

Upwell Community Primary School

School Road, Upwell, Wisbech, PE14 9EW

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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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.

- Children make good progress in Reception, and develop a wide range of skills and understanding.
- Most pupils make good progress from Year 1 to Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is mainly good, and some is outstanding.
- Disabled pupils and those who have a statement of special educational needs make good progress.
- The school makes good use of outdoor areas to foster pupils' interest in learning.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils feel that they are listened to and that any concerns are dealt with quickly.
- Pupils feel very safe in school, and safeguarding processes are robust.
- The headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Leaders and managers have successfully made necessary changes to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- The governors provide effective challenge and support, and have made changes that have improved the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching.
- Pupils lack confidence when asked to undertake work that requires them to find things out on their own.
- More-able pupils do not make as much progress as other pupils.
- Although they are catching up, the standards reached by pupils eligible for the pupil premium are still lower than those of other pupils in the school.
- Parents have not always been kept well enough informed of the changes that have been made to improve teaching and learning.
- Information that shows how well different types of pupils are doing in different subjects is not shared with all leaders and managers.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons. Four joint lesson observations were undertaken with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' books, listened to pupils read and examined pupils' work on display.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, and a telephone discussion was undertaken with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 28 responses to the online questionnaire for parents provided by Ofsted (Parent View) and 57 responses to the school's own most recent paper-based questionnaire. He talked directly to parents during the inspection. In addition, six responses to a staff questionnaire were considered.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Andrew Read, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds; very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (the additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, for children in local authority care and for pupils with a parent in the armed forces).
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching, and thus further increase pupils' progress by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to undertake work that requires them to think and work on their own, particularly in mathematics and science
 - making sure that more-able learners receive challenging enough work
 - accelerate the progress made by pupils eligible for the pupil premium, to ensure that their attainment in English and mathematics matches that of other pupils.
- Extend the capacity of the senior leadership team to make improvements by:
 - ensuring that the vision, aspirations and development priorities of the senior leadership team are communicated well to all parents
 - developing the use of systems to collect, analyse and share the performance of different groups of pupils on a whole-school basis.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Considering pupils' different starting points, the majority of pupils are making good or better progress from Reception to Year 6.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, once well below the national average, is now in line with national averages in all three areas. This is because progress has improved markedly since 2010 as a result of changes to teaching and the management of pupils' behaviour. For example, when compared to other schools nationally, a high proportion of pupils made better than expected progress in reading across Years 3 to 6.
- Current information collected by the school shows that rates of progress have accelerated most markedly for those of low and middle ability in both English and mathematics. While the rate of progress made by more-able pupils has also improved over this period, it has done so at a slower rate.
- Children enter with skills, knowledge and abilities which are below those expected for their age, with very few at higher levels. However, by the end of Reception the majority are working within, or just below, expected levels in most areas. This represents good progress.
- In Reception, children have good opportunities to develop skills and understanding in all areas of learning, developing good skills in language and early reading. This is due to high-quality adult support, and well-resourced indoor and outdoor learning areas.
- The good rates of progress seen in Reception are continued into other year groups. For example, pupils make strong progress in reading in Year 1 as a result of the good-quality teaching concerning the sounds made by different letter combinations in words. This is reflected in the confidence that pupils have when attempting to read unfamiliar words for the first time.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make a strong start in Reception. They maintain a good rate of progress across other year groups, doing particularly well when supported individually. Pupils in receipt of a statement of educational needs also make good progress, because class teachers ensure that their learning is well matched to their particular needs.
- The support given to pupils eligible for the pupil premium is resulting in good or better rates of progress. However, given their low starting points, these pupils still remain several terms behind their peers in reading, writing and mathematics. Thus, while these pupils are achieving at a lower standard than their peers, the gap is closing rapidly.

The quality of teaching

is good

- In the last three years, leaders and managers have made considerable improvements to the quality of teaching in English and mathematics. For example, a strong emphasis on improving the quality of writing has resulted in accelerated progress in this area.
- During the inspection, most of the teaching seen was good, which matches the school's own record of the quality of teaching observed over time. While teaching is very rarely less than good, it is not often outstanding.

- The use of outdoor areas for learning is particularly good. The school is developing safe learning areas by the river and in a protected nature area to foster a wide range of artistic, scientific and writing activities.
- Teachers do not always ensure that more-able pupils have challenging enough work. For example, while the provision of mobile computing devices is good, more-able pupils are not given enough opportunity to use them for extended independent research.
- During the inspection, older pupils were seen to lack confidence when asked to work independently, for example when researching topics in science or problem solving in mathematics. Similarly, pupils do not always have enough opportunity to practise their writing on their own. This is a recognised area for development by the school, as current classroom practice is heavily dependent on group and collaborative approaches to learning.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium receive extra help and resources from teachers and support staff which enable them to make good progress. While the quality of teaching provided for these pupils has improved markedly over the last two years, it is not yet consistently outstanding, as would be required to fully close the gap in the standards between these pupils and their peers.
- Teachers mark and assess work regularly, providing feedback in a form that learners say they find easy to understand. As a result, pupils know how to get better. Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of individuals, planning particularly well for those of a lower ability.
- The use of support staff is very good. Such staff are knowledgeable about the needs of individual learners, particularly in Reception. For example, short, targeted early language and communication assessments are being used to support individual pupils.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are encouraged to express their feelings and discuss moral issues. The school has recently focused on the diverse nationalities across Europe, thus widening pupils' awareness of other cultures. The spiritual development of the pupils is strong, and regular assemblies are used effectively to promote the consideration of other belief systems, and to reflect on world issues at an age-appropriate level.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good, because leaders and managers ensure that consistent behaviour management and high expectations encourage pupils to support each other in their learning. During the inspection, pupils were keen to tell the inspector that behaviour has recently improved.
- Parental surveys and interviews during the inspection show that some parents have in the past raised concerns over behaviour. However, staff and pupils are positive about current behaviour and safety, and many parents said that they now feel that behaviour is much better.
- Pupils feel safe in school and are able to raise any concerns with teachers whom they see as very approachable. Again, while a minority of parents have in the past raised questions over whether this is the case, the inspector found no evidence to suggest otherwise.
- Pupils' behaviour outside lessons is almost always good. For example, pupils were seen playing happily in mixed-aged groups. Younger pupils were keen to assure the inspector that they felt

comfortable with older pupils and well cared for by supervising staff, particularly at the start of the school day.

- Pupils are fully aware of different forms of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying. Consequently, pupils say that bullying in all its forms is rare and is dealt with quickly. Many felt that this represented considerable improvement over the last few years, and were quick to attribute such change to the raised expectations and approachability of the headteacher and deputy head.
- Consistent behaviour management by all staff makes a strong contribution to a very positive climate for learning. Pupils who have specific behavioural problems show good improvement over time as a result of the specialist support provided, and pupils are caring and patient with those who find working in groups hard.
- In the past, attendance has been well below the national average. However, attendance data for the current academic year show that there has recently been a considerable improvement, and overall attendance is now only slightly below average. Historically, a small number of pupils have had very low attendance rates. The school is doing all that is reasonable to address these issues, and the attendance of these pupils has risen markedly in the last six months.
- Pupils understand very clearly what constitutes unsafe situations, including when near local dykes and busy roads, and are highly aware of how to keep themselves and others safe. This includes a good awareness of how to stay safe when using the internet. For example, pupils in Year 6 were clear about the risks posed by social networking sites.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers have made significant improvements to the school over the last three years. An experienced and effective headteacher has taken direct action to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and the consistency of behaviour management. As a result, standards have risen in English and mathematics, and pupils and staff feel much happier in school.
- While recent successes are evident in the positive perceptions concerning the quality of leadership held by the majority of staff, pupils and the parents, some parents have been slow to embrace such improvements. This is because the school has not always communicated the reasons behind changes in a manner that is accessible to all parents. This is a recognised area for development by leaders and managers.
- While the individual assessment practices of classroom teachers are robust, the whole-school tracking processes that quickly identify any emerging under-performance in groups are under-developed. For example, English and mathematics coordinators are not well enough informed about how well different groups of pupils are performing, and are not in a position to spot year-on-year patterns in whole-school data. However, such leaders are able to talk about the progress that individual pupils make in their areas of responsibility, and have good subject knowledge that enables them to offer effective support to other teachers.
- Teaching is monitored effectively and new teachers are given good support and induction. Processes to manage the performance of teachers are robust and clearly linked to pupils' progress. For example, leaders make very good use of the Teaching Standards. Teachers say they feel very supported, and can talk articulately about recent improvements.
- The provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Recent

improvements to the identification and monitoring of pupils with additional needs are due to the establishment of clearer lines of communication between managers and classroom teachers. For example, high-quality systems enable the early exploration and identification of additional needs in Reception.

- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The progress of Reception children shows that the leader has a particularly good knowledge of the needs of young children, and ensures that provision is both good and well tracked in terms of outcomes for learners. In recent times, practice has been improved still further by developing better-quality outdoor learning areas.
- A local authority officer has been providing effective challenge in a number of key areas, such as attendance, teaching quality and behaviour. This has been typified by accurate and timely monitoring of the quality of provision, and meetings with the school's headteacher, who has been pro-active in seeking support.
- The school's teaching programmes provide very well for the needs of the pupils, ensuring that all pupils have equal access to learning opportunities. For example, very good provision exists to develop group outdoor learning. The curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to learn and work on their own so that they can develop independent learning skills. However, pupils say that they thoroughly enjoy the wide variety of learning opportunities available to them.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding exceed statutory requirements. They show that a rigorous approach is taken to the identification and resolution of care issues affecting the pupils. Processes are multi-disciplinary, with all staff ensuring that pupils at risk are well supported.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are effective. In recent years, they have demonstrated a strong drive to improve standards of achievement. The governing body is led well by the Chair, and ably supported by those responsible for leading committees, each of which are closely linked to priority areas. Governors hold leaders to account for the school's performance. For example, they have put in place robust reporting procedures that ensure that the headteacher keeps them well informed about the quality of teaching. Information that presents how well different groups of pupils are doing is, however, underdeveloped. For example, while governors know how the pupil premium funding is being spent on an individual pupil basis, they are less clear of how such pupils are performing as a group. This is a recognised area for development, as recorded in the governors' own self-evaluation documentation. Governors ensure that teachers' pay and promotion are systematically linked to teachers' performance in helping pupils to achieve well, and have a recent track record of appointing effective classroom teachers. Through rigorous planning and controls, governors ensure that pupils stay safe, and that the school remains on a secure financial footing.

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	120885
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	401979

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	135
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Culley
Headteacher	James McBurney
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 November 2009
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