



Upton Infants' School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113671
LEA Dorset
Inspection number 279215
Inspection dates 3 October 2005 to 4 October 2005
Reporting inspector Diane Wilkinson RISP

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Guest Road
School category	Community		Upton
Age range of pupils	4 to 7		Poole, Dorset BH16 5LQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01202 622367
Number on roll	250	Fax number	01202 624 659
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	26 June 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Ann Nicoll

Age group 4 to 7	Inspection dates 3 October 2005 - 4 October 2005	Inspection number 279215
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Upton is an average-sized infants school which remains popular with parents, although numbers are falling. Standards on entry are below average. Most pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. There has been a high turnover of staff in the last year due to promotion, retirement or long term leave, many at senior management level. In the last two years, the school has gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Investor in People Award and the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which provides good value for money. The school is aware that the high turnover of staff last year affected the progress made by some Year 2 pupils and has cautiously judged itself to be satisfactory. Despite last year's difficulties, most pupils are making good progress and this is supported by national test results in recent years. The school's ethos, together with excellent relationships and effective teamwork, supports learning particularly well. As a result, pupils develop very positive attitudes to their work and behave exceptionally well. Throughout the school, including in the Foundation Stage, consistently good teaching and a rich and well planned curriculum help pupils achieve well. Effective partnerships with parents and the local community promote pupils' well-being. The strong leadership of the headteacher, together with good management systems, has ensured that the school has continued to be well led and managed through the period of high staff turnover.

The school has built on the strengths seen during its last inspection and improvement has been good, especially in the teaching of mathematics. The school has adapted well to declining numbers and changes in standards on entry. A thorough and effective analysis of the school's provision has allowed good strategies to be put in place to address areas of need, such as improving achievement in reading and mathematics. However, the school is not always realistic about how well its strategies are impacting on standards. The monitoring and evaluation process is continuous and developmental and the school is building on, and extending, its successes. Consequently, its capacity to improve is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to build on the effective strategies put in place to improve achievement in reading and mathematics
- Ensure that pupils are encouraged to take part in appropriately challenging activities in mathematics at every opportunity.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In recent years, standards on entry to the Reception classes have been below average, particularly in literacy and numeracy skills. In the last two years, a good focus on teaching the basic skills ensures children now achieve well, and most reach the expected standards by the end of the year although few exceed them.

This good start is built on well in Years 1 and 2 where pupils continue to achieve well. Currently, overall standards at the end of Year 2 are average. They are above average in writing and information and communication technology (ICT) and the school's own data shows that standards are also improving in reading and mathematics. Despite the high staff turnover, the 2005 test results in reading and writing reached the challenging targets set although they did not do so in mathematics. The school's own data shows

that this was because some pupils with learning difficulties did not do as well as expected although they did make satisfactory progress.

In previous years, boys have not done as well as girls in the tests. This is partly because a higher proportion of boys have had specific learning difficulties. The school is putting in place a number of strategies to help improve boys' achievement and currently they achieve as well as girls. Good support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those who have specific needs, ensures they also achieve well.

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good, supported by the very positive atmosphere that is generated within the school. Pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development because of an effective planned programme, which is reinforced by assemblies and circle times.

Pupils' behaviour in a range of situations is exemplary. They live up to the high expectations and clear guidelines set by their teachers. Pupils enjoy coming to school, where they feel safe and demonstrate outstanding attitudes to their work and play. Attendance and punctuality are good.

Staff encourage pupils to eat and drink healthily and to adopt a healthy and safe lifestyle by taking advantage of the many opportunities to be active that exist in classrooms and at playtime. Pupils are taught to be safety conscious; for example, they know how to use tools safely. They develop a range of useful skills such as for ICT which help contribute towards their future economic well-being.

Pupils in Year 2 take turns at being a play buddy and are taught and understand their responsibilities to care for others in this role. All pupils are fully involved in drawing up their classroom golden rules, and feel ownership of them as a result.

Grade: 2

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Problems associated with the high turnover of staff last year have been addressed and teaching throughout the school is consistently good. High quality teamwork and a consistent approach facilitate pupils' learning across the school. Outstanding relationships and teachers' exceptionally good classroom management skills encourage pupils' willingness to learn. Teachers expect pupils to do well and a variety of effective methods help to ensure pupils easily acquire new skills and knowledge and that the higher-attaining pupils make the progress of which they are capable. A particularly good feature is that pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and to explain what

they are learning so they develop good understanding. Good awareness of the different interests and needs of boys and girls ensures that all are fully included in activities. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning, especially for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, who are taught well. Work is assessed well and this helps teachers plan effectively for individual pupils' future progress.

Teaching in mathematics has improved, especially in Year 2 where pupils are taught in groups according to their ability, which is having a positive impact on improving their achievement. When pupils of different abilities are taught mathematics in whole class groups, opportunities are sometimes missed to direct them to the tasks most appropriate for their needs.

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well planned, with a particular emphasis placed on acquiring the basic skills. This is a strength for which the school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark. Effective links are made between subjects, which provide pupils with good opportunities to practise and apply a range of skills, for example by using ICT skills to support learning in other subjects. Activities are interesting and motivate pupils well. A good programme of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors helps to maintain their interest. Effective links are maintained with local schools and churches, and pupils' involvement in the community is good.

The curriculum for the Reception classes is well matched to their needs, with an appropriate balance between specific focused learning and purposeful play. The curriculum provides well for pupils' personal development. In particular, it makes an effective contribution to their consideration of safe and healthy lifestyles.

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school succeeds in achieving its aim of providing a caring and safe environment. Suitable procedures for child protection are in place, and health and safety practice is given a high priority. The attractive environment and well-equipped playground, together with a high level of good supervision at playtimes, help children to play happily and safely together.

Parents are very happy with the good quality of the support and guidance they receive from the school. The school's induction programme is thorough and parents receive help when children transfer to Year 3.

Good tracking procedures are in place throughout the school so that teachers know how well children are progressing and give them good advice on how to improve. This benefits children with learning difficulties and disabilities, who make good progress.

Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to ensure that their individual learning needs are effectively met.

Grade: 2

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Through her inspirational leadership, the headteacher successfully shares her vision with all staff, motivating them to work energetically in effective teams. She has been particularly successful in managing the absence of a full leadership team over the last year. The team, now fully in place, has the determination and capacity to develop the school even further. Subject co-ordinators devise effective strategies to address areas for development. Good communication ensures that teaching and support staff work very well together to achieve the school's aims.

The school's self-evaluation is firmly based on the impact of its work on the standards pupils achieve and effectively analyses where improvements are needed. The leadership team has put good strategies in place to address these, although the school has not been realistic enough in evaluating their effect and this is the main reason for the modest assessment of its work. Effective procedures involve all staff and governors in the monitoring and evaluation process and good account is taken of parents' and pupils' views.

Governors are well informed. Their committee structure and increasing participation in keeping a check on the school's work enable them to develop a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. Governors make a positive contribution towards shaping the school's direction, for example retaining a balanced budget in the light of decreasing numbers. They have taken a number of appropriate decisions to address this issue and ensure that the school provides good value for money.

Grade: 2

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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	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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	3	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?	2	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	2	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	3	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

Upton Infants' School Guest Road Upton Poole Dorset BH16 5LQ

7th October 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly and helpful. We particularly want to thank the pupils in Year 2 for reading to, and talking with, the inspectors. You and your parents think your school is good and we agree with you.

What we liked most about your school:

Your headteacher, staff and governors are working successfully to make your school a good one

You are well taught and your lessons are interesting and well planned, which helps you to do well

You work hard and make good progress

You are given good advice on how to improve your work

Teachers and assistants take good care of you

You are very helpful to each other and your behaviour and attitudes to work are excellent.

What we have asked your school to do now:

Help you to do as well in reading and mathematics as you do in writing

Make sure that in mathematics lessons you always work on activities which will help you to do your best.

Yours sincerely

D Wilkinson Lead Inspector