



Upton Noble CofE VC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123782
LEA Somerset
Inspection number 281560
Inspection dates 8 December 2005 to 8 December 2005
Reporting inspector Shirley Billington RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Upton Noble
School category	Voluntary controlled		Shepton Mallet
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Somerset BA4 6AU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01749 850375
Number on roll	144	Fax number	01749 850 447
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Robin Day
Date of previous inspection	26 June 2000	Headteacher	Mr Mike Narraway

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 8 December 2005 - 8 December 2005	Inspection number 281560
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small primary school serving a widespread rural area in Somerset. There are six classes and, because of unevenness in pupil numbers, all classes for Years 3 to 6 include two age groups. The number of pupils that join or leave the school other than at the normal times is broadly average. Most of the pupils coming into the school join in Years 3 to 6. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and none speak English as an additional language. Children starting school in the Reception class have levels of skills and understanding that are above average for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a sound education for its pupils and gives satisfactory value for money. It has some particularly strong features. These include the good care and support for pupils, the wide range of activities in which they participate outside of lessons and the ways in which they are helped to mature. The youngest children get a sound start in the Reception class. Almost all achieve expected standards at the start of Year 1. Progress is good in Years 1 and 2 and many pupils achieve high standards at the end of Year 2. While pupils in Years 3 to 6 make steady progress, the rate slows in these year groups. Classes are larger and teachers are planning for two year groups in each class. In addition, the number of support staff in these classes is limited and this means that it is difficult to cater for the range of needs. There is good attention to pupils with learning difficulties and they do well. However, the more capable pupils sometimes mark time and are not stretched as much as they should be. Some could achieve more in mathematics and aspects of their written work.

The school has a realistic view of its effectiveness and has accurately identified some key areas for improvement and demonstrates reasonable capacity to improve. Since the last inspection, there has been very good improvement in provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and standards in this subject are good. Most other areas for improvement have been tackled successfully. However, there is still a need to improve the use of assessment information and target setting for pupils. Systems to check on planned improvements are not as rigorous as they should be. The school has a reasonable range of information on pupils' achievements and this is used well to pick up those who may need extra help. However, it is not analysed systematically to check on the progress of all pupils and this is another factor that affects the achievement of those that are capable of reaching high standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure that more able pupils make a consistent rate of progress as they go through the school
- strengthen the systems for checking on the effectiveness of the school's work
- provide more support for classes catering for pupils in Years 3 to 6.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children in the Reception class get a secure grounding in basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Almost all achieve at least expected standards at the start of Year 1 and are well prepared for work in the National Curriculum. Pupils do well in Years 1 and 2 and standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 2 are high. Progress for the majority of pupils is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 but the good start that they make at the lower end of the school is not consistently built on. As a result, while standards are above average at the end of Year 6, they are not as high as they are at the end of Year 2. The school sets fairly challenging targets for pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Year 6 but does not always meet these, particularly for the higher

levels. Some more able pupils could be achieving more, particularly in using their skills in problem solving in mathematics and in their creative writing.

Girls made better progress than boys in the last academic year. The school does not regularly analyse the achievement of different groups. As a result, there is no way of telling whether this is a particular pattern or whether there is no difference in boys' and girls' achievement over time.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from the extra support that they get and they achieve well in relation to their starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and are enthusiastic learners. Attendance is good. The older pupils are mature and responsible and enjoy taking on responsibilities. They are able to use their initiative, as was demonstrated in the sensible way that a Year 5 pupil organised the sorting of the Christmas post. The school council plays a good role in decision making and manages its own budget to improve facilities for pupils where possible. Pupils are involved in fundraising for a range of causes. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They benefit from a wide range of experiences to raise their awareness of the school and the wider community. Participation in local events, visits to places such as the Bristol Museum, and visitors who share their interests and expertise extend pupils' horizons and experiences. Pupils throughout the school show good awareness of the need to lead a healthy lifestyle and keep safe. They respond well to the strong emphasis on eating a balanced diet; one Year 2 pupil described carrots as 'nice healthy nutrition'.

Pupils' good skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT, together with their mature attitudes and good behaviour, mean that they are well prepared for their future well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Throughout the school relationships are good and pupils respond well in lessons. Some teaching is good and pupils respond well to challenging activities. This was evident in a mathematics lesson where they had to organise a television viewing schedule to fit a variety of programmes into a two hour slot. At times, however, teaching tends to be aimed at the middle level of ability and this is what slows the progress of potentially more capable pupils. Good attention is paid to supporting pupils with learning difficulties. Where teaching assistants are available, they are used well. However, at times teachers are stretched to meet the wide range of needs in a mixed age class and the limited extra support in Years 3 to 6 slows pupils' progress. In some lessons, interactive whiteboards are used well as a teaching tool to demonstrate key teaching points.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum includes all the elements that it should and has some good features. All subjects are taught and teachers of mixed age classes make good efforts to draw from different programmes for different ages to cover the ground that they should in subjects such as mathematics. The curriculum meets the needs of most learners but does not ensure that more capable pupils progress as well as they should in all subjects. There are some good links between subjects such as ICT and art. The school is looking to extend this further and to improve aspects of planning to develop pupils' creativity. There is a very good range of activities to extend learning in the classroom. These include visitors and visits, a variety of out of school activities such as sports, drama and animation clubs and special projects, for example, the 'Big Arts' week.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Very good care is taken of the pupils and they are confident that they are safe in school and have someone to turn to if they have any concerns. The school is extremely successful at integrating pupils new to the school, who often have some specific needs. A group of pupils who have joined classes over the past two years were very positive about the support that they have had from peers and staff. One described the school as 'the bestest I've ever been to'. Academic guidance is not as strong as the pastoral. Targets have been set for all pupils this year but some are not sure what these are or what they have to do to achieve them. There are very good arrangements in place for safeguarding pupils. Risk assessments are regularly carried out and child protection arrangements are fully in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides a strong lead in ensuring pupils' safety, welfare and enjoyment of school. Parents and pupils are regularly consulted on their views of the school and improvements are made where it is possible to do so. Sound systems are now in place to check on the effectiveness of the school, but much of what is being done is in the early stages. A priority this year, for example, is to extend the role of subject leaders in monitoring the quality of the work in the area for which they are responsible because they are not routinely involved in doing this. Information from national tests is analysed to identify areas for improvement. This has been helpful in targeting the need to improve pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics and some aspects of their written work. However, there has been no check on the impact of what has been done to bring about improvements. As a result, the school does not know whether the work that has gone on is making a difference. Information on pupils' progress year by year is used well to pick up those who may need extra help but not to check whether all pupils, particularly the more able, are making progress at a consistent rate.

The governing body is well organised to fulfil its key responsibilities. Governors have a good level of involvement in school life and are very supportive. They play a role in planning for the school's development, but are not fully involved in strategic planning. At the moment the school has a significant underspend in the budget. Governors are aware of their responsibility to use this for the benefit of the pupils and are in the process of allocating the excess funds to further enhance learning and improve achievement.

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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?	3	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	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	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	2	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	1	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?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	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	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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 Noble CE VC Primary School Upton Noble Somerset BA4 6AU

9 December 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for all the help that you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you during your lessons and at lunchtime. You gave us lots of useful information about all kinds of things that go on!

Some of the things that we think are particularly good about your school are:

- You learn how to keep healthy and safe and to think about the needs of others.
- You become very mature and responsible as you move through the school.
- You have lots of good activities to do outside of your lessons.
- Those of you who need extra help are given it and you do well.

We have asked the school to do a few things to make your school even better. These are to:

- Make sure that you do as well as you can, especially in maths and in your written work.
- Find better ways of checking on how well the school is doing
- Provide some extra help for your teachers in Years 3 to 6.

Thank you again for your help. Good luck in your learning and keep enjoying it!

Yours sincerely

Shirley Billington Lead Inspector