

Upshire Primary Foundation School

Upshire Road, Upshire, Waltham Abbey, EN9 3PX

Inspection dates 8–9 July 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
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Effective leadership by the headteacher, other school leaders and governors, has improved the quality of teaching and raised pupils' achievement so they are both now good.
- School leaders check the quality of teaching and learning rigorously, so they are quick to spot weaknesses and make changes.
- Leaders track pupils' progress closely and any pupils falling behind are given extra help so they catch up.
- Pupils are well behaved and take great pride in their work and school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because staff promote it well.
- Teachers ensure pupils are completely safe whilst they are in school. Staff look after them well and give their well-being a high priority; consequently, pupils are happy and thrive.
- Teaching is good because teachers make sure learning is well-planned and they challenge pupils to do the best they can.
- Throughout the school all pupils, including disadvantaged and disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and the most-able pupils all make good progress in relation to their very different starting points.
- Early years provision is good; children make good progress in the Reception class and are well prepared for Year 1.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' expectations are not always high enough in writing; pupils are not always expected to write to the same high standard in other subjects as they do in English lessons.
- Teachers do not always make the best use of learning support assistants, particularly when the teacher is talking to the whole class. This means these assistants are not always as effective as they could be.
- Not enough is done to ensure all children transfer smoothly into Reception from their preschool settings and get off to the best possible start.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 15 lessons covering all year groups and a range of subjects. Several of these observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher, deputy headteacher or senior teacher.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the senior teacher, members of the governing body, subject leaders, other teachers, parents and pupils. An inspector also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work and heard a group of pupils read.
- The inspectors considered documents about the school's self-evaluation, plans for improvement and arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe.
- The inspectors took account of the views expressed by parents in discussions and in the 50 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The inspectors also took account of the 23 responses to the questionnaire returned by staff.

Inspection team

Bob Greatrex, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Grainne Grabowski

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Reception children attend full time. There is one class in each year group.
- The proportion of boys is larger than average.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is a little below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are looked after by the local authority or who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school is part of an informal group of local schools that remain independent of one another but work cooperatively to provide common approaches to aspects of school life.
- The school runs breakfast club and after school club every weekday.
- An independent preschool operates in the school building. This is inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress by making sure that:
 - all teachers have equally high expectations that pupils will use their good writing skills to the same high level when writing across all subjects
 - teachers deploy support staff effectively in all parts of lessons.
- Work more effectively with preschool settings to ensure children's transition into school is smooth and they settle quickly and make a good start.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since the previous inspection, school leaders have created a strong culture that promotes effective teaching and good behaviour, with the result that standards, by the time pupils leave, are rising.
- Leaders, governors and teachers are committed to giving all pupils an equal chance to succeed. Every pupil is valued and the school takes resolute and effective action to combat any hint of discrimination.
- Leadership at all levels is good and a significant factor in the school's improvement since the previous inspection. Senior leaders form a highly effective team, using their complementary skills well. Subject leaders have a clear and accurate view of their subjects which they use effectively to lead improvements in teaching and achievement in their areas of responsibility.
- Teaching is good because leaders manage teachers' performance well. The points for improvement they set staff are clear and well founded. The school makes good training opportunities available so that teachers can act on the targets they are set and improve their teaching.
- The school provides extra help for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and ensures it is very carefully matched to each pupil's specific needs. Leaders make good use of outside expertise and advice where necessary. As a result, this group of pupils achieves well.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and identifies what needs to improve. Leaders at all levels ensure desired improvements are speedily achieved by drawing up and implementing effective plans for action.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their direct involvement in charity projects and special events like 'diversity week' encapsulates the essence of the school's values. Pupils take advantage of the real and relevant opportunities teachers provide to discuss 'big' questions such as, 'how are we different, how are we similar?' This supports their moral and social development particularly well.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. They understand the democratic process because their involvement in the school council gives them a clear and active voice in areas of importance to them in their school. The school teaches them about the values that underpin our way of life, such as 'tolerance' and 'respect', and pupils see staff promoting these values themselves well in their day-to-day work in school.
- The curriculum is good. It is broad and well balanced. Pupils experience a wide range of interesting and well-planned learning opportunities that are regularly extended and enriched by visits or visitors. Teachers use activities, such as cooking, to interest pupils but also to provide good opportunities for them to practise their numeracy skills. However, support for the development of pupils' literacy skills is not as effective as it should be because too few teachers expect high standards of spelling and presentation when pupils are writing outside formal literacy lessons.
- The school has developed new assessment processes, in partnership with other local schools, to reflect the recent changes to the National Curriculum. Leaders have arranged good training for staff to ensure they understand them and use the new criteria consistently. They have also explained the new procedures fully to parents.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress because the school uses the pupil premium funding effectively to support them. They have used this funding to appoint extra staff to help disadvantaged pupils to catch up. Leaders are not afraid to challenge disadvantaged pupils to improve their performance and check that teachers set them work that is suitably demanding.
- The school makes good use of the primary school sports funding to make a positive contribution to pupils'

physical development and well-being, for example, by providing horse riding or trampolining. As a result, many pupils learn new skills and those not enthused by traditional games find new opportunities to participate in sport. Pupils know that exercise is important to health. The school has arranged for specialist coaches to work alongside teachers and teach lessons themselves, to improve pupils' skills and help staff to improve their teaching.

- Parents are positive about the school; four in every five responding to the online survey say they would recommend the school to others. Parents are very supportive of their children and regularly attend activities in which they participate. Parents appreciate the good quality breakfast club and after school provision.
- The school works closely with other local schools, for example to ensure all have identical policies for attendance.
- The local authority has organised useful support for the school, and helped it to share ideas and expertise that with other local schools.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective. Staff understand and adhere closely to all statutory requirements and school procedures. As a result, pupils say they feel safe in school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors contribute fully to school improvement. They organise themselves efficiently to maximise their impact; for example committee chairs meet regularly to share information.
 - Governors know the school very well because they visit regularly and undertake specific tasks, such as checking the procedures to safeguard pupils. They use a wide range of information, including data on pupils' achievement and information about how pupils feel about their learning and school life generally, to gauge how the school is performing.
 - Governors use a wide range of useful information and performance data to check that the school is moving in the right direction, and to ensure that plans they have agreed with leaders are having the desired impact.
 - Governors have an accurate picture of the quality of teaching at the school. They make sure that teachers' pay rises are dependent on their pupils making good progress. They know how staff are managed and check that leaders address any underperformance quickly.
 - Financial spending is checked very carefully and governors have assessed the impact the pupil premium and sports funding are having on pupils' achievements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school's rules are clear. Pupils say that behaviour in lessons has improved because everyone knows what is expected of them.
- Pupils are keen to learn. In discussion, pupils explained that this helps because they can start with the least difficult if they are unsure, build their confidence and then move up.
- Leaders see pupils' well-being as fundamental to their happiness and ensure they can thrive and make good progress. They support pupils' social and emotional needs very well, particularly those who find it difficult to make or sustain friendships and those with low self-esteem.
- Pupils willingly take on responsibility. For example, prefects and play leaders help other pupils if they are not sure what to do, or are feeling unhappy. Pupils are proud of their school. Their work is neat and well presented. They look after the school site well and there is no litter. They say they appreciate the way teachers display their work around the school because it builds their self-esteem by celebrating and reminding them of their achievements.
- Attendance is a little above average and punctuality good. The school is quick to notice any dip in either

and take action. The popular breakfast club promotes good attendance and punctuality.

- The school invests a great deal of time in supporting the very small number of pupils who struggle to control their behaviour. School records show the impact of this support is good and that pupils' behaviour has improved as a result. The small number of exclusions since the previous inspection have been for appropriate reasons.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school carefully checks the background of all adults who are likely to work in the school or come into contact with children. The school carries out regular risks assessments to ensure that activities are safe and secure. As a result, pupils say they feel safe and nearly all parents agree.
- Pupils say incidents of bullying are rare. They are confident staff would quickly resolve any worries pupils might have. Pupils clearly understand the difference between bullying and the ups and downs of normal friendship.
- Pupils' understanding of safety, and how to keep themselves and others safe, is good. They move around the building safely. The eldest are very aware of the need to look after those younger than themselves.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the potential dangers of the internet and social media, and know how to keep themselves safe online.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers are clear to pupils about the conduct expected of them, and the rewards and consequences they can expect. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure within this framework and make good progress.
- Teachers promote the school's 'terrific' values consistently in every classroom so that pupils understand not only that should behave well but that they should try their best at all times.
- Teachers regularly check pupils' learning during lessons. They take careful note of how well pupils have understood the tasks they have been set, and make sure the tasks they set offer sufficient challenge to all groups of pupils.
- Teachers use resources, especially technology, particularly well to interest pupils in new learning, to explain teaching points clearly, and to maintain pupils' interest.
- Teachers have developed a common approach to teaching throughout the school, so that pupils know what to expect no matter which teacher they have. For example, they know that lessons will have 'mild', 'spicy' and 'hot' tasks of different levels of difficulty, and that staff encourage them to challenge themselves. Pupils say they feel a sense of accomplishment and pride when they move up a level, and that this motivates them to try even harder.
- Teachers are very successful in improving pupils' confidence and levels of motivation. Pupils say their learning has improved because they are taught to keep trying. For example, in the past they might say, 'I can't do this,' whereas now they will say, 'I can't do this yet', and can explain why the difference is important.
- Teachers' marking gives pupils useful 'next steps' so they know how to improve their work, and can offer an informed view of where they think they are in their learning.
- Teachers ensure that classroom displays offer pupils a rich learning environment containing a wealth of useful information that they can use to figure out a solution when they are stuck in their work. In this way, teachers encourage pupils to develop the ability to solve problems themselves.

- Pupils say they enjoy homework because they are given some choice in what they do and in how they tackle it. As a result, they use homework to explore topics in depth and regularly say that they want to research more.
- Teachers make concerted efforts to help pupils develop their speaking and listening skills, and these are taught well. Teachers' questions encourage pupils to answer in full sentences using a wide range of vocabulary, and insist they use technical terminology, that is specific to that subject or lesson, accurately.
- Reading is taught effectively. Phonics (how letters link to the sounds they make) is taught well, particularly in Year 1. As a result, pupils enjoy reading and the standard of their reading is improving across the school.
- Mathematics teaching is good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they use it to set tasks that interest pupils and encourage them to 'aim high'. All teachers follow the school's policy on how to teach key aspects of mathematics, for example calculation, so that pupils' understanding builds well as they move through the school.
- Support for pupils' writing is mostly good, but it is stronger in specific literacy lessons than it is in other subjects. Although staff provide pupils with frequent opportunities to write in subjects such as 'topic' and religious education, they do not always insist that pupils use key skills, such as punctuation, to a high enough standard.
- In most cases, learning support assistants help and guide the individual pupils and the small groups they work with very effectively. They provide these pupils with good support and encourage them to try to work out how to solve problems or approach a task for themselves. However, when the teacher is talking to the whole class, teaching assistants' roles are unclear and they make less impact on learning.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Across the school, the progress of the vast majority of pupils is good, as shown by the school's accurate and regular assessments, the evidence confirmed by inspectors, and national test results.
- School leaders and teachers check the rate of pupils' progress regularly and use this information in a variety of ways, for example to plan extra lessons for pupils falling behind. Based on this information, the headteacher writes additional targets for individual pupils, and checks these are met. Pupils are pleased she is directly involved in their learning. This contributes strongly to pupils' good progress.
- In the Year 6 national tests in 2015, pupils made good progress overall. In writing, every pupil made or exceeded the expected rate of progress from the start of Year 3. In reading and mathematics, nine in every 10 did. In reading, over half exceeded the expected rate, in writing about two in every five, and in mathematics about a third. This represents good progress because these pupils achieved results that were significantly below pupils nationally when they last took national tests at the end of Key Stage 1.
- In 2015, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level by the end of Year 6 was in line with the latest national average in mathematics, writing and grammar, punctuation and spelling. In reading, it fell to below average.
- In 2015, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics was below the latest national average. Nonetheless, these results show a marked improvement since 2014.
- Attainment in Year 2 is good. The proportions both reaching and exceeding the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics was above the school's results last year and last year's national averages.
- Progress is equally good elsewhere in the school, largely because of improvements in teaching. The relatively small number of girls in some classes do well because teachers ensure they are fully involved in

all parts of lessons.

- Disadvantaged pupils throughout the school make good progress. This recent improvement is largely because extra well-trained staff provide the specific help they need. In 2015, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 closed the gap between themselves and other school pupils and are now ahead of other pupils in reading and writing, and at a similar level in mathematics. In reading, they are three terms ahead, and in writing a term and a half. All disadvantaged pupils made at least the expected rate of progress from Year 3, and half exceeded it in reading and writing and about a third in mathematics. When compared with the most recent results for all pupils nationally, those in 2014, disadvantaged pupils were two terms ahead in reading and one and a half terms ahead in writing, but a term behind in mathematics.
- The most-able pupils make good progress, which is an improvement since the previous inspection, because these pupils are recognised earlier and given tasks at the right level of difficulty.
- Disabled pupils, and those with special educational needs, do particularly well from their varied starting points because each one is known as an individual and the school provides good support that ensures their needs are quickly identified and met. This support is wide-ranging and includes social and emotional guidance for those with low self-esteem, for example. As a result, they build self confidence and do well academically.

The early years provision

is good

- Children start in the Reception class with a wide range of knowledge, skills and understanding that, whilst broadly typical for their age, are particularly low in early reading and writing. They make good progress and largely catch up with the expected level of development for their age, with two-thirds reaching a good level of development.
- Relationships between staff and children are very positive and contribute to children's good progress. Children generally behave well and the very small proportion who struggle to manage their own behaviour are well supported by staff, who quickly re-establish their interest in learning.
- Teaching is good. Teachers ensure that pupils listen carefully to what they are told and work purposefully at all times. No time is wasted because teachers ensure children know the routines and expectations and settle quickly. Consequently, children achieve well.
- Key skills, such as phonics, are taught clearly and accurately so children make good progress in their early reading and also begin to grasp of the rudiments of writing and number. Adults quickly spot when activities are not working and quickly change the activity or their approach so that the children's interest is maintained.
- Leadership is good. Staff form an effective and cohesive team with a clear sense of direction because everyone knows what is expected of them. They are managed well so they understand how to check children's progress. The early years leader briefs all adults carefully about each day's activities so that they know how to take the children forward in their learning.
- Procedures to keep children safe are good and followed closely by staff. Staff check the classroom and outside area for potential risks at the start of every day. They teach the children how to stay safe and to make sure, for example, they carry and use equipment properly.
- Children are well prepared for Year 1 and transition arrangements into this key stage are good. Children have taster sessions and the initial approach taken in Year 1 mirrors that of Reception very closely. As a result, children settle quickly.
- Transition into the Reception class from the on-site preschool is good because school staff do much to prepare the children and get to know them and their parents. However, transition arrangements from other preschool settings vary and do not always, for example, give the school a full picture of the children joining, so that adults can ensure children settle quickly.

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	462108

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	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeff Towerzey
Headteacher	Jackie Blackburn
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2013
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