

Urmston Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106315
Local Authority	Trafford
Inspection number	309094
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Diane Auton

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	249
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Kate Hutchings
Headteacher	Miss Fiona Bee
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2004
School address	Wycliffe Road Urmston Manchester Lancashire M41 5AH
Telephone number	0161 7484362
Fax number	0

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school serves an area of mainly private housing. It is situated on a campus site which it shares with its associated junior school and with Urmston Grammar School. Its small main building dates from the nineteenth century and a more modern annexe building provides accommodation for the Nursery class. The outdoor area is smaller than is found in most schools. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is smaller than average. Most pupils are White British. A small proportion of pupils are from a range of other heritages and speak English as an additional language. Very few are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

The school holds the Investors in People award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Department for Children, Schools and Families Active School accreditation and the Healthy Schools Award. A new headteacher and a new deputy headteacher were appointed in April 2006 and September 2006 respectively.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides its pupils with a good standard of education and gives good value for money. The restructuring of the leadership team brought about by the arrival of the new senior leaders is working well. Under the headteacher's effective leadership, the good quality of provision seen at the last inspection has been sustained and the school continues to be held in high regard by its community. Staff at all levels share a clear focus on raising attainment and on the personal development of every child. As a result, standards are rising rapidly.

Improvements in the systems to track and analyse pupils' progress have ensured that the school has accurately identified the underlying issues that contributed to the slight drop in standards in 2007. Strategic actions taken to raise attainment have had a positive impact in the current year and this has restored the upward trend of previous years. Pupils of all abilities, including those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well in this inclusive school. Progress is good and standards in all subjects are above average.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding and nurtured extremely well, as the range of external awards held by the school indicates. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils are polite, friendly and helpful. They have excellent knowledge of how to live a healthy lifestyle. They are confident that the adults in school listen to their views. Pupils' personal, social and emotional development is supported very well through regular opportunities to meet together in mixed-age groups to discuss and reflect on issues that are important to them in their daily lives. They develop mature, thoughtful attitudes as a result of this and also because of the many opportunities provided for them to take on responsibilities in school. Parents appreciate the excellent pastoral care and pupils say they feel safe and secure in school. Academic progress is tracked well and pupils know their individual learning targets.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils enjoy their learning activities. However, teachers do not always make the purpose of the lessons sufficiently clear and, where pupils are not fully aware of the teacher's expectations for them, the impact on their learning is reduced. The curriculum provides interest and enjoyment for the pupils. It is enhanced by an excellent range of after-school activities and a very good programme of visitors. The school utilises its limited accommodation very well. The imaginative use of a narrow area between its boundary wall and the main building to create an attractive and well resourced 'play garden' is a good example of this. Pupils benefit from the school's positive response to the challenge the restricted accommodation presents.

Leadership and management are good because leaders know the school well and work together cohesively towards shared aims. Strategic planning is good. It is based on analysis of data gained through rigorous monitoring and careful tracking of pupils' progress and has resulted in the achievement of ambitious improvement targets this year. More remains to be done to ensure complete consistency in the quality of teaching in all classes. The school's good capacity to make further improvements is shown in the clear-sighted leadership provided by the headteacher and her deputy, the good critical support they are given by the well informed governors and the increasingly effective contribution being made by subject leaders.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good provision supports the development of children's early learning skills well, and they quickly become receptive and happy learners. Their skills on entry to the Nursery are broadly typical for their age group. The well led Foundation Stage team effectively nurtures children's personal, social and emotional development by building their confidence and self-esteem in a safe and supportive learning environment. Vulnerable children and those with additional learning needs are identified promptly and supported well. All children make good progress in gaining early literacy and numeracy skills and in extending their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. This is the result of good teaching and a well planned curriculum. Good opportunities are provided for children to learn through investigation and discovery, although restricted space places some limits on continuous access to learning out of doors for children in the Reception classes. Despite this, stimulating activities are provided, both indoors and outside, which engage their interests very well and children become absorbed in what they are doing and develop good concentration skills. Adults are skilled in helping children to develop their ideas, interests and understanding. By the end of the Reception year, children's skills are above expectations for their age in all the areas of learning, representing good achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all lessons have clear learning objectives and that these are shared with and understood by pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter Year 1 with skills that are above national expectations. They progress well in Years 1 and 2 as a result of the good teaching and curriculum provided for them. In 2007, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were above average for the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level but average for those gaining the higher level 3. The school's tracking information for the current year shows that standards have risen as a result of measures taken to improve pupils' progress and attainment in both literacy and numeracy. Above average proportions of pupils in the current Year 2 are working at both the expected and higher levels in all subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of the school's good provision for them. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress overall; their excellent achievement in assessments in 2007 reflects the school's effective provision for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Behaviour is very good in lessons because pupils are interested and absorbed in their activities. Playtimes are happy, friendly occasions, with a good range of play equipment provided. Pupils say that adults are always there to help if they have a problem. The school encourages its pupils to make their voices heard through the school council which includes representatives from the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Pupils are confident and articulate. They can explain why theirs is a healthy school and why it is important to eat sensibly and take regular exercise. Despite restricted site facilities, the school encourages very good levels of participation in physical activity, including daily 'wake and shake' sessions enjoyed by pupils and staff. Pupils'

spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It is nurtured very effectively through assemblies and through friendship groups, which help to foster a sense of community and help pupils to develop understanding of their own and other people's feelings. Pupils have a good grounding in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT); they gain important life skills through fund-raising for local charities and carrying out responsibilities around the school. All of this prepares them well for the future. Pupils' good attendance reflects how much they enjoy school and is also evidence of the school's very good, mutually supportive, relationships with parents.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good quality teaching underpins the good progress that pupils make. Lessons are well planned and learning activities are interesting and engaging for the pupils. The level of challenge is usually appropriate and the pace of learning is usually brisk. Activities are usually well matched to pupils' learning needs and pupils with additional needs are supported well, sometimes through additional adult input from the small team of teaching assistants. Questioning and prompts are used well to promote the development of pupils' thinking skills. Partner work also helps them to develop their ideas and to gain confidence in expressing them. In the best lessons pupils are given a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn and achieve, and they are encouraged to assess their own progress. This is not consistently developed across the classes, however, and teaching is less effective in lessons where the objective is not defined clearly or explained to pupils. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to enhance learning in lessons. Information gained from regular, systematic assessment is used well to inform the next stages in planning and to identify areas where additional support is required. The learning environment is bright and attractive; every available corridor and alcove is utilised well to extend the limited accommodation in the classrooms. Display is used well to promote learning and to celebrate pupils' achievements.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils are served well by the provision for literacy and numeracy and this is an important contributory factor to their good progress. For example, a recent focus on improving pupils' skills in calculation has helped to bring about improved attainment in mathematics. New strategies to promote pupils' phonic skills are helping to accelerate progress in reading and writing. Pupils achieve well in ICT as a result of good opportunities to develop their skills in activities across the curriculum. The school has begun to link subjects together in a thematic approach, but it is too early to judge the impact of this on pupils' learning. The curriculum supports pupils' personal and emotional development very well, including their awareness of issues around healthy living and how to keep safe. A wide range of additional activities linked to the topics being studied enriches pupils' learning. This includes many visitors to school and occasional visits to places of interest. The school's very good provision of well attended after-school clubs provides opportunities for pupils to develop a range of skills and to experience success when representing the school in competitive sporting events.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

High quality care, guidance and support mean that pupils feel happy in school and make good progress. Staff are quick to identify any potential difficulties faced by individuals, and to provide them with very good support. The school's very effective procedures highlight the more able pupils as well, and staff ensure that their needs are also fully met. Procedures for safeguarding pupils and child protection meet requirements. Provision to promote pupils' health and safety is very good and helps to contribute to their outstanding personal development and well-being. Parents agree that their children are looked after and cared for very well. The school's tracking systems are effective in identifying how well pupils are progressing in relation to expectations. They are reviewed regularly and used well to help to ensure that provision is effective and interventions are targeted accurately. Pupils talk confidently about their learning targets and understand that achieving them will mean that their work is improving.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's clear vision for taking the school forward is shared wholeheartedly by governors and staff, who join with her in the tasks of assuring and maintaining the quality of provision in the school. Monitoring and evaluations are systematic and rigorous. The information gained provides the school's leaders with a clear overview. As a result, they have an accurate picture of strengths and the areas for further development. Some aspects of recent initiatives to improve the quality of teaching are not yet fully embedded and the school's leaders are aware that further work remains to be done to achieve this. Challenging targets are set for groups and individual pupils, reflecting the school's high expectations of them. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is managed well. A supportive, well organised and well informed governing body holds the school to account and acts as its critical friend. Most issues around restricted accommodation space have been tackled creatively. Partnerships with external providers facilitate opportunities for pupils to take part in a wide range of sporting activities. Good pastoral links with the junior school support pupils at transition to Key Stage 2.

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Annex A

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?	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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	1
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?	1

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

On behalf of the inspectors I would like to thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We really enjoyed our visit. As you know, we came to see how well the school is doing and how you are all getting on with your learning. This is what we found out:

- your school gives you a good standard of education
- you are taught well and looked after very well and this helps you to make good progress
- the school gives you very good opportunities to learn about staying healthy and safe and to carry out responsibilities as playground buddies and Ted's Friends, and this prepares you well for the future
- you reach higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics than many children of your age. Well done - keep up the good work!
- your school is well led and managed.

We have asked the headteacher and the staff to make sure that in all your lessons your teachers make clear to you what they expect you to learn. This will help you to understand how well you are doing in the lesson.

To finish off my letter, I'd like to send you all my very best wishes for your future success.