

Unstone Junior School

Main Road, Unstone, Dronfield, S18 4AB

Inspection dates 6–7 March 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

- Pupils' achievement is not as good as it should be. Pupils have not made sufficient progress in recent years to reach the levels of which they are capable.
- Pupils, particularly boys, are not reaching the standards they should in their writing. They do not write at length and do not practise their skills in other subjects often enough.
- Teachers do not always explain clearly enough what they expect pupils to do. They do not always have high enough expectations of the pupils or challenge the most able pupils to do their best.
- Pupils are not encouraged to use English and mathematics skills often enough in other subjects.
- Pupils do not routinely respond to teachers' marking.
- Leaders have not ensured that school plans have sufficient detail in them to bring about rapid improvement.
- Governors do not have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, nor do they know the specific impact of the pupil premium funding.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well, are interested in their learning and are proud of their school.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and are looked after well. Their parents agree with them. Teachers and other adults provide good levels of care and support for the pupils.
- The quality of teaching has recently improved and this is ensuring that pupils are currently making better progress.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, are committed to bring about the necessary improvements and have the capacity to do so.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in nine lessons taught by six teachers and by teaching assistants. Six of these lessons were observed together with the headteacher.
- Samples of pupils' work in English were analysed from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. The inspector listened to Year 6 pupils reading.
- Meetings and discussions were held with school staff, a group of pupils, members of the governing body and a school improvement adviser from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 17 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) and five questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the work in pupils' books; monitoring records; the school's own data on pupils' progress; minutes of governing body meetings; and policies, procedures and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

David Herd, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Unstone is a much smaller than average junior school.
- Most of the school's population is White British, with a very small minority from other ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. This provides extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good across the school, by ensuring that teachers always:
 - clearly explain and show what they expect pupils to do in different parts of the lesson
 - have higher expectations of what pupils can and should achieve in lessons and over time and so raise the level of challenge for all pupils, particularly the most able
 - check that pupils have responded regularly to their marking.
- Improve pupils' achievement, particularly in their writing, by:
 - ensuring that pupils, particularly boys, make better progress towards their targets
 - making writing experiences closely related to real-life situations so that boys, in particular, are keener to write at length.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, by:
 - ensuring that plans are sufficiently focused on the precise actions required to bring about improvements to the quality of teaching and to pupils' achievement
 - making sure that pupils are encouraged to use their skills in English and mathematics more often in other subjects
 - improving governance so that all members of the governing body know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and know precisely what impact the pupil premium is having.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- The small numbers of pupils in each year group makes it difficult to establish trends over time. In 2012, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 was below average.
- Pupils start the school in Year 3 with skills that are sometimes below those expected for their age. Over time, insufficient numbers of pupils have been making the progress they should while they have been at the school. Even though most pupils are now making better progress in Key Stage 2 than in recent years, their achievement requires improvement.
- Although pupils' reading still requires improvement, progress is reasonable. It is sometimes good, particularly for more confident readers. However, some pupils do not use their skills in phonics (linking letters to the sounds they make) confidently, so do not quickly make sense of what they are reading.
- In their writing, despite improvement, pupils do not always apply their knowledge of grammar and punctuation; for example, they forget to use capital letters and full stops correctly. Boys, in particular, do not make good progress in their writing because they are not encouraged to write at length often enough in topics that interest them.
- In their mathematics, pupils have good knowledge of number and tables facts and are able to apply these when they are solving problems. For example, based on their understanding of how to tell the time, younger pupils correctly calculated the length of lessons. Sometimes, pupils' progress is slowed because they are asked to focus on too many things at once.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium are now making improved progress in reading, writing and mathematics and are achieving as well as others. Based on their average points scores in the national tests in 2012, Year 6 pupils eligible for free school meals attained at least as well as others in the school, and as well as similar pupils nationally.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Most of these pupils make good progress because of the support provided for them inside the classroom. Good support is also provided individually or in small groups to help these pupils to do well, especially in improving their reading and remembering important facts in mathematics.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving, over time it has not been consistently good enough to bring about good progress for all groups of pupils.
- Teachers do not always explain clearly enough what pupils are going to learn in the lesson. Sometimes, teachers miss opportunities to demonstrate what they want the pupils to do. For example, in a mathematics lesson where pupils were asked to calculate the area of a shape, the teacher had not ensured that they understood the method clearly enough.
- In recent years, teachers have not had sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons and over time. This is improving but expectations are not yet consistently high and teachers do not always take account of the full range of pupils' abilities. For example, in a mathematics lesson, more-able pupils could have achieved more when reading and comparing scales, and, in English, work on improving sentences did not fully stretch the most able older

pupils.

- Good teaching was observed in each year group and in English and mathematics. Teachers usually use questions skilfully to help pupils to understand what they are learning. For example, when teaching younger pupils how to tell the time, the teacher's questioning was based on a fun activity, with pupils jumping around a large clock on the classroom floor.
- In most lessons, teachers create a positive atmosphere for learning. This results in the pupils being keen to learn. For example, in a guided reading session, some pupils were eagerly involved in researching details of the sinking of the Titanic.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are taught well. Teachers and teaching assistants take time to consider the needs of each individual pupil and design learning support to match their ability levels. For example, teaching assistants provide helpful guidance for pupils catching up on their early reading skills.
- The marking of pupils' work is mostly good. Teachers note what pupils have done well and tell them what they need to improve. However, pupils do not respond well enough or regularly enough to teachers' marking.
- Teachers make good use of the school's target-setting system so that pupils know what they are aiming for.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is generally good and pupils become increasingly keen to learn as they go through the school.
 - Pupils show interest in their learning when it is explained well and this helps them make better progress. By the time they reach Year 6, they show respect for the views of others and demonstrate that they know how to behave well. Pupils are friendly and have good manners.
 - In the playground, pupils of all ages play and get on well together. They are supervised effectively by adults, who encourage positive play alongside the pupils who are 'mini-leaders'. Many activities are available which occupy pupils and give them useful exercise.
 - The system for managing pupils' behaviour works well and is implemented consistently. Pupils who need additional guidance to manage their behaviour are given good support.
 - Pupils understand that they have the right to be safe and to learn well and are very proud of their school.
 - Parents are mostly confident that their children are safe in school. Pupils say that they are taught to stay safe near roads, railway lines and near water. They say they understand different forms of bullying, including the use of mobile phones and the internet, and say that special lessons given to help them stay safe on the internet have been very helpful. They are confident that if there are any incidents, they know that they will be dealt with effectively by school staff.
 - The school has worked hard to improve pupils' attendance steadily over recent years. Most pupils now attend regularly and arrive at school on time. Pupils' attendance is now above
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average.

- A very small minority of younger pupils sometimes lose concentration, even when they are supervised by an adult, and their behaviour slows their learning.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Planning for school improvement is correctly focused on improving the quality of teaching. However, there is insufficient detail in the school's plans regarding how exactly the school will provide support and guidance to teachers in order to improve their performance and, consequently, pupils' achievement.
 - The headteacher checks and evaluates the school's performance using a range of methods. School self-evaluation is accurately summarised in a useful document.
 - The school sets out clearly how teachers' performance will be evaluated. The targets set for teachers to improve their practice are focused correctly on the need to raise achievement.
 - The curriculum is well planned and provides pupils with lessons that they find interesting. Opportunities are sometimes missed, however, for pupils to use and apply in other subjects the skills they learn in English and mathematics. The school provides a range of clubs and activities including artistic, sporting and musical experiences. For example, pupils learn French in a fun way and older pupils have the opportunity to learn how to play a stringed instrument. These add to pupils' enjoyment of school and develop their confidence.
 - Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils have opportunities to develop their spiritual awareness in assemblies and in lessons. Pupils know right from wrong and understand the consequences of their actions. They develop good social skills, talking and listening to each other and respecting others' views. However, their awareness of other cultures in this country and beyond is less well developed.
 - The school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe meet requirements. Staff have received appropriate safeguarding training and carry out all procedures correctly.
 - Relationships with parents and carers are good. Most parents believe that the school looks after their children and keeps them safe. A small minority of parents feel that pupils' behaviour is not well managed and that the school does not deal effectively with bullying. However, although the inspector pursued these concerns, he did not find evidence to support them.
 - The school engages effectively with a range of partners and services. Teachers and teaching assistants have benefited from these relationships in building understanding so that pupils' personal and learning needs can be fully met.
 - The school has received a good level of support from the local authority, which recognises the weaknesses to be tackled. Support has focused on improving teaching to impact on pupils' achievement, and leadership and management, including governance.
 - **The governance of the school:**
The governance of the school requires improvement. Governors are determined to improve the school and have the capacity to do so. Longstanding governors know what is happening in
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school and understand the school's strengths and weaknesses; other governors, new to their role, have yet to develop this understanding. They oversee the budget well and know how the extra funds from the pupil premium are being used. However, they have not followed this up to hold the school to account for the progress of this and other groups of pupils. Governors have, in the past, relied too much on information provided to them by the headteacher. They are beginning to better hold the school to account for pupils' achievement by asking questions of senior leaders. Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and are using pay and promotion more carefully when rewarding teachers, by measuring the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement. The governing body demonstrates thoroughness in ensuring that its statutory duties are met, particularly with regard to health and safety and the safeguarding of children.

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	112642
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	405415

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	51
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Adlington
Headteacher	Rachael Fowlds
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2009
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