

Unstone Junior School

Main Road, Unstone, Dronfield, Derbyshire S18 4AB

Inspection dates

13–14 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders do not robustly evaluate the impact of their actions to raise standards. As a result, necessary improvements have not been promptly achieved.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies too much across the school.
- Pupils make slower progress than other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers do not consistently reinforce high expectations for the presentation and accuracy of pupils' written work across different subjects.
- Governors have not ensured that they use the information provided to them about pupils' performance to challenge the headteacher about the effectiveness of her work.
- Teachers do not consistently plan work that meets pupils' different needs and abilities. The most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- The teaching of mathematics is not consistently good. Consequently, the progress pupils make in mathematics differs too much across classes.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and governors are ambitious for the future of the school. They have created a positive culture for learning where pupils socialise well and feel valued.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education well. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school's curriculum is planned with pupils' interests at heart. It is enriched by a range of interesting activities.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is good. Pupils receive support which enables them to make good progress.
- The school's promotion of pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school has a calm, friendly atmosphere where pupils enjoy learning.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are very good. As a result, pupils are confident learners and attend school regularly.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that leaders:
 - sharply and consistently monitor and evaluate standards across the school, including in subjects other than English and mathematics
 - hold teachers to account more closely and ensure that they are following agreed practices
 - identify weaknesses in teaching swiftly and take action to support and challenge staff to improve their practice.
- Improve the effectiveness of governance by ensuring that members of the governing body hold the headteacher to account for her actions to improve the performance of pupils, including the impact of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
 - consistently use the school's agreed strategies for the teaching of mathematics so that pupils make more rapid progress
 - routinely plan activities, particularly in reading and mathematics, which meet pupils' different needs and abilities and effectively challenge the most able pupils
 - have consistently high expectations for the accuracy of pupils' writing and presentation of their work across a range of subjects and year groups.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that pupils make consistently strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics during their time at Unstone Junior School.
- Leaders, including governors, do not sharply evaluate the impact of their actions to raise standards. As a result, improvements in teaching and learning are taking longer to establish and weaker teaching has not been promptly addressed.
- The headteacher has not ensured that teaching strategies introduced to raise standards, particularly in reading and mathematics, are implemented consistently across the school.
- The headteacher has taken effective action to improve the evaluation of pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. However, she has not checked that teachers use the information from their evaluations to provide pupils with consistently challenging work, particularly in mathematics.
- Leaders have ensured that additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is allocated appropriately. However, they do not evaluate the impact of specific strategies sharply enough to ensure that it leads to the rapid progress necessary.
- Leaders have improved pupils' attainment and progress in reading. As a result, attainment in reading at the end of Year 6 improved in 2017, to above national averages. Nevertheless, leaders are aware that the progress pupils make in their reading varies too much across year groups.
- Some subject leaders, including those for subjects other than English and mathematics, are relatively new to their roles and are not yet effective in evaluating and assessing the progress pupils make. The small number of staff makes the sharing of subject leader roles difficult. However, the recent federation with Unstone St Mary's Nursery and Infant School has enabled the headteacher to begin to develop these roles more effectively across the federation.
- Leaders make effective use of the additional funding to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They carefully check the impact of their actions to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Leaders have reviewed the curriculum to ensure that it is broad and balanced. They provide a wide range of learning activities for pupils, particularly boys, to develop skills in different areas. Leaders consult pupils about the content of the curriculum and about what they are interested in and what they would like to learn. Members of the school council help staff to plan enrichment activities such as external visitors and trips to places of interest. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic learners.
- The headteacher is committed to the school and is passionate for pupils' success. She has created a culture where all are valued. Staff have established positive relationships with pupils and they know each as an individual. Pupils feel well supported and are happy and settled at school.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education well through the curriculum. Pupils have a good understanding of fundamental British values and of

different faiths and cultures. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, one pupil told me, 'Being able to have the option to vote is important because everyone gets a choice. That way, we ensure decisions are fair.'

- Leaders use the additional funding provided through the sports premium to good effect. In addition to providing good-quality teaching and coaching skills, pupils have increased opportunities to participate in a range of sporting activities.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for further improvement. They understand the work that is currently being undertaken to bring about improvements. However, they have not ensured that they use the information provided to them by the headteacher to sharply challenge and hold the headteacher and other staff to account for pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Governors monitor the use of additional funding, such as the pupil premium funding. They understand how it is used to support pupils. However, they do not closely evaluate the impact of the additional support to ensure that these pupils make the best possible progress.
- Members of the governing body are ambitious for the future of the school. Governors have a range of relevant experience, skills and knowledge. They know the school community very well. As a result, they are able to effectively support many aspects of development and are supportive of the headteacher.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff and governors have undergone training in safeguarding. Staff understand that they have a duty to be vigilant and are aware of the different forms of abuse.
- The designated safeguarding leaders are well trained and ensure that pupils and their families are referred to external support agencies promptly, when required. Records relating to safeguarding are kept in a well-ordered fashion.
- The headteacher and senior teacher know the school community well and work with families to ensure the well-being of children whose circumstances may make them particularly vulnerable. Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning across the school is not consistently good. As a result, some pupils, including the most able and those who are disadvantaged, sometimes do not make as much progress as they should.
- Teachers do not use assessment information consistently well, particularly in mathematics and reading. Too often, they do not match activities to pupils' abilities to enable them to make good progress. Teachers regularly give pupils the same activities or do not move them on to more challenging work quickly enough.

- In mathematics, new strategies for the teaching of mathematics are not consistently implemented across classes. In some lessons, teachers do not ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop their competency in problem-solving and reasoning skills. As a result, pupils, including the most able, do not make as much progress as they should.
- Teachers do not always reinforce high expectations for the presentation and accuracy of pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation in their work across the curriculum. This slows pupils' progress in writing.
- Teachers and additional adults use questions well in different subjects to reinforce learning and clarify misconceptions. Where this was strongest, pupils made very good improvements in their learning.
- Teachers use good-quality texts and visual images to plan interesting work in English. Where the inspector saw this done well, the teacher modelled good reading and writing skills which inspired pupils in their work. For example, the teacher used a film clip of the animation 'Lighthouse', to motivate pupils to create effective imagery in their writing. One pupil began her narrative, 'In the cold, crisp sky of the night, the moon shimmered above the isolated lighthouse.'
- Much work has been undertaken to promote effective reading skills throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and regularly. There was compelling evidence that staff training has led to significant improvement in reading in some year groups. Pupils who read to me were able to read fluently, with expression and good understanding.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported in their learning. Adults provide timely intervention to give pupils appropriate guidance and support.
- Teaching assistants work well with teachers and leaders to provide high-quality nurture and support for pupils at different times of the school day.
- There are very good relationships between pupils and teachers. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress.
- Where there is stronger practice, teachers plan lessons that interest and motivate pupils. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' participation and involvement. As a result, pupils make good gains in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and caring. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that they can talk to staff about worries they may have. The headteacher ensures that particularly vulnerable pupils have a named adult to go to when needed.
- Pupils enjoy school and socialise well. The small size of the school enables pupils to mix confidently across different age groups. Pupils, parents and carers highly value the 'family atmosphere', as one parent put it, in the school.

- Pupils are encouraged to take part in decision-making through their elected positions as members of the school council. In addition, lessons and collective worship regularly focus on themes around fundamental British values and ensuring pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in different situations. For example, pupils told me how they have been learning about the risk to their health from smoking. One pupil explained, 'It can give you cancer and you might die.'
- Leaders promote healthy lifestyles. Pupils were able to explain to me how to stay healthy by eating well and exercising regularly. In addition, they told me how the school council had consulted with staff on the kinds of clubs and activities they would like as part of their wider curriculum. As a result, pupils benefit mentally and physically from a wide range of opportunities including fencing, football, gymnastics, craft club and gardening club.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were positive about the care, education and opportunities their children receive. One parent stated, 'My son is extremely happy at this school and enjoys all lessons. His confidence has grown and he feels able to contribute in class. He feels safe and secure in the school environment and also enjoys participating in the variety of after-school clubs.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is a calm, friendly place. Pupils behave well in lessons and conduct themselves well around the school. Pupils are polite and well-mannered.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying and the different forms it can take. They say that incidents of bullying are few and that adults deal with these incidents promptly and fairly.
- In lessons, pupils collaborate well and show mutual respect for each other. Relationships are positive. In some lessons, pupils lost focus only if their work was not well matched to their needs.
- Procedures for monitoring attendance are rigorous. The headteacher promotes the importance of attendance in the school and works with parents and outside agencies to ensure that pupils are safe and attend school regularly. As a result, attendance is close to the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The majority of pupils enter the school with above-average skills and understanding. They do not make strong progress by the end of Year 6. In 2017, pupils' progress by the end of Year 6 in reading and mathematics, though improved, was not good enough. The quality of pupils' work in their books across the classes is variable. Too often, the quality of pupils' writing is let down by inaccurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. Presentation of work varies across subjects. In mathematics and reading, work is sometimes too easy for pupils. There are too few examples of pupils, particularly the most able, being challenged to extend and deepen their understanding.

- Pupils' progress in reading by the end of Year 6 was well below average in 2016, as it was in mathematics. Results improved in both subject areas in 2017, but still indicate some underachievement. Pupils' progress in writing by the end of Year 6 has been in line with the national average for the last two years.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils in 2017 was too small to report on their progress without the risk of identifying them. Current pupils across the school are making similar progress to that of their peers.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standards in reading and English grammar, punctuation and spelling improved in 2017 to above national averages. Pupils' attainment of the higher standards in mathematics and writing also improved to above national averages. However, leaders are aware that the very small and varied cohorts in different year groups make year-on-year comparisons of pupils' attainment difficult.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress. Staff effectively identify where additional support is needed and ensure that individual needs are met well.

School details

Unique reference number	112642
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10047847

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	44
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Adlington
Headteacher	Rachael Fowlds
Telephone number	01246 413109
Website	www.unstone.derbyshire.sch.uk
Email address	info@unstone.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 January 2015

Information about this school

- Unstone Junior School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school federated with Unstone St Mary's Nursery and Infant School in September 2016 to form the Unstone Schools Federation.
- The school works with a local cluster of schools as part of the Partnership of Dronfield Schools.
- The school receives minimum support from the local authority.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in both classes, across all year groups. These were joint observations with the headteacher. The inspector observed the teaching of reading and listened to pupils reading. The inspector talked to pupils about their school and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior teacher and the special educational needs coordinator. The inspector held meetings with representatives of the governing body and had a telephone conversation with a representative for the local authority.
- The inspector spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. She took account of the 15 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector considered the two responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and the 14 responses to the pupil survey.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including: the school's self-evaluation of current performance and plans for improvement; the school's most recent information on the achievement and progress of pupils; information relating to the safeguarding of pupils; information about the behaviour management of pupils; the school's most recent information relating to the attendance of pupils; and minutes from a number of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Stephanie Innes-Taylor, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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