

Unstone Junior School

Main Road, Unstone, Dronfield, S18 4AB

Inspection dates 21–22 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has taken rigorous action to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- The governors have acted promptly and decisively to improve their roles and responsibilities.
- Teaching has improved and is now consistently good. Teachers' expectations, of what pupils can achieve, are high.
- The classrooms are attractive, stimulating and provide good support for learning.
- The curriculum appeals to and motivates the pupils. Pupils enjoy their work; they present it neatly and are proud of the progress they are making. They are eager to learn and keen to succeed.
- Behaviour is consistently good in and around the school because pupils show respect for others.
- Pupils are kept safe at school. Consequently, pupils say that they feel safe and that the adults take good care of them. Parents who stated a view agree.
- Progress has improved since the previous inspection and is now consistently good in all classes. In 2014, every pupil made at least the progress expected for his or her age in reading, writing and mathematics.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough pupils make better than expected progress in reading, writing and in mathematics.
- Planned work does not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to apply their literacy and mathematics skills in other subject areas.
- Marking, although always giving clear reasons for positive comments, does not consistently provide pupils with regular guidance on how to improve their work.
- All pupils have targets in writing and mathematics but these are not checked and updated regularly enough to make sure that pupils are always challenged.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in nine lessons. All classes were observed three times. The inspector also observed pupils working in smaller groups. Five of the lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector heard pupils read and checked their reading records.
- Meetings were held with all members of the teaching staff.
- A meeting was held with the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors.
- A telephone conversation was held with the local authority's officer linked to the school.
- Many discussions took place with pupils both formally and informally in lessons and at lunchtimes.
- The inspector took account of the views of 11 parents from Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View), and conversations were held with parents at the start and end of the school day. The inspectors also analysed the eight responses to the questionnaire for staff.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: the school's own data on pupils' recent and current progress; planning and monitoring documentation; reports on the quality of teaching over time; records relating to behaviour and attendance; the school's improvement plan; documents relating to safeguarding; and the minutes of various meetings, including those of the governing body.

Inspection team

Nigel Grimshaw, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is about one in four of the school's population, which is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, for whom the school receives the pupil premium, is just below one third of the number of pupils on roll, which is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided to schools for looked after pupils and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The pupils on roll are predominantly from White British backgrounds and few speak English as an additional language.
- The number of pupils arriving at and leaving the school after the start of Year 3 is low compared to other schools.
- The school operates a breakfast club three mornings a week.
- With numbers on roll rising, the school has recently created an extra class so that pupils in Years 5 and 6 are taught in separate groups.
- The composition of the teaching staff changed completely following the previous inspection.
- The school has achieved a national 'Anti-Bullying Award' for its good practice and has also achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark for the fifth time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the number of pupils making better than expected progress, particularly in mathematics, by
 - providing more consistent guidance on how to improve their work
 - making sure that the targets set for pupils are followed up consistently by the teachers
 - planning more opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and mathematics skills in other subjects through their topic work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is an excellent role model for the staff and the pupils. She has created an ethos within the school that celebrates success. Her high expectations are now becoming firmly embedded among staff and pupils alike. Together with governors, she has built further on the success noted in the letter reporting on the monitoring inspection in June 2013 and improvements have continued in all areas.
- The headteacher has focused rigorously on improving the quality of teaching. Teaching is now consistently good and some is outstanding.
- Staff with responsibilities for subjects are newly appointed and contribute with enthusiasm and increasing skill to improving the school. Regular half-termly checks on classroom practice and pupils' attainment and progress have taken place as part of a well-structured monitoring programme. These regular checks are a key part of a successful programme to manage the performance of all staff.
- All staff are very willing participants in courses and training events designed to improve their practice through professional development. A strong team ethic is very evident. Staff work together harmoniously for the good of the school and the pupils.
- School leaders are implementing a detailed development plan that is addressing the main priorities for the school. In the recent past, this has led to improvements in teaching and learning within school and these are now gathering momentum.
- The staff have created an exciting and varied curriculum that is welcomed by the pupils, who unanimously say that they love coming to school and enjoy their learning. Staff trialled many aspects of the new National Curriculum last year and have now planned work to meet the new requirements. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply their improving literacy and mathematics skills when working in other subjects such as history, geography and religious education.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well and is now fully absorbed into the ethos of the school, including the cultural aspects in this predominantly White British school. The ethos of the school is built around agreed rules and the school's 'Three Rights': the right to learn; the right to be heard; and the right to be safe. Pupils show respect for each other and for adults in lessons and around school. Consequently, pupils understand British values and are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They participate in school-level approaches to democracy through the school council, suggesting for example ideas for school improvement.
- Timetables are planned to allow flexibility in working across year groups. This was very evident in a mathematics lesson on calculating percentages of money when pupils in Year 6 were joined by pupils from Year 5 so that they could be further challenged.
- All staff and governors help to ensure that pupils are treated fairly and have equal access to all the activities and opportunities offered to them, whatever their abilities and backgrounds. Any discrimination is tackled robustly. Staff and governors have thought carefully and effectively about the use of pupil premium funding. The funding has mainly been used to improve staffing ratios and resources and these are having a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. Use of the funding to support residential trips, and lunchtime and after-school clubs, has improved opportunities that some disadvantaged pupils might not receive otherwise.
- The additional sport funding, provided to all primary schools, has also been used effectively. A qualified coach is now employed to deliver most aspects of physical education and sport and to provide training for staff. Pupils are now more regularly involved in sporting events and have access to better equipment. Pupils have an improved knowledge of how to live healthier lives. The school has also achieved national Healthy School status.

- The school has received good support from the local authority. Training and advice have been provided for staff on the quality of teaching and on the learning environment. Teachers attend regular network meetings and find them very helpful.
- Safeguarding procedures are implemented rigorously and meet all statutory requirements.
- Parents think highly of the school. One parent said, 'We are absolutely delighted with the school. Nothing has been too much trouble for the teachers and other staff if we have any small problem. Both children love school and are doing really well.' Another said, 'The new headteacher has made a big difference. Children have many opportunities now like trips and playing instruments. This place is like one big family in a small school.' One parent took the time to write a long letter extolling the virtues of the school and wrote, 'We feel very lucky as a family for our children to attend Unstone Junior School.'

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body has improved the way it works significantly since responding so promptly and positively to the findings of the previous full inspection and the more recent monitoring inspection, which recommended an external review. In response, a wide range of training has been completed and a detailed action plan has been produced and is being implemented. Governance is now effective.
- Outcomes from skills audits have resulted the co-option of several new governors. Governors are more actively involved in monitoring the work of the school, including the quality of classroom practice. Consequently, governors have a very clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including their knowledge and interpretation of data on pupils' performance. They are well aware of the school's priorities in the immediate future and over time.
- Governors are clear about performance management systems in school and are rigorous in monitoring pay increases to ensure they are only awarded where teaching is good. They rigorously and successfully helped tackle underperformance in teaching. They fully understand about the impact of pupil premium and sports funding because individual governors have been assigned to monitor these closely.
- The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements for safeguarding children are fully in place.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This has been the case for some time, as evidenced by the school's own records and the findings of the previous inspection.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed in their work. They work very well co-operatively and show respect for the views of others in lessons. They take pride in their work and its presentation, which is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- They are polite and courteous around school, and show good levels of care for the learning environment and the resources available to them. They say they like wearing the school uniform because it gives them 'a feeling of togetherness'.
- Of the parents who expressed their views during the inspection, all indicated that behaviour is good and this was echoed by the pupils in discussions with them, and from records seen. Pupils say they love coming to school.
- School leaders have worked closely with parents to improve attendance and it is now edging above the national average. Persistent absence has reduced so that almost all pupils attend regularly. The pupils are punctual in arriving at school, even during the inspection when there was a heavy snowfall and several local schools had closed.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils and their parents unanimously agree that

the pupils feel safe at school. Pupils are confident that if they had any concerns these would be addressed by the adults in school.

- Pupils are given guidance in lessons about the safe use of the internet. Most are clear about how to search the internet safely for their work, and sites are checked carefully before use by the pupils in school. Guidance for parents is given through the school's website.
- All parents who stated a view, and pupils, indicated that the school deals effectively with bullying. This has received more prominent focus for staff and pupils in school recently, recognised through the school's award for its work in this field.
- The school site is secure and all external doors have keypad entry. Visitors to the school are checked effectively on arrival. Appointments to the school staff comply with 'safer recruitment' procedures and all staff are checked thoroughly.
- Safeguarding practices are rigorous. Risk assessments are completed whenever the pupils undertake visits and activities away from the school site. Pupils are also given good advice, often from external agencies, about keeping themselves safe outside school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Following the previous inspection, new teaching staff have been appointed. Good appointments were made because, from the school's own records and from joint observations undertaken by the headteacher with the local authority adviser, the quality of teaching has been consistently good or outstanding since that point. Evidence from information about pupils' progress and from the scrutiny of the pupils' work in their books confirms that teaching is consistently good.
- Teachers plan work that interests and motivates the pupils. They also set work that challenges pupils of different ability levels, including the most-able pupils who achieved much improved Level 5 results in 2014. Accelerated progress is evident in lessons and over time in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers have high expectations and pupils respond to these well. When working on 'The Romans' the pupils in Year 6 responded well and showed good understanding of language. For example, they jointly composed the following sentence through group discussions: 'The opalescent clouds sauntered across the midnight sky.'
- Teachers' checks on pupils' attainment and progress are now frequent and are moderated to ensure accuracy, often through good joint working with other schools in the locality.
- Classrooms and corridors are set out with attractive and stimulating displays. The good balance between being informative, supporting learning and celebrating the good work of pupils inspires pupils to find things out and learn well.
- Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are a real strength of the school. The pupils are eager to please and are encouraged to show initiative through their homework. There are many examples where homework has contributed to the pupils' learning, such as recent work on Ancient Egypt.
- Teachers have focused well on the aspects identified in the previous inspection to help pupils improve. Significant improvements are evident in pupil's speaking and listening skills, their handwriting and the presentation of their work. Marking, too, has improved. It consistently encourages the pupils by giving clear and specific reasons why their work is good. However, detailed guidance on how they can improve their work is less consistent.
- Pupils have targets to achieve that are pasted in their literacy and mathematics books. They value these but teachers do not always update these promptly when the target has been met.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of pupils enter Year 3 with attainment levels that are below those expected for their age. This is confirmed by local authority checks and from evidence on inspection. Pupils' individual rates of progress have accelerated since the previous inspection in response to stringent, successful action to improve teaching. Consequently, most pupils have caught up with the levels expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave Year 6. Progress is now good and pupils achieve well.
- Every pupil in Year 6 in 2014 made at least the progress that is expected nationally by that age in reading, writing and mathematics. However, progress in mathematics was slightly slower than in the other two subjects.
- The most-able pupils are suitably challenged, in an improvement since the previous inspection. Consequently, they make at least the progress expected for their age. Attainment at the higher Level 5 in 2014 improved in reading, writing and mathematics because of the level of challenge provided by teachers and the school's raised expectations. This was particularly evident when pupils in Years 5 and 6 were successfully calculating percentages of amounts of money, such as 15% of £70.40.
- The fact that every pupil has made at least expected progress shows the high level of support provided by the teachers and teaching assistants for the disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The good progress they make is similar to that of their peers.
- The numbers of disadvantaged pupils in each year group are small and so any statistical comparisons would be unreliable. However, individual records show that disadvantaged pupils have made the same accelerated progress as their peers over the last two years.

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	453712

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	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Adlington
Headteacher	Rachael Fowlds
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 March 2013
Telephone number	01246 413109
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