

Inspection of Unstone St Mary's Infant School

Crow Lane, Unstone, Dronfield, Derbyshire S18 4AL

Inspection dates: 11–12 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

The previous 'outstanding' judgement reflected the school's overall effectiveness in May 2011 under the relevant inspection framework at that time.

The new judgement of 'requires improvement' reflects the current inspection framework as well as any changes at the school since the last inspection.

The school has not been inspected for eight years, which is longer than the five-year maximum at any point in that period. The long time between inspections is because the law changed in 2011; it made outstanding schools exempt from routine inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe at school. There is always someone for them to talk to and staff notice if a pupil seems to be upset or anxious. 'Teapot time' gives pupils the chance to share their worries or concerns with a trusted adult.

Leaders want pupils to get off to the best start in their school life. However, they have not made sure that the teaching of phonics is consistent. Not all pupils become fluent early readers. Pupils do not build on what they have learned before in all subjects.

All staff want pupils to become confident and resilient. Pupils enjoy the opportunities that they have to learn outdoors in all weathers. There are lots of exciting trips and visits, such as to Sherwood Forest and the pantomime.

Pupils play together happily. Year 2 play leaders organise games for other pupils. Pupils do not feel that bullying happens. Staff make sure that any problems are sorted out straight away. During 'friendship week', pupils learn how to be good friends to each other.

Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. They are friendly and polite. They are keen to do their best in class. Sometimes pupils need reminders to listen carefully.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Unstone St Mary's Nursery and Infant school is an inclusive and caring community. Parents and carers value the readiness of staff to listen, and the support that their children receive. There is a well-established tradition of effective pastoral care for pupils and families.

Children learn to get along well with each other in the early years. Nursery children listen to each other, ask questions and take turns. They learn how to use outdoor equipment safely and respectfully. They change direction to avoid each other when they are riding bikes and trikes on the playground. Staff plan activities that build up children's knowledge of number or help them to identify different shapes. Children use the sounds they have learned to help them to spell when they are writing. Staff quickly spot when children need extra help to catch up with their peers. They check that this extra help is making a difference.

Leaders want pupils to develop a love of reading so that they are 'desperate to pick up a book'. However, they have not made sure that all staff have had the training that they need to teach phonics consistently well. Not all staff accurately model the sounds that pupils are learning. They do not spot when pupils are confused between letter names and letter sounds. Teachers check which sounds pupils know. However, they do not make sure that the books pupils read contain these sounds. Too many

contain irregular words which pupils cannot read or sounds that they do not know. This does not help pupils to catch up quickly.

Leaders want pupils to have the right knowledge and skills to become 'junior ready'. In some subjects, such as mathematics, leaders have organised the curriculum so that it builds on what pupils have learned before. Teachers help pupils to practise and recall number facts fluently. Pupils enjoy using this knowledge in real life scenarios, such as pretending to spend money in a shop. However, they do not always have the chance to think more deeply. Some pupils find the work easy.

There have been changes in the leadership of the school since it federated with the junior school. Some subject leaders are new to their roles and have recently begun to work across both schools. Leaders have identified that learning is not sequenced well enough in all subjects. They have plans to improve this, but these are at an early stage. The coordinator for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) makes sure that pupils are well supported as they move to the junior school.

Leaders have prioritised pupils' personal development. They have made sure that the curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is well planned. Pupils know how to be healthy. They enjoy their active physical education (PE) lessons. They can visit a range of places of worship and understand that everyone should be treated fairly.

Pupils learn to take responsibility for the world around them by being part of the 'Clean Team' and picking up litter. They are proud of the 'Green Flag' that they have been awarded for their environmental work. Some pupils train to be science ambassadors. They help to organise workshops and assemblies to share their love of science. Staff want pupils to be 'Learning today, leading tomorrow'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff know what to do if they are worried about the safety of a pupil. Leaders act on these concerns. They contact other agencies swiftly. They work well with families to help them to get the right support.

Staff know what dangers pupils might face. They check that what they are teaching pupils about staying safe will help them to do so. Pupils know how to stay safe online. They know that they need to tell an adult if they are using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that the teaching of phonics is consistent. Not all teachers model pure sounds. Pupils do not build consistently on what they

already know. Misconceptions are not reliably addressed. Books do not match the sounds that pupils know. Leaders should make sure that all staff receive training to improve their subject knowledge. They should ensure that the teaching of phonics is organised so that it is systematic. They should check that the books pupils are given to read help them to keep up and catch up.

- Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is sequenced so that pupils know more and remember more in all subjects. They should check the sequence of skills they have identified is embedded in the whole school curriculum plans. They should make sure that learning is organised so that pupils are building on what they have learned before.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	112643
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10121303
Type of school	Nursery & infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	53
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Janet Hill
Headteacher	Rachael Fowlds (Executive headteacher)
Website	www.unstone.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 May 2011

Information about this school

- Unstone St Mary's Infant School federated with Unstone Junior School in 2016. The schools share an executive headteacher and a governing body.

Information about this inspection

- We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.
- The previous outstanding judgement reflected the school's overall effectiveness in May 2011 under the relevant inspection framework at that time.
- The new judgement of 'requires improvement' reflects the current inspection framework as well as any changes at the school since the last inspection.
- The school has not been inspected for eight years, which is longer than the five-year maximum at any point in that period. The long time between inspections is because the law changed in 2011; it made outstanding schools exempt from routine inspection.
- We spoke with senior leaders. We spoke with an associate school improvement advisor by telephone.

- We carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and science. We spoke with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and scrutinised samples of work.
- We scrutinised the records which the school keeps with regard to safeguarding and recruitment. We spoke with staff, pupils and parents. We visited an assembly.
- We spoke with pupils at formal and informal times of the day. We spoke with governors.

Inspection team

Hazel Henson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ged Philbin

Ofsted Inspector

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