

Upshire Primary Foundation School

Upshire Road, Waltham Abbey, Essex, EN9 3PX

Inspection dates 10–11 July 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 do not make consistently good progress in Key Stage 2, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good.
- Pupils are not always given enough opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning.
- In some lessons work is not closely enough matched to the abilities of pupils, particularly the more able.
- Some pupils do not fully understand the books that they read, because they are not given enough help.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to use subject specific words when they are writing.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work, particularly in mathematics in Key Stage 2, does not always provide clear guidance on how they can improve.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers have taken positive action to improve teaching. As a result pupils' progress is improving in Key Stage 2.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils behave well, feel safe and are well cared for. They enjoy being in a harmonious school community.
- Parents are very positive about the school. They say that it is warm and welcoming.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 11 lessons or part-lessons. Some observations were seen alongside the headteacher. Inspectors also made a number of other short visits to classrooms.
- All of the teachers were observed, except those who were supervising a residential trip for the pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, and looked at work from each year group, much of this with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement planning, and records on behaviour, safety and attendance. They also looked at information on individual pupils' progress and teachers' performance, and records of meetings held by the governing body.
- Inspectors met with pupils, interviewed a sample of staff, and spoke to parents. They also spoke to members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The views of parents were obtained through the school's surveys and the 22 responses to the on-line Parent View survey. Written comments from 28 members of staff and one parent were also considered.

Inspection team

Brian Netto, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Patrick Walsh	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in seven classes, a Reception class, a Year 1 and a Year 2 class, and four mixed-age classes in Key Stage 2.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small number are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Few of these speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is average. This is additional funding provided for looked after children, pupils eligible for free school meals and children of service families. In this school, it applies to the second group only.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also broadly average.
- The privately funded 'Fledglings' pre-school is located on the school site and is inspected separately.
- The school provides an 'Early Birds' breakfast club and an 'Owls' after-school club that are managed by the governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes in the teaching staff and the governing body, including a new Chair of the Governing Body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching, particularly in Key Stage 2, so that pupils make consistently good or better progress by making sure that:
 - work is suitably challenging for all groups of pupils, particularly those who are capable of reaching higher levels
 - pupils are given more opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning
 - the marking of pupils' work in mathematics provides pupils with clear guidance on their next steps in learning and they are given time to respond to the advice given.
- Raise attainment in writing and mathematics by:
 - making sure that pupils are helped when they read books so that they can use this understanding to improve their writing more effectively
 - making sure that pupils make better use of words and concepts from the different subjects they are learning in their writing
 - making sure that pupils have more opportunities to use their number and calculation skills in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement. Over time pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has been below average in writing and mathematics. More able pupils have not made the accelerated progress typically expected.
- In the current year a more positive picture is evident. Pupils' progress across the school is accelerating. For the current Year 6 attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is on course to be above average.
- Achievement is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1. Children make a successful transition from the pre-school into the Reception class, often with skills below those typical for their age. They are provided with a stimulating environment and activities which engage their interests both indoors and outdoors. As a result they quickly acquire basic skills and achieve well.
- In 2012, pupils' attainment in mathematics was well below the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. Attainment in writing was also below. Standards in reading are improving across Key Stage 1 and are now at the national average. This represents good progress from low starting points. Pupils of middle ability did better than national levels in reading at the end of Year 6 in 2012.
- Pupils are helped to develop their writing well in Key Stage 1. Year 2 made good progress in writing a letter as the guidance from the teacher gave them ideas on how to start and end the letter. They could share their ideas and compare their letters to help each other make improvements.
- There were not enough pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in Year 6 in 2012 to comment on their attainment without identifying them. All groups of pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium are now making good progress.
- Rigorous checks on pupils' progress are set against ambitious targets. Consequently gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding are closing, as pupils are now being provided with work more suitable to their abilities.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There are a number of strengths in teaching, but the teaching of writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2 is not consistently good. Higher ability pupils are not always provided with work that is appropriately challenging.
- In many lessons, pupils are too dependent on the teacher and are not given enough encouragement to work on their own.
- Pupils are not always given help when reading books to develop their understanding beyond just the literal meaning. This means that they are not helped to widen their use of words to improve their writing. They are not helped to use words and concepts specific to different subjects in their writing.

- Marking is not consistent across the school particularly in mathematics, where guidance is infrequent and pupils are not given enough opportunities to correct their work and show that they have acquired the new skills. However, marking is often detailed in literacy in Years 5 and 6. Pupils are given clear guidance on their next steps in learning and are set challenging targets.
- The teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) is good in the Reception class and in Year 1. Pupils are placed in groups so that the activities are well matched to their different abilities. The teaching is lively and a wide range of resources including short video clips helps to engage the pupils.
- Pupils are encouraged to use their language skills in all their lessons. For example, pupils in Year 2 develop their use of words related to science as they learn about medicines. This is as a result of effective questioning by the teacher and good opportunities to act out their ideas.
- Opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve problems are frequent. For example, children in the Reception class compared the different heights within their class. They showed perseverance in recording their findings. The teacher and other adults provided further stimulus to hold their attention. Pupils in a mixed Year 3 and 4 class explored number patterns and made use of different methods to investigate possible solutions. This gripped their attention and helped them to develop their understanding of how to examine a problem using a system. As a result they made outstanding progress.
- The way that additional adults are used in lessons is strong. They use their questioning skills well to support individuals and small groups. As a result, work is well matched to the pupils' needs, so that disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils funded through the pupil premium achieve well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is good and pupils enjoy learning in a harmonious and happy community. They show very positive attitudes towards school, and are very polite and welcoming to visitors. In lessons they are eager to contribute and willingly work with different partners. They are always ready to help each other.
- The school has worked effectively to improve the behaviour of the pupils in lessons and during break times. Pupils have responded positively to the new expectations. They enjoy being identified as a 'Terrific' pupil, who is for example trustworthy or caring. As one pupil said, 'I like our terrific school.' They enjoy their lessons and as a result attendance has improved and is now at the national average.
- Pupils say they feel safe and trust adults to deal with problems quickly. Parents agree that the school looks after their children well and appreciate the care provided in the breakfast and after-school clubs.
- Pupils show a good understanding of different forms of bullying and say these are not tolerated in the school. The recent extended focus on cyber-bullying has raised awareness of the need for safety when using the internet. A group of older pupils ably led an assembly showing their younger peers different scenarios about how to combat bullying.
- Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable receive excellent care and attention. As a result, their behaviour improves and they make the same progress as their peers. Equality of opportunity is effectively promoted and ensures that no one is left behind.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement as steps taken to improve the school have not yet had time to fully contribute to raising achievement in writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2.
- Teaching is improving as a result of the decisive steps taken by leaders and managers. Teachers are now better held to account for the progress of the pupils. Regular meetings are used to check on this progress.
- Leaders work with external partners to good effect. Meetings with local schools help to make sure that they have an accurate view of how well the pupils are doing. Checks on the quality of teaching by their partners give the school a robust understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement. This gives the school a good capacity to sustain improvements.
- Teachers plan topics and themes together and ask pupils about their own interests. Pupils learn about a broad range of stimulating topics. A wide range of after-school clubs and regular visits as well as residential experiences help to make the learning enjoyable. These striking experiences contribute well to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Relationships with parents are strong and improving. Parents are very happy with the school and speak warmly about how easy it is to speak to teachers when they need to.
- The local authority acts as a commissioner of services. The school makes use of these services as and when necessary.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has been strengthened by new members and by a more focused approach to checking on how well the school is doing. Regular visits are supported by a wide range of useful information, provided by the headteacher and the school's commissioned adviser. This is helping the governors to better hold the school to account and to take action to address weaknesses. They now have a more informed understanding of the link between achievement and the quality of teaching. They understand the relationship between teachers' performance and pay and promotion. They have a clear understanding of how the additional funding the school receives to support pupils who need extra help is being used. Links with local schools and local authority services helps them to keep up to date with their training needs. They ensure that all statutory duties, including those related to safeguarding are met.

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	115310
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	401509

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeff Towerzey
Headteacher	Jackie Blackburn
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2010
Telephone number	01992 715567
Fax number	01992 710642
Email address	admin@upshire.essex.sch.uk

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