



Uplands Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120036
LEA Leicester City
Inspection number 280714
Inspection dates 7 March 2006 to 8 March 2006
Reporting inspector Frances Gillam AI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Melbourne Road
School category	Community		Leicester
Age range of pupils	3 to 7		Leicestershire LE2 0DR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0116 2625280
Number on roll	459	Fax number	0116 2625280
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr John Mugglestone
Date of previous inspection	30 October 2000	Headteacher	Ms Jill Fletcher

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Uplands is a large infant school close to the city centre of Leicester. The school is in an area of social and economic deprivation and over a third of its pupils are entitled to a free school meal. All the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, the majority from an Indian background with pupils also from Bangladeshi, Pakistani and other Asian backgrounds. There is a growing number of pupils from a Black African heritage. Most of these pupils are from Somalia and the majority are at the early stages of acquiring English language. Children start part-time in Foundation 1 at the age of three. They move into Foundation 2 aged four and attend full-time until moving into Year 1.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Uplands Infant is a good school. This reflects the school's view of its work. In most classes, an interesting range of experiences develops children's personal well-being and early skills of language, literacy and numeracy effectively. Good provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that children make good progress overall, and very good progress in learning to speak and understand English. Pupils' progress is good by Year 2 and standards are average. Teaching and learning are good but the activities in the Foundation 1 classes do not always challenge the more able children.

Pupils behave well and have very good relationships with the adults who work with them. Pupils enjoy school but attendance levels remain stubbornly low. The high level of care ensures that pupils feel safe and secure. The curriculum is good and particularly effective in developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Since the last inspection, the provision for ICT has improved, as has teachers' marking. These improvements, together with rising standards, reflect the school's good capacity to improve.

Leadership and management are good. Extensive and robust self-review ensures that senior managers and governors have a clear view of how well pupils are doing but they need to check more systematically how well staff are responding to areas for development. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the needs of the more able children are met more effectively in the Foundation 1 classes by ensuring that teaching challenges them to do their best.
- Check that areas for development in teaching are being addressed successfully.
- Work more closely with parents to improve the attendance of their children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well to reach broadly average standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 2. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress overall. Attainment is still below average by the time children enter Year 1 but good teaching has moved them on considerably from their well below average standards on joining Foundation 1. Progress is particularly rapid in learning to speak and understand English. Teaching assistants throughout the school take every opportunity to encourage talk in both the children's home language and English and this increases their vocabulary and their confidence to express themselves. Although progress of the more able pupils is good in most year groups, it is not as rapid in the Foundation 1 classes. Teaching in these classes does not do enough to extend the more able because the work is not challenging enough. Learning does not move on as quickly as it should to ensure these children make the same good progress as their classmates.

By Year 2, standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics and pupils' progress is good. Test results have improved year on year. In the tests in 2005, not as many pupils attained the higher levels in reading and mathematics as pupils did nationally. Senior managers are very aware of the reasons for this and are taking effective action. This is ensuring that pupils receive focused support. This contributes very well to the achievement of all pupils and has a significant impact on standards. Reading, writing, mathematical and ICT skills develop well and pupils make good use of these skills to develop their understanding in other subjects.

Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress. They receive well-focused support to help them to meet their targets for improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good overall. Pupils' good behaviour has a positive impact on their attitudes to learning and they enjoy coming to school. However, their attendance is below average, mainly as a result of parents taking them out of school for extended holidays and religious festivals.

Pupils have a good awareness of the need to eat healthily and take regular exercise. They make a positive contribution to the local and wider community through their enthusiastic involvement in local events and their support for many charities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Particular strengths are in the pupils' social and cultural development. They gain a very good awareness of their own and other people's religions and cultures through stories, music and art. Pupils treat each other and adults with respect and the introduction of 'R Time' (relationship time) is doing much to help pupils work together effectively. Good progress in literacy, numeracy and ICT skills makes a good contribution to pupils' future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and explains why pupils make such good progress. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and pupils respond well by trying hard to succeed. The teaching of language skills is very good. This starts very well in the Foundation 1 and 2 classes and pupils make rapid progress in their use and understanding of English. Teachers generally give pupils plenty of opportunities to work independently and they do this well, especially for the more able groups. In the Foundation 1 classes, however, teachers' planning does not yet ensure that the more able children in particular are suitably challenged and guided when exploring things for themselves, and this limits their progress. Teachers make lessons fun by using exciting resources, including large computer screens that pupils find fascinating. Teaching assistants make an important contribution to pupils' learning through their

skilled support, both for pupils with learning difficulties and those at an early stage of learning English. More able pupils in Year 2 benefit from good teaching to extend their skills, not least by the deputy headteacher who works very effectively with groups withdrawn for very challenging work. Assessment systems are good and, together with the effective marking, give pupils a good feel for how well they are doing and how they can improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good. It is planned well to provide an interesting range of activities that are relevant to the needs of pupils, although there is too little focus on the needs of the more able children in the Foundation 1 classes. The curriculum prepares pupils well for the future, with good provision for basic reading, mathematical, scientific and ICT skills. The very well planned personal, social, health and citizenship programme does much to help pupils understand the need to live healthily and stay safe. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors including artists, musicians and dancers. There are few activities after school to extend the curriculum due to pupils' other commitments related to their faith. The school is looking at using lunchtimes to provide additional enrichment to the curriculum. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is good. Their targets are challenging but achievable and they are fully included in all activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support of pupils are good. Very good relationships between adults and pupils explain why the school is a happy place. Child protection procedures are good and staff are fully aware of these. Pupils are confident that there is always an adult to turn to if they need help and they feel safe and free from harm. The school pays very good attention to pupils' well-being and the importance of healthy eating and taking enough exercise. Pupils have good guidance on how well they are doing, both in their work and personal development. The school makes very good use of a wide range of other professionals to support pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Very good systems to support pupils new to the school help them to settle quickly and make a good start to their learning. Despite a strong emphasis on improving pupils' attendance, the figures are still too low. The school has appropriate plans to contact parents earlier on the first day of absence and is considering home visits as another way to encourage some parents to help their children attend more regularly.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The extensive programme to review the school's provision ensures that senior managers, staff and governors have a very clear

understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors are therefore well informed. They make careful decisions about how funds should be used for the benefit of the pupils.

The accurate analysis of test results and the tracking of pupils' progress provide a clear focus for raising standards and for directing support and guidance for teaching and learning. Notable is the support for children at the early stages of learning English. Very effective links with the service to support pupils from minority ethnic groups help to develop teaching and contribute to the good progress these pupils make. The very strong emphasis on ensuring that all pupils of different backgrounds, faiths and abilities are treated equally reflects the success of the staff in making all pupils feel part of the warm and friendly school community.

Senior managers have focused on helping teachers to plan for the different ability groups in their classes so as to develop good teaching and to make sure that pupils always achieve as well as they can. Despite this, some weaknesses continue. This is because senior managers have not been systematic enough in checking that teachers are dealing successfully with weaknesses identified in their work. Consequently, there is still work to be done in helping teachers in the Foundation 1 classes adapt lesson plans to take full account of what children already know or where they have gaps in knowledge in order to ensure the more able, in particular, do as well as they can. Other action taken has led to clear improvements across the school, for example in the quality of teachers' marking, pupils' achievements in ICT and improved standards by Year 2. These clearly reflect the school's capacity to improve.

Parents are confident that their views are taken into account and the school has responded by improving access for disabled visitors and improving the playground areas for the younger pupils. Pupils also feel involved and are very pleased with the new equipment in the playground that has improved their enjoyment of playtimes.

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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	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	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	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	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	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 for making Mr Elston, Mr Lord and myself so welcome when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing what you were learning in your lessons. We would like to tell you what we thought of your school.

•You do well with your work, especially reading, writing, mathematics and working with computers. •You told us that your teachers are kind and we agree; all the staff in the school care for you very much and make sure that you are kept safe and well. •You behave well and get on very well with your friends and teachers. •Children who are learning to speak English do very well because of the very good help they have. •You enjoy your lessons because your teachers make sure they are exciting and interesting, although some of you do not come to school regularly enough to make the most of them. •Ms Fletcher, the governors and teachers know how well you are doing and this helps them to make good decisions about what needs to be done to help you do even better. •We think that some of the more able children in Foundation 1 could do better. We have asked Ms Fletcher to check that teachers plan activities that help these children to do their very best.

I wish you every success for the future.