure lessons always focus on pupils developing scientific skills independently, alongside gaining knowledge and understanding of concepts. As a result, lessons are interesting and attainment in science has risen rapidly.
- The curriculum is well planned. The school is already reflecting on and reviewing the project-based curriculum to ensure it is driven by learning priorities for pupils. A new planning format has been adopted to support the aligning of content and skills. A stronger focus on pupils using their speaking, reading, writing, mathematics and computer skills in other subjects ensures that they apply them well to real-life situations.
- Effective procedures are applied to manage the performance of teachers. The process leads to objectives set for individuals to improve their practice and that reflect whole-school priorities. The headteacher makes the right decisions about teachers' movements up the salary scale on the basis of the quality of their teaching and its impact on pupils' progress. Evaluation of individual teachers' performance is accurate, although hitting whole-school targets is less precisely measured.

- The local authority has taken a light-touch approach to the school because it has correctly recognised the good quality of education that pupils receive. However, there has been good support from consultants for the development of the science, English and mathematics curriculum.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide pupils with catch-up sessions for these pupils during the school day. These sessions have resulted in good achievement for the pupils and helped them to close any gap between their attainment and that of their classmates, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet current government requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is effective. The governing body provides good support to the school. It uses its understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses to hold leaders to account for its performance. A termly newsletter to parents and carers shares important information about the work of the governors in supporting the school and provides all necessary statutory information. Governors know, in general, how well the school is doing and understand the quality of the education it gives the pupils. The governors work closely with the headteacher in ensuring the procedures to monitor teachers' individual performance are robust, and they are rigorous in ensuring that individual teachers' promotion and pay are justified by the quality of their work and the impact it has on the progress of the particular pupils they teach. However, they have been less demanding in ensuring measurable criteria are applied to the general targets for achievement in school planning. The governors know that the extra funds to support the pupils eligible for the pupil premium are spent effectively on additional staffing which contributes well to these pupils' achieving as well as others. Governors undertake training to ensure they understand educational priorities and processes.

## 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>	104332
<b>Local authority</b>	Wolverhampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	402941

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	367
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Hughes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lesley Ward
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 Jul 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 558870
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