

# Uplands Junior School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104332
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wolverhampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	308575
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 July 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Eadie

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	341
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Hughes
<b>Headteacher</b>	L J Ward
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 April 2005
<b>School address</b>	Finchfield Road West Finchfield Wolverhampton WV3 8BA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 558870
<b>Fax number</b>	01902 558873

---

<b>Age group</b>	7–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 July 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	308575

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Uplands is much bigger than most junior schools. The majority of pupils are White British, though nearly two in five are from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds and more than half of these are of Indian heritage. Although about one in seven pupils does not speak English as their home language, almost all have sufficient English to cope comfortably with all aspects of school life. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average. Privately run after-school provision is provided on site.

## 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. Standards have been on a steady uphill path in recent years, halted last year when pupils did not score nearly as well as expected in the national tests at the end of Year 6. However, this dip has been reversed, and unvalidated results for this year show standards have once more returned to well above average. Pupils throughout the school are making good progress and achieving well because lessons move at a good pace and teachers have high expectations. Standards in writing, particularly for boys, although still above average, lag behind those in reading and mathematics. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are only just satisfactory and pupils do not use their ICT skills effectively to support learning in other subjects. The school is aware of these relative weaknesses and has plans to address them. Standards in a number of subjects are higher than those usually found as a result of the stimulating and broad curriculum. For instance, stunning art displays around the school; national commendation for work in design and technology; the range of successes in sporting events; and the hugely popular dramatic and musical performances demonstrate high standards.

Much of the success of the school is down to the drive of the headteacher, ably supported by her senior management team. Management is delegated well and middle managers play a key role in leading developments and checking on standards. For example, year group leaders manage their teams of teachers and teaching assistants very effectively. This teamwork is evident in the sharing of expertise in, for instance, enabling teachers with particular skills to teach a subject throughout a year group. This specialist teaching ensures good provision in subjects such as music, design and technology, and physical education. Expertise from local secondary schools gives pupils further opportunities in French and physical education. Governors also play a full part in management, offering good levels of support and challenge to the school.

A strength of the school is the extremely caring ethos. Parents appreciate this and say such things as, 'I know when my child goes into school, he is in a safe environment, and that if he has any concerns they are dealt with straight away.' Pupils value this care and respond by developing into thoughtful and responsible young people who behave exceptionally well. They say that they really enjoy school because of all the interesting things that they do. Pupils are developing a very strong consciousness of how to stay safe both in their daily lives and, for instance, in their use of the Internet. Academic support and guidance are not so good. Regular tests check on pupils' progress. They are set targets for the levels they should reach at the end of each year and these targets are shared with their parents. Teachers' day-to-day assessments are sound and they are therefore able to adapt their planning for future lessons. However, there is no rigorous system of assessing and recording the skills that pupils are gaining. This means that pupils are not sufficiently aware of what they have achieved and what they need to learn next.

A parent stated the views of many and summarised the school very well in saying, 'Under the expert leadership of a strong and caring headteacher and supported by like-minded staff, the school provides an environment where the children thrive. Their academic, emotional and physical needs are fully met through working in close partnership with parents.' Bearing in mind the rising standards and improving provision, the school is well placed to continue its upward climb.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Increase teachers' expertise in assessing pupils' levels of skills and knowledge and use these assessments to set clear targets for pupils' next steps in learning.
- Raise standards in ICT by improving teachers' skills and putting in place a plan to develop and extend pupils' skills.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enter the school with above average standards overall. By the time they leave from Year 6, their standards are well above average. Pupils make good progress in all year groups and achieve well. Although unvalidated results from the national tests for this year show that boys did not make such good progress as girls, the inspection found that boys achieve as well as girls in their day-by-day work. Pupils from all ethnic groups do well, with those of Indian heritage making particularly good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported very well and make at least as good progress as their classmates. Standards in ICT are barely adequate. There is no clear programme to develop pupils' skills and ICT skills are rarely used to support learning in other subjects.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils really enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic and excited about their learning. When asked what it was they enjoyed there was a chorus of, 'We love all of it!', 'We like everything!' They also felt that their 'teachers are fun, strict but fair'. Achievements are consistently promoted and celebrated. As a consequence, pupils strive to do well. Pupils are friendly, relaxed and respectful with each other and with adults. Their behaviour is impeccable because of the very high expectations of staff, whose knowledge of the pupils is outstanding.

Pupils understand why and how they should lead healthy lifestyles. They are constantly encouraged to make healthy choices, although their lunch boxes show they do not always follow this through! Pupils are very clear about how safe and valued they feel because of the approachability of all adults. They feel their peer support mentors 'really help and know how to sort out problems', so ensuring the playground is a friendly and fun place to be. The approach by the school to explaining and sharing cultural differences has ensured pupils are fully aware and interested, but relaxed about the cultural differences of their peers. They are given many opportunities to reflect on their learning and consider big challenges and issues. Pupils make a good contribution to the local and wider community. They support a wide range of charities and engage in exciting enterprise activities such as the Young Engineers Project. Pupils' good personal attributes and literacy and numeracy skills mean that they are well prepared for their future lives. Even so, their ICT skills do not equip them well for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and lessons are conducted at a very good pace. Teachers constantly give pupils time targets to complete a task, which ensures they remain focused and engaged in their learning. Teachers' marking helps pupils to know

what they have achieved and sometimes gives them next steps in their learning. Pupils are not always given opportunities to follow these comments up.

Classrooms have a purposeful atmosphere and pupils know they are there to learn. Consequently, they are confident to take risks in answering questions and offer suggestions and solutions even when they are not wholly sure of their responses. When pupils are given opportunities to talk and discuss their thinking, they talk articulately and sensibly and develop their ideas. This is too often interrupted or halted by the teacher, however, and some learning is over-structured and too directed. Teaching assistants play a full part, are briefed well and know how to help pupils to learn. They encourage pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to take responsibility for reaching their learning targets and so these pupils make good progress. Parents feel comfortable about visiting the school to discuss their children's education because of the approachability of the teachers.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is responsive to the needs of the pupils. A particular strength is the regular arts weeks, where the evidence of the work produced, often with visiting artists and in a range of media, is evident all round the school in spectacular displays. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in a wide variety of enrichment activities. For instance, there are a number of sporting and musical after-school activities as well as a number of creative clubs. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and good action is taken to support their learning.

The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good and supports pupils in managing their behaviour and developing their sense of community and responsibility. The provision for ICT is barely adequate and, in particular, does not provide sufficient challenge for those pupils who already have good skills. The school recognises that opportunities are missed to make links between subjects so that pupils can develop their skills more consistently.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The warmth and friendliness of the school is reflected in the excellent pastoral care for the pupils. Teachers and pupils demonstrate how much they value and respect each other. Pupils find it easy to ask any adult for support. The pupils believe their peer support programme 'makes a big difference' to how safe and looked after they feel. Procedures to ensure pupils are kept safe are rigorous and understood by all staff. The school uses support from external agencies well when necessary. For example, the social inclusion and pupil support worker helps individual pupils through specific difficulties and challenges and ensures they can focus more readily on their learning.

The school has developed a progress-tracking system which makes good use of information from tests carried out twice each year to identify where pupils have not answered questions well. This clearly identifies general programmes of support for pupils, although next steps in learning are not sufficiently specific for individual pupils. Pupils are aware of some targets for English and mathematics and refer to them whilst doing their work. However, these targets are limited.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The school is led well by an enthusiastic headteacher. Her drive is clearly communicated to all connected with the school and there is a great sense of teamwork in the school's aim to provide the best for its pupils. There are good systems for evaluating the effectiveness of the school's work. All staff are involved and governors play their part well through challenging the school to show evidence when self-evaluation is at a draft stage. Managers sometimes take an unnecessarily pessimistic view of the quality of provision and outcomes, but this stems from a natural desire to avoid complacency. Although middle managers and subject leaders are involved in monitoring planning and outcomes in pupils' work, they do not yet carry out classroom observations to check more thoroughly on the effectiveness of provision. Governors are aware that they, too, should be carrying out this task and are to receive training for this in the near future.

The school is well aware of what it needs to improve, but specific plans are not clear enough. For example, the details of what needs to be done to improve standards in ICT and writing are not specific enough. Similarly, the success criteria in the plan are not based on measurable outcomes in improved pupils' achievement and standards.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

### 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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

17 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Uplands Junior School, Wolverhampton WV3 8BA

Thank you so much for welcoming us so warmly when we visited your school. We really enjoyed hearing you tell us all about all the interesting things you do at school and that you could not think of anything you want to change. We are not surprised as Uplands Junior is a good school. We were delighted to hear how much you value your peer support mentors and what a good job they do. I also enjoyed watching some of your Year 6 production – it was super! The Years 5 and 6 singing was also a highlight, and I couldn't help but join in with your singing exercises.

These are some of the best things that we found:

- You are making good progress and are reaching well above average standards because your teachers expect you to do well and make your lessons interesting.
- You really enjoy school, behave extremely well and feel very safe and secure as you say that there is always someone you can share your problems with.
- All adults take very good care of you and encourage you to do your best.
- Lots of interesting things are organised for you, such as arts weeks and design and technology competitions, which make your learning fun.
- These interesting things mean that you reach high standards in many subjects, art, design and technology, PE and music, for instance.
- Your headteacher and teachers work well together and are committed to making your school even better.

There are just two main things that we have asked your headteacher and teachers to improve:

- Although most of you know what levels you are trying to reach at the end of each year, you are not told clearly enough what you need to learn next to get there.
- Your standards in ICT are nowhere near as good as your standards in other subjects so we have asked the adults to help you to do better in ICT.

You can help by asking your teachers how you can improve your work. Keep up the good work!

Best wishes

John D Eadie Lead inspector

17 July 2008

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Uplands Junior School, Wolverhampton WV3 8BA**

Thank you so much for welcoming us so warmly when we visited your school. We really enjoyed hearing you tell us all about all the interesting things you do at school and that you could not think of anything you want to change. We are not surprised as Uplands Junior is a good school. We were delighted to hear how much you value your peer support mentors and what a good job they do. I also enjoyed watching some of your Year 6 production – it was super! The Years 5 and 6 singing was also a highlight, and I couldn't help but join in with your singing exercises.

**These are some of the best things that we found:**

- You are making good progress and are reaching well above average standards because your teachers expect you to do well and make your lessons interesting.
- You really enjoy school, behave extremely well and feel very safe and secure as you say that there is always someone you can share your problems with.
- All adults take very good care of you and encourage you to do your best.
- Lots of interesting things are organised for you, such as arts weeks and design and technology competitions, which make your learning fun.
- These interesting things mean that you reach high standards in many subjects, art, design and technology, PE and music, for instance.
- Your headteacher and teachers work well together and are committed to making your school even better.

**There are just two main things that we have asked your headteacher and teachers to improve:**

- Although most of you know what levels you are trying to reach at the end of each year, you are not told clearly enough what you need to learn next to get there.
- Your standards in ICT are nowhere near as good as your standards in other subjects so we have asked the adults to help you to do better in ICT.

You can help by asking your teachers how you can improve your work. Keep up the good work!

Best wishes

John D Eadie  
Lead inspector