



Upland Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134118
Local Authority Bexley
Inspection number 294110
Inspection dates 4–5 December 2006
Reporting inspector Robert Lovett HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Church Road
School category	Community		Bexleyheath
Age range of pupils	4–11		DA7 4DG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8303 2175
Number on roll (school)	450	Fax number	020 8301 1635
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Brendan Hollyer
		Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Rabey
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 4–5 December 2006	Inspection number 294110
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Upland Primary School opened in September 2003 following the amalgamation of Upland Infant and Junior Schools. For the first two years the school was accommodated in the existing school buildings while a new school was designed, built and then opened in September 2005. The new headteacher was formerly headteacher of the junior school.

The school is larger than most primary schools. While a higher than average proportion of pupils is from minority ethnic groups, only a small proportion of these is at the early stages of learning English. Significantly more pupils join and leave during their school careers than is usual.

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 and inspectors agree that Upland is a satisfactory school where pupils are keen to learn and behave well. Pupils achieve satisfactorily and reach average standards by the end of Year 6.

Pupils enter the Nursery with levels of attainment which are broadly average. Because teaching is good and they learn to be independent, they make good progress so that by the time they leave Reception standards are above average. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make satisfactory progress so that when they join Year 3 standards remain above average. The progress pupils make by the end of Year 6 has varied over the last three years but is satisfactory overall. All pupils in the school make similar amounts of progress, although some more able pupils are not doing as well as they could.

In their first few years in school pupils get off to a good start. They form good relationships with adults and each other and are able to concentrate well, sit quietly when appropriate and select and use resources independently.

While there is some good teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6, it is satisfactory overall. Part of the reason for this is that, while the school holds a range of assessments, they are not always well used to match work accurately to pupils' individual needs. Pupils are keen to contribute to lessons and most enjoy learning. They listen well and have good relationships with each other and with adults. However, some lessons are too teacher dominated and do not make enough use of opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning or to work with others. Pupils say they enjoy those lessons where they are actively involved most of all.

The school provides a sound curriculum which is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities and the chance to learn French from an early age. The outside area for younger pupils is spacious and secure, offering good opportunities for physical and creative development as well as extending knowledge of the world.

The school works well with outside agencies and partners in the community to promote the well-being of pupils. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher led the school effectively through the challenges of amalgamation and moving to the new building. While the school has undertaken a great deal of monitoring and evaluation, this could be used more effectively to improve teaching and raise standards. The school has a satisfactory capacity to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching through better use of assessment so that learning is well matched to pupils' differing needs, including the more able.
- Improve the quality of learning by ensuring pupils are more actively involved in lessons.
- Ensure the school's monitoring and evaluation systems are used more effectively to raise standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

When they enter the Nursery most pupils are at the standard one would expect of their age. Pupils make good progress so that attainment is above average by the time they leave the reception class.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 so that by the time they leave Year 2 standards overall are above average. In 2006 the proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected level in writing was much the same as last year but the proportion reaching the higher Level 3 fell.

During their time in Years 3 to 6, the progress pupils make has varied considerably over the last few years. In 2005 pupils did much better than in 2004, so that standards were higher than average in English, mathematics and science. While in 2006 standards overall were average, not enough pupils reached the higher Level 5 in writing or science so that some pupils did not do as well as they should. The school has set challenging targets for Level 5 in 2007 but the achievement of more able pupils should be a continuing focus for school improvement.

Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress because they receive appropriate support in the classroom. Pupils who speak a first language other than English are also well supported and make the same progress as other pupils. Their targets and progress are analysed by the Inclusion Manager in order to ensure that provision matches well with pupils' learning needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils reflect thoughtfully on issues that concern them. They have made a positive contribution to the rules of behaviour and in the valued school forum they enjoy discussing other changes and improvements they would like to see. Pupils enjoy learning about other cultures, for example, through the Black History Week and studying French. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Attendance is broadly average but there is considerable variation between classes. This partly reflects that a minority of pupils do not enjoy some aspects of school. The school has recognised this and has taken effective action which is beginning to address it. Pupils are very positive about the range of out of school activities, but older pupils do not feel they have sufficient opportunities to exercise responsibility in school. Pupils have limited opportunities in some lessons to develop as confident, independent learners.

Pupils follow a well structured personal, social and health education programme which they say they enjoy. Even younger pupils recognise the drive towards a healthier lifestyle. They talk about changes in canteen provision and understand the benefits of taking part in the wide sports programme available outside lessons.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In the Nursery and Reception classes teaching is good, resources are well organised and readily to hand. This enables pupils to work on a range of interesting learning activities and encourages a good sense of independence.

Teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory. In most lessons there is appropriate planning to support teaching but different work which meets the needs of all pupils, including the more able, could be improved. Pupils are keen to contribute to lessons and most enjoy learning. They listen to adults and each other with care and respect. In some lessons questioning is used well to help pupils reflect and clarify their thinking but in some lessons questioning lacks challenge and ambition. It elicits only 'yes' or 'no' answers which fail to help pupils sufficiently in their learning. Some lessons are too teacher led and make little use of opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning or to work with others.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a sound curriculum with planning in place to ensure it is broad and balanced over the year. The curriculum does not provide well enough for the needs of all pupils in lessons because teachers' planning does not identify appropriate learning in sufficient detail. Sometimes, while activities differ, the range of challenge does not differ enough. It is well supported by the good range of extra-curricular opportunities which provide something for all, including wildlife club, choir, sports clubs and art and craft club.

Good provision in the Foundation Stage ensures the youngest pupils enjoy a wide range of learning experiences that helps them make good progress.

Information and communication technology provision is good with a new computer suite, a bank of laptops and interactive whiteboards in every class. Pupils say that when they are used, they make learning more exciting. Effective partnerships have been formed with outside agencies and organisations and the local community to provide support and enrich the curriculum. These include Schoolfriend Club which provides out-of-school care on the school site and strong links with community religious groups. The new building provides a range of learning spaces in addition to classrooms, and these, such as the studios, are made good use of.

Older pupils have a residential visit which Year 6 pupils are really looking forward to and all pupils experience a good range of visits to support their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Personal support is good and has a positive impact on pupils' welfare. Vulnerable pupils, such as those with learning difficulties, are well cared for through a good partnership between the school and outside agencies. Most parents rightly regard this as a caring school. Pupils have the opportunity to contribute to their school reports and say how well they think they are doing. Child protection and risk assessment procedures are suitably robust.

Academic support and guidance is less well developed. The school collects assessment data and sets targets for pupils. However, the information gathered is not used well enough by teachers in their planning or teaching. Consequently, able pupils are not always set appropriately challenging tasks and there is not a clear understanding of exactly what pupils have to do to improve their work, raise achievement and improve the quality of learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has been effective in managing the difficult process of school amalgamation and then relocating to the new building. She has been successful in establishing a clear whole-school ethos and ensuring Upland Primary School has a definite identity of its own. She has been well supported in this by the school leadership team. Subject leadership is satisfactory overall but too variable. The best has a clear focus on raising standards and a good understanding of what needs to be done. The newly constituted middle management team has both the commitment and enthusiasm to contribute substantially to school improvement.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors provide committed and increasingly well informed leadership. While the governors' role is developing well, the current school improvement plan makes it difficult for them to hold the school fully to account. This is because it does not make the link between raising standards and improving teaching and learning sufficiently clearly and the ways by which the success of the plan can be measured lack clarity.

There was a high response rate from parents to the inspection questionnaire and they were overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school. However, some parents felt the school could communicate more effectively and keep them better informed about what is going on.

The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well and monitors standards carefully. It evaluates the progress individuals and groups of pupils make but does not always use this information well enough to improve teaching and raise standards. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I'm writing on behalf of all the inspectors to thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. Your views were very interesting and played an important part in ensuring we got to know your school well.

We think the headteacher led the school well when it was moving from being separate infant and junior schools and made sure the move to the new building went well. Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is good but some of you told us you don't like it when sometimes pupils misbehave and stop you learning as much as you would like. Most of you said you enjoy school but some said they don't find lessons exciting enough and would like more chances to work together. We think this is a good suggestion and would help make teaching better and would help you learn more. We agree with you and your parents and carers that the school cares for you well and makes sure you are well looked after.

You told us you like the wide range of clubs and sports that are available and we agree this is something the school does well.

We judge yours to be a satisfactory school and that you can all work together to make it better. Here are some of the ways we are asking the school to help you learn more.

- Match the work you do in lessons more closely to what you are able to do so that everyone, including those of you who usually do best, learn as much as you can. You can help your teachers with this by letting them know if work is too easy or too difficult.
- Give you the chance to be more involved in lessons through discussions with partners and working on your ideas with others. This also relies on you to behave sensibly (and almost all of you do), and make sure you join in.
- Make sure the information the school has about how well you are doing is used to make sure you do even better.

I know this is a very busy time in schools. I hope you enjoy getting ready for Christmas and have a great end to the term.

R P Lovett
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools