

Underhill School and Children's Centre

Mays Lane, Barnet, Hertfordshire EN5 2LZ

Inspection dates	8–9 March 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leadership and management are good. Leaders, including governors, provide a clear direction and drive to move the school forward. They are having a positive impact on teaching and learning and as a result, pupils are now making good progress and the school is improving rapidly.
- Leaders and managers have an accurate understanding of how well teachers are doing and provide effective challenge and encouragement for all staff.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Teachers form good relationships with the pupils, check up on their progress and are skilled in demonstrating what pupils are to learn next.
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Pupils behave considerately and are keen to learn. Members of staff ensure that pupils feel safe at school and are knowledgeable about how to stay safe.
- Outcomes are good. Attainment is rising across the school because pupils of all abilities are supported effectively, enabling them to make good progress.
- Children in the early years provision do well from their starting points. They enjoy learning and develop confidence and independence.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all activities in the early years provision motivate and engage girls and boys equally well. When this happens, boys do not learn as quickly as they should.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations for the presentation of pupils' work. There are occasions when they do not maintain the pupils' concentration throughout lessons by moving learning on in a timely fashion.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all activities in the early years provision motivate and engage girls and boys equally well.
- Make sure that teachers always have high enough expectations for the presentation of pupils' work and maintain pupils' attention throughout lessons by moving their learning on as soon as necessary.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The senior leadership team work together well to ensure that the school has a climate in which members of staff and pupils can flourish and pupils can be well prepared for the next stage of their education. Leaders, including middle leaders, have a clear and accurate understanding about how well the school is doing and what needs to be done next to improve teaching and pupils' progress further.
- There are rigorous systems in place to help teachers to improve their performance and to identify the training and classroom support they need so that they can succeed. Leaders are good role models for teaching and provide coaching for teachers who are new to the school or in training. Teachers enjoy working at the school and are keen to develop.
- The curriculum is wide and provides motivating topics that capture the pupils' interest and are girl- and boy-friendly. Topics start with a visit or visitors to bring the subject to life and inspire pupils to learn. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 3 thoroughly enjoyed a workshop about the Stone Age. Leaders check that the curriculum covers all subjects fully and is enhanced with a breadth of additional activities such as clubs. The revised curriculum is having a positive impact on the pupils' progress.
- The curriculum is well designed so that it supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about various cultures and to understand the values held in modern Britain. They learn to respect others by nominating 'stars of the week' and valuing the 'unsung heroes' chosen by the staff.
- The special funding for sports and physical education is spent wisely on resources, swimming and extending the range and quality of sporting activities. For example, during the inspection pupils in Year 5 developed their ball-handling skills well by watching a video about chest passes before playing netball.
- The funding for disadvantaged pupils is having a positive impact on their progress, and the remaining slight gaps in their attainment are closing rapidly. There is a clear analysis of the impact of any additional activities on the progress of the pupils.
- Leaders are working well to engage parents in their children's learning, and hold a number of workshops and training events to support parents in helping their children at home. Parents make positive comments such as, 'The children are safe, happy and are learning well' and, 'They give children a lot of support.'
- The local authority provides effective support for this good and rapidly improving school. The school has welcomed training and has worked with other schools to develop skills and increase the impact of changes on the pupils' learning.
- Leaders are aware that there are a few remaining inconsistencies in teaching and learning and are striving to ensure that all staff maintain the school's high expectations for all aspects of its work.

■ The governance of the school

- Governance is good. Governors are challenging and supportive and have a good understanding of what is happening at the school. Every governor has an individual 'portfolio' (responsibility) and researches and feeds back to other governors about the aspect of school life they are checking up on. This has enabled governors to deepen their impact on whole-school development. Governors have a real influence on what happens at the school and are relentless in pursuing improvement.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that all members of staff are knowledgeable about how to care for the pupils and are checked for suitability. Swift and effective action is taken when a member of staff has a concern about a pupil's welfare. Parents are confident that their children are being kept safe at school. Pupils comment on the way they are made to feel safe and learn how to avoid unsafe situations, including when using the internet.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers explain what pupils are to learn clearly and are good at demonstrating what pupils are to do. They use various resources well to make learning interesting. For example, pupils in Year 5 enjoyed using iPads to find out about Sutton Hoo in preparation for their visit to the British Museum.
- Teaching assistants provide valuable support for all groups of pupils, especially when giving specific help to disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability.

- Good relationships between members of staff and the pupils ensure that behaviour is managed well.
- Careful questioning and the promotion of key vocabulary support pupils well, including those who are learning to speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils are taught a wide range of skills to help them with their reading and are given various strategies to help them to solve problems in mathematics. For example, in Year 4 pupils remembered to use the school's approach to help them to solve word problems.
- Teachers check how well pupils are doing and mostly provide work that builds on what pupils have previously learned. There are occasions when teachers do not check up on learning quickly enough in lessons. When this happens pupils' learning slows because they are not given a further challenge straight away and can become restless.
- Teachers do not consistently expect pupils to present their work with care and this can lead to avoidable errors in writing and mathematical calculations.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils understand what they need to do to be good learners and are confident that they can achieve well. For example, in mathematics in Year 6, pupils were confident about explaining the importance of place value when carrying out calculations.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school and they are knowledgeable about how to stay safe. They are well-mannered and polite and are developing a good sense of community spirit. They have good opportunities to take responsibility and are enthusiastic in their roles as 'Blues Busters' (playtime helpers) and school councillors.
- Pupils are aware that they need to make allowances for each other. One pupil spoke for others by saying, 'We all make mistakes but we are very accepting of our mistakes.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most pupils and parents agree that behaviour is good over time and has improved. Pupils move around the school sensibly and play together harmoniously. Pupils report that instances of bullying have reduced and state with confidence that 'all of the teachers are against it'.
- Pupils behave well in class, and disruption in lessons is rare. Pupils are keen to look after the school environment and make good use of information about learning displayed on the classroom walls.
- The school's rigorous systems for discouraging absences are improving pupils' attendance. Although not all pupils attend regularly or arrive punctually, this is largely due to many of them being placed in temporary housing further away from the school while their homes are being refurbished.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their work and are willing to help each other in their learning. Occasionally, when their learning is not moved on quickly enough, they become inattentive and lose concentration.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- The majority of children join the early years provision working below the levels typical for their age. Pupils are making good progress from their starting points over time and across the age groups.
- School information and pupils' current work shows that attainment is rising across the school and is mostly in line with age-related expectations. Pupils in the current Year 1 are on track to do better in the phonics screening check than last year. Pupils across the age groups use this knowledge to help them to tackle unfamiliar words. They demonstrate an interest in reading a range of books. The school is working effectively to close the remaining gap in attainment between girls and boys in this subject.
- 2015 was the first year of national test results for Year 6 pupils at the school. The attainment of this group of pupils was below the national average overall, and, particularly, in reading. Although not all groups of these pupils made enough progress, this was largely due to underachievement in the past.
- There were large gaps between the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in 2015. These attainment gaps have reduced dramatically this year and disadvantaged pupils are making at least as much, if not more, progress than other pupils. Where gaps remain they are slight and are closing.

quickly.

- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability have not always done well enough in the past. There are now rigorous systems in place for identifying the needs of these pupils and ensuring that they receive specific support in their learning.
- Pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language do so quickly. They benefit from support from members of staff and pupils at the school.
- The most-able pupils make good progress and in most lessons they are given the right level of challenge to enable them to extend the depth of their knowledge and understanding.
- There are occasions in some lessons where pupils do not move on in their learning fast enough. This is when the work provides too much practise for previously learned skills, pupils finish too quickly and there is not enough new learning.

Early years provision

is good

- Members of staff provide a wide range of exciting activities that promote good learning. For example, children enjoyed making models for their jungle scene and using tweezers 'to remove bugs from slime'.
- Teachers and support assistants work well with the children and ask questions that encourage them to think about their learning and extend their speaking and listening skills. For example, in one lesson children were able to explain how they could build their towers more effectively and what they needed to do to steer their boats.
- Children who have special educational needs or disability are supported well. The learning of all groups of children is assessed frequently and thoroughly. Members of staff encourage parents to become involved in their children's education.
- Attainment is rising and children develop a good level of knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects.
- Children, including the two-year-olds, make good progress from their starting points and establish school routines quickly. They soon become confident and independent and even the two-year-olds in the Nursery are learning about the importance of sharing.
- Children behave well and are keen to talk about their learning. For example, in the Reception classes children were enthusiastic when explaining the purpose of the x-rays being shown in a light box. Children persevere with the tasks they have chosen and concentrate well.
- Children feel safe at school and know how to stay safe. The facilities for the two-year-olds are right for them, and close links with the children's centre enable children to settle well in the Nursery.
- The early years provision is led and managed well. Leaders have a clear understanding of what remains to be done to further develop both the provision and the children's progress. Learning topics are carefully chosen to interest the children and to support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Funding for disadvantaged children is spent effectively and all groups of children are prepared well for Year 1 and the next stage of their education.
- There are occasions when not all activities are sufficiently equally inviting for girls and boys. When this happens, boys in particular do not choose to work at these tasks, and therefore do not make the same rapid progress in literacy and numeracy as the girls.

School details

Unique reference number	101301
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10002021

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	563
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Ruckman
Headteacher	Jack Newton (executive headteacher) Jenny Matthews (head of school)
Telephone number	020 8449 2423
Website	www.underhillschool.org
Email address	office@underhill.barnetmail.net
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Underhill is larger than the average-sized primary school. There is a Nursery and three Reception classes in the early years provision.
- There is a well-above average proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Pupils come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, and speak a wide range of languages.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school became a 'through' primary in September 2014 when Underhill Infant and Underhill Junior amalgamated.
- The executive headteacher also leads and manages another school in the area. The executive headteacher and the head of school have been in charge since the amalgamation, and became permanent leaders of the school in November 2015.
- The children's centre on the same site is led and managed by leaders at the school but is inspected separately.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning in 26 lessons, almost all jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with leaders, other members of staff, pupils, a member of the local authority and members of the governing body.
- The inspection team took into account the 54 responses to the online survey, Parent View, a letter from a parent, and held informal discussions with a number of parents.
- A range of information supplied by the school was scrutinised, including the school's own information about how well pupils are doing, planning documents and checks on the quality of teaching. Inspectors also looked at the school development plan and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Alison Cartlidge, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Nicholas Hunt	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Harris	Ofsted Inspector

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