



Upminster Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102306
LEA Havering LEA
Inspection number 276691
Inspection dates 6 February 2006 to 7 February 2006
Reporting inspector Judith Dawson AI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	St Mary's Lane
School category	Community		Upminster
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		RM14 3BS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01708 220453
Number on roll	385	Fax number	01708 640758
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr R Skillet
Date of previous inspection	16 January 2001	Headteacher	Mr D Donoghue

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Larger than most, Upminster Junior School achieved an Active Mark in 2004 and has a thriving orchestra and choir. Most pupils have attended the on-site infant school and attainment on admission is above average. Most come from advantaged backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Almost all are of white British heritage and very few are at an early stage of learning English.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school, parents and pupils see Upminster Junior as a good school and inspectors agree. It gives good value for money. Pupils' personal development, attitudes and behaviour are outstanding and attendance is well above average. The school produces mature, thoughtful and hard-working pupils who enjoy learning. Pupils enter school with above average standards. They achieve well throughout the school and reach standards that are consistently well above average by the end of Year 6. Standards in musical performance are impressive, far exceeding those normally expected of junior pupils. Teaching and learning are good overall and sometimes outstanding. Teachers' planning, relationships with their pupils and good subject knowledge enable pupils to make good progress. The best teachers encourage pupils to work together, take responsibility for organising their learning and to study independently. In a few lessons, while teaching is well planned, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn independently. Some teachers use too many worksheets, limiting opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills across the curriculum. Teachers are beginning to set targets but pupils are not yet sufficiently involved in evaluating their performance or helping to identify areas for improvement. There is a good curriculum and the provision for music and sport is a significant strength. The school is led and managed well. The headteacher has an astute understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and, with the support of the staff and governors, has established effective plans for school improvement based upon rigorous self evaluation. The commitment of the staff and governors and the pupils' excellent attitudes to learning makes the capacity for improvement good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils and adults are very well cared for and the school is a happy place to be.

What the school should do to improve further

* Ensure that pupils know how to evaluate their work and what they need to do to excel; * Improve some aspects of teaching so that pupils have better opportunities to learn independently and to apply their English skills in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well throughout the school and the most able pupils make very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. The achievement of the few pupils with English as an additional language is similar to that of their peers. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average when pupils join the school. By the end of Year 6 standards are well above average in English and mathematics and high in science and pupils meet the school's challenging targets. Pupils' achievements in English have risen since the last inspection and their handwriting, spelling and grammar and overall presentation of their work is very good. Pupils' musical achievements are a significant strength of the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are major strengths. Pupils develop an excellent sense of social awareness and make significant gains in developing their confidence and independence. They enjoy school, have extremely positive attitudes and are proud of their school. Relationships are excellent and pupils say 'our teachers listen to us'. Attendance is very good and pupils behave very well. Pupils are aware that their opinions count and they keen to assume responsibilities such as being a prefect, a mediator or a 'web buster'. The members of the school council know that their decisions, for example, the need to have a rota system for football games in the yard, impact on school life. Pupils know how to keep healthy and safe. They make a positive contribution to the community and are effectively prepared for their future economic well-being, as they have a very good grasp of basic skills in literacy and numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. They appreciate the difference between right and wrong and learn to work together very well. They show loyalty and concern for each other. Pupils respond thoughtfully to good assemblies showing a sense of reverence and respect. Pupils' cultural awareness has improved since the last inspection. While pupils' appreciation of, and participation in, musical performance is outstanding, the school has rightly identified the need to develop links with schools that are more culturally diverse to deepen pupils' understanding of other cultures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall and outstanding in some lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge, prepare well and enjoy very good relationships with pupils. These factors set a purposeful context for learning and ensure that pupils of all abilities make good progress. Most teachers engage pupils well through varied approaches, challenging questions and the effective use of paired and group work. This helps pupils to clarify their thinking and promotes discussion effectively. In a Year 4 ICT lesson on branching databases the teacher challenged pupils to think for themselves and to cooperate effectively in pairs to develop their ideas. As a result, pupils worked with high levels of independence and made rapid progress. In a few satisfactory lessons pupils do not have enough opportunities to participate and find it more difficult to maintain concentration as a result. Teachers use a variety of approaches to assess pupils' work. Marking is regular and in most instances offers pupils constructive feedback about what they need to improve their work. There are good examples of teachers encouraging pupils to assess their own work. Targets are beginning to be used to help pupils to understand what they need to do to excel. However, this practice is not consistent, and in some classes, pupils are not always clear about the next steps in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It provides well for pupils' academic and personal needs and also allows them to be creative and enjoy their education. The curriculum tackles basic skills thoroughly and ensures that pupils of all abilities make good progress. In some classes, however, there is too much emphasis on worksheets and opportunities to extend pupils' writing are missed. Provision for ICT is very good and is used well to support learning in other subjects. Pupils' learning is enriched in a variety of ways. The school is rightly proud of its outstanding provision for music. Large numbers of pupils play in the orchestra and sing in the choir and standards in performance are impressively high. Similarly, there is a strong tradition in sport and pupils have regular opportunities to compete successfully against other schools. The school provides well for the teaching of modern foreign languages. A wide range of visits and visitors extend pupils learning well. During the inspection Year 6 pupils worked with a team from the BBC's 'Newsround' programme to see how it is was compiled. This gave them considerable insights into the world of broadcasting and developed their sense of citizenship. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship is very good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes very good care of its pupils. Good induction arrangements ensure that children settle into school well. They give parents confidence and promote a fruitful partnership between home and school. One parent commented 'I believe my children to be well rounded, well educated individuals as a result of their time at the school.'The school is careful to ensure that pupils are well protected. Good arrangements are in place and understood by all staff. Health and safety checks are regular and rigorous. All school activities both within and outside the school day are carefully assessed to minimise any potential risks. Policies and procedures to protect children from bullying and racism are successful and ensure that pupils feel safe and secure in school. The school works closely with a range of outside agencies to meet the emotional and learning needs of all its pupils. Support and guidance for pupils' personal development is very good. However, guidance to help pupils to improve their work is inconsistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is led and managed well. The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is very accurate. The conscientious headteacher, senior management team and governors have well-crafted plans for improvement and have been successful in establishing accurate and useful methods for tracking pupils' progress. The outcomes of this are used to sort pupils into ability groups. Effective self-evaluation contributes strongly to the school's capacity to improve. Recent monitoring by subject leaders

and the senior management team has concentrated on interviews with pupils. While this has helped to inform areas for development, monitoring has lacked a sharp edge in ironing out inconsistencies in provision for independent learning, marking and the use of targets. Financial management is good and spending is clearly linked to school priorities. The management makes very good use of the views of pupils and parents to inform its plans. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well and is fully involved in school development. Individual governors are increasingly involved in evaluating the outcomes of school initiatives, for example, the improvements in provision for ICT. Parents are kept well informed about school activities and their children's progress and feel involved in their children's education. Leaders' commitment to high standards, the strong musical and sporting traditions of the school and the promotion of pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship permeates through all aspects of school life, resulting in a caring, mature and orderly community where all are valued and have equality of opportunity.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much indeed for your friendliness and help during our visit to your school. You showed us how proud you are of the school, your teachers and each other and how much you enjoy being at school. You told us that Upminster Junior School is a good school and we agree with you. Many thanks to the school council who gave us your views.

I should like to tell you some of the things that are so good about your school. * Your behaviour, care for each other and willingness to take responsibility are excellent and you hardly ever miss school; * You are taught well; you work hard and understand how learning helps you to make the most of your lives; * Your work is very good; * The headteacher, governors and managers run the school well and your school is a happy place to be.

There are some things your school could do to make it even better.* Make sure that you all know what you need to do to make your work even better and help you all to decide this for yourselves;* Every teacher needs to give you plenty of opportunities to work independently, discuss your learning and use your very good writing skills for different subjects. We enjoyed visiting your school. We saw the DVD of your summer concert and thought your performance was outstanding. Well done.