

Urmston Junior School

Hereford Grove, Urmston, Manchester, Lancashire, M41 5AJ

Inspection dates 12–13 February 2013

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		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

- Not enough teaching is consistently good and at times the work pupils are asked to do does not fully match their needs and abilities.
- The marking of pupils' work is not consistently good. It does not always tell pupils what they have to do to improve their work. They are not given enough time to improve it in lessons.
- Pupils do not make consistently good progress. Whilst most pupils make the progress expected in English and mathematics, not enough of them make more rapid and good progress.
- The plans made by school leaders to bring about school improvement do not focus sufficiently on pupil outcomes.
- School leaders' assessment of the school's performance is not rigorous enough.
- The checks made on pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics lacks rigour.
- The governing body is not rigorous enough in holding the school to account for the quality of teaching and pupil progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good. They behave well in lessons and around the school. They are eager to learn and work and play well together.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Pupils feel very safe and well cared for by the staff of the school.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and the wider curriculum for the pupils are good.
- The acting school leadership is providing a strong direction for the school. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what it needs to do to improve and the drive and commitment to see the required changes through.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons of which two were joint observations with the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors heard pupils' read, made brief visits to classes to look at the display of pupils' work and work in their books. Work in English and mathematics was specifically scrutinised.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, parents, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, senior school leaders and other members of staff. Inspectors also talked with pupils on the playground and in their lessons.
- Inspectors also took account of 59 responses to the on-line survey, Parent View.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including information on pupil progress, school self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, records of the checks made on teaching, attendance and behaviour logs and documents in relation to pupil's safeguarding and child protection.

Inspection team

Peter Martin, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Stephen Helm	Additional Inspector
Chris Maloney	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Urmston Junior is an average sized junior school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have educational special needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils who are supported through school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive pupil premium funding is below average.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language is below average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards which set the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics so more pupils make good progress, improve the quality of teaching by:
 - matching all learning activities more sharply to the needs and abilities of pupils
 - ensuring teachers make frequent checks on pupils' understanding as the lesson proceeds, by questioning more pupils and adjusting the work accordingly, when necessary
 - ensuring that teacher-led activities are shorter in duration and that more opportunities are provided for pupils to work by themselves
 - ensuring marking indicates to pupils how they can improve their work and that pupils are given time to reflect on the guidance and to improve their work.
- Strengthen the leadership and management by:
 - ensuring school leaders and governors hold teachers rigorously to account for the progress of their pupils
 - ensuring governors hold the school to account for its use of pupil premium funding
 - making sure planned actions planned to raise pupil achievement are clear and that outcomes are measurable
 - ensuring that school data is used more rigorously to provide the school with an accurate view of its own performance
 - making sure that subject leaders, in subjects other than English and mathematics, make rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their subjects in order to raise standards further.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement. From above average starting points pupils leave at the end of Year 6 with attainment which is above the national average. The proportion of pupils making the expected progress in English was average but below average for those making good progress. This was due to the weaker progress in boys' reading. In mathematics the proportion making expected and good progress was above average.
 - Following a dip in attainment in the previous two years, the attainment in 2012 showed a marked improvement, particularly in writing and mathematics but less so in reading.
 - Information on the attainment of pupils in other year groups shows that whilst pupils make good progress in some year groups this is not consistent across the whole school. However, current data shows that the weakness in reading has been addressed and now pupils, particularly the boys, are showing accelerated progress in developing their reading skills.
 - In 2012 girls were making much better progress than the boys but current information shows that boys are now making accelerated progress and the gap between them is closing.
 - Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs made the expected progress in line with their peers. The introduction of a more robust system for checking pupil progress is enabling the school to identify more quickly pupil groups and individuals who are falling behind in their learning and plan additional support to enable them to catch up. Consequently, their progress is also beginning to accelerate.
- Pupils learning English as an additional language made the expected progress in line with their peers as do pupils entitled to pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals. Effective use of additional funding to support these pupils, with a programme designed to accelerate the progress of those who have fallen behind in their learning, has resulted in many of these pupils now making better progress.
- The school has given reading a strong focus this year and initiatives such as the lunchtime reading club, the reading tree and investment in books aimed at boys has resulted in an improvement in the attainment in reading, particularly for boys.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is still not consistently good. Whilst teachers are employing an increasing range of teaching methods to gain pupils' interest so they can get on with their work well, they are used more effectively in some classes than others. Consequently, the rate of progress in classes varies.
- Where teaching was less effective activities did not match pupils' different needs and abilities. In some lessons only a few individuals were given the chance to answer the teacher's questions. Teachers sometimes missed opportunities to check on pupils' understanding during the lesson so they might modify their teaching if necessary. In some lessons teachers talk to the whole class for too long and there are too few opportunities for pupils to work on their own.
- Where teaching was at its best, good questioning skills challenged more pupils to think and tested their depth of their understanding. Good subject knowledge on the part of the teacher was evident. Lessons proceeded at a brisk pace and pupils learnt quickly. There was a good balance between teacher-led activities and opportunities for pupils to work by themselves. In the best lessons pupils were given the opportunity to assess how well they had done against their learning targets which gave them a great sense of achievement and an understanding of the progress they were making.
- Work in pupils' books showed that they are receiving a broad curriculum and are given opportunities to apply their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, there were some excellent examples of empathetic writing on the topic of 'The Victorians' describing the life of children at that time.

- The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not always tell pupils what they have to do to improve their work or how to take it to the next level. They are too rarely given time to reflect on the guidance in the marking and to be able make improvements to their work.
- Relationships between the staff and pupils is a strength of the school and lessons progress smoothly with very little disruption.
- Teaching assistants were generally deployed well. They explain tasks clearly to pupils so that all are included and able to participate in lessons.
- The pupils said they enjoyed most lessons, particularly when they involved practical work or investigations – 'We learn different ways to learn'. They enjoyed them less when the 'teachers talk too much'.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of the pupils is a strength of the school. They are friendly, polite and helpful and show excellent manners. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is consistently good. Low level misbehaviour is very rare. In lessons they are eager to learn, they listen well to their teachers and each other and work well together.
- They are very responsible and take pride in their school and their work; the quality of presentation in their books was consistently good. Older pupils assume various responsibilities to make the school run more smoothly such as toast monitors, door monitors, play leaders and as librarians. The school council is very proud of their involvement in fund-raising activities for charitable causes as well as gaining outdoor play equipment.
- The pupils feel safe at school; they are happy and feel well cared for by the staff. They care for each other well. They have a good understanding of bullying and are adamant that there is none in their school. They know how to keep themselves safe and have a good awareness of the possible dangers of the internet when using computers.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good and parents are very confident that their children are well cared for by all staff. They said that they thought that pastoral care is a strength of school.
- Attendance is excellent and well above the national average. This is because children enjoy coming to school and they say that, 'Our lessons are 'fun'.
- The school's management of behaviour is good. Rare incidents of misbehaviour are effectively dealt with and actions are carefully recorded.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Actions taken to bring about advances in the quality of teaching and to accelerate pupil progress have not yet brought about sufficient improvement. School leaders have placed a strong emphasis on improving teaching in order to raise achievement. A new and more robust system for checking on the performance of teachers was introduced in September and teachers are set rigorous targets for school improvement and pupil progress. Although actions have resulted in accelerated progress in some year groups, it is still not consistent across the school.
- Although only in post for a relatively short time, parents, governors, staff and the local authority have recognised how successful the acting school leaders have already been in improving the work of the school. One parent described the improvements since June as 'phenomenal'. Parents' view were overwhelmingly positive about the school and its current leadership.
- A more robust system for the monitoring of pupil progress was also recently introduced which is enabling the school to identify which pupils are doing well and which pupil groups and individuals are falling behind. School leaders are now using this information more effectively to target additional support to help these pupils to progress more quickly.
- Leaders' analysis of how well the school is performing is not as sharp as it might be and goals for the future are not closely linked to pupils' achievements.
- The school provides a wide and varied curriculum which provides a rich variety of learning

opportunities to ensure that pupils enjoy their learning and that all have an equal opportunity to succeed.

- The development of the pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural education is strength of the school. Pupils enjoy a wide range of after-school clubs which provide sporting, social and cultural experiences. For example, Year 6 pupils talked excitedly about the planned residential trip to an outdoor adventure centre. They learn about other cultures and religions and have opportunities to explore moral issues in lessons.
- Although some teachers have taken on the role of subject leaders for subjects other than English and mathematics, they are at an early stage in this role, especially in making the required checks on provision and outcomes in their areas.
- The school meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding.
- The local authority provides effective support for the school leadership in developing the quality of the teaching in the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors of the school are highly committed to the pursuit of school improvement. They acknowledge that there has been insufficient rigour in holding the school to account for the progress of its pupils and the quality of teaching in the past. Since the appointment of the acting leadership they are now much better informed about pupil progress in relation to other schools, the results of checks on the quality of teaching and learning and of systems for performance management which are linked to pay progression. Although a school policy for the use of pupil premium funding is in place, there was previously insufficient rigour in scrutinising the impact of this spending. This situation is now improving. Actions planned by school leaders to bring about improvements, whilst addressing the right priorities, do not set out intended outcomes that are clear and measurable so that governors can hold the school robustly to account.

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	106314
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	405032

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	264
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Derek Brown
Headteacher	Sarah Woods
Date of previous school inspection	25 May 2011
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