

# Unstone Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112642
<b>Local Authority</b>	DERBYSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	310961
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Foster

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

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<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	70
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Marianne Rawson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Eileen Kelly
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Main Road Unstone Nr Dronfield Derbyshire S18 4AB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01246 413109
<b>Fax number</b>	01246 413109

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This smaller than average junior school serves the village of Unstone and the surrounding area. Almost all pupils are of White British background and have English as their first language. When they start at the school pupils' attainment is broadly average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below national average, as is the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school has gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Healthy Schools' Award and the National Clean Air Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school, with some good elements, that gives satisfactory value for money. Leadership and management are satisfactory. This judgement appears to indicate a decline since the previous inspection, when leadership and management was judged to be good. During the past four years, however, there have been significant changes in the staffing of the school. Despite these changes, standards have been maintained and, over the past two years, have improved in English and mathematics because subject leadership is sound. The headteacher has produced a good plan for improving the school, based on an accurate assessment of its current position but the governors, who support the school well, are aware that they need to be more actively involved in monitoring its performance. Nevertheless, the school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

National data indicates that pupils' achievement is satisfactory and at the end of Year 6, most reach the expected Level 4 in English and mathematics. Over the past four years, however, too few have reached the above average Level 5 in these subjects. The current Year 6 are achieving well and evidence indicates that a higher percentage of pupils is likely to reach the higher level in English and mathematics this year. Over the past four years standards in science, particularly in relation to national standards, have fallen and in 2007 were significantly below average. Whilst raising standards in English and mathematics has been the school's focus over the past two years, this focus has now moved to improving standards in science.

Pupils' personal development is good. They have a good understanding of how they should treat others and their social development is good because of the many opportunities they have to work and play together. Pupils are aware that they should lead healthy lifestyles and take regular exercise. They enjoy school immensely. As one Year 6 boy said: 'I cannot think of anything to improve the school.' Their keenness to come to school is shown through the greatly increased attendance figures since the last inspection, when low attendance was a key issue. Pupils behave well overall, though occasionally teachers' expectations of good behaviour are not high enough. Pupils make a positive contribution to the community through their involvement with the school council and activities within the village. The ways in which pupils are prepared for their future are satisfactory, based on the progress they make in English, mathematics and information and communications technology (ICT).

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good elements, though it is inconsistent across the school. It is because of this inconsistency that, throughout their time at the school, pupils make satisfactory, rather than good, progress. At its best, teaching is focussed on pupils' learning needs and takes account of how they learn. Too often, however, not enough attention is placed on individual needs, and particularly the needs of the higher attaining pupils. The quality of marking is variable and does not always help pupils to improve their work. The school has a satisfactory curriculum and this is enhanced well by the use of visitors and visits. During the inspection the school held a Problem Solving Day, based on the science curriculum. The activities arranged helped the pupils to make good progress as they moved between the different activities prepared for them.

The school cares for pupils well. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that they would readily go to any adult for advice and help if they had a problem, confident in the knowledge that their problem would be dealt with effectively and fairly. Parents are overwhelmingly happy

with the school and the care taken of their children. As two parents wrote: 'We cannot fault the school', and 'The school cares well for all our child's needs.'

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

- Improve the standards in science so that they are at or above national averages.
- Ensure that the needs of higher attaining pupils are catered for fully.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

The previous inspection report, in 2003, identified standards and achievement as above average. However, that year group was particularly able and attained higher than average standards. Since 2004 pupils' achievement has been satisfactory and standards have been slightly below average in English and mathematics. During this time, too few pupils have attained higher than the expected Level 4 in these subjects. The targets for the current Year 6, however, show a marked improvement in the percentage of pupils expected to attain Level 5 in mathematics and English. This is supported by inspection evidence. The picture in science is somewhat different. Since 2004 standards have slipped in relation to national averages and in 2007 they were significantly below average. As a result, plans, similar to those implemented in mathematics and English over the past three years, are now in place to help raise standards in science.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good. They are encouraged to live healthy lives and the provision of fruit at breaktimes and regular opportunities for physical education support this well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are considerate to others and they play and work well together. The school has enjoyed links with an inner city school with a wide ethnic mix of pupils. An exchange of letters and visits have helped pupils to appreciate the different cultures in modern Britain. Pupils enjoy school and the Problem Solving Day showed how well the older pupils care for the younger ones and how they enjoy learning together. The school council has had a good influence on the working of the school and has led other pupils in raising money for charities. Involvement in the wider community is good. The school visits the Golden Age Club at the local community centre to sing Christmas Carols and invites villagers to the school for activities such as fund raising coffee mornings and performances by the pupils. The satisfactory progress pupils make in English, mathematics and ICT prepares them satisfactorily for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good elements. The satisfactory teaching has resulted in pupils making satisfactory progress in their learning. Where lessons are planned well, teachers take account of pupils' different learning needs, using the teaching

assistants well to support learning. However, this is inconsistent across the school and results in some pupils, particularly the higher attainers, not always having enough challenge in their work to make the progress that they should. Relationships between the teachers and pupils are good, so pupils are not afraid to ask for help. The quality of marking is variable. At its best, it shows pupils what they are doing well and how they can improve their work. Too often, however, the marking consists of comments where the praise given does not match the quality of the pupils' work.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The school offers its pupils a satisfactory curriculum, with some good elements. The school has adopted the new national strategies for mathematics and English, and plans topics, with effective links between subjects, to cover the curriculum in, for example, geography and history. Throughout the year Problem Solving Days are planned. These give pupils opportunities to work in groups with children from other year groups. The pupils gained much from the activities undertaken from a science-based day during the inspection and they made good progress in developing an understanding of scientific principles. The school provides a wide range of activities beyond the school day, normally varying these activities between terms. Pupils appreciate this provision and levels of participation are good.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The care, guidance and support given to pupils are good. Arrangements for their safety fully meet government requirements. The school undertakes risk assessments for all activities and child protection arrangements are effective. All staff are aware of procedures to follow if they should have a concern over an individual pupil. Relationships are good with the older pupils caring for the younger ones well. The pupils organise an effective Buddy Scheme to ensure that all children are involved in playground activities. The academic guidance given to pupils is satisfactory. In some classes and subjects, the pupils are set targets to help them to improve, but this practice is not applied consistently throughout the school and this sometimes leads to a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Whilst the headteacher has a clear vision for developing the school, many initiatives are too recent to have had a significant impact on standards and achievement. The school's evaluation of its performance is accurate and the clear, focussed plans to improve the school are based on this evaluation. Within this small school, the monitoring of subjects is satisfactory, with each teacher having responsibility for a number of subjects. The school has recently re-organised subject leadership so that committees of staff, including the teaching assistants, monitor groups of subjects. This arrangement was introduced too recently to have improved monitoring procedures. Governance is satisfactory. The chair is aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the school, but the governing body as a whole is not yet fully involved in monitoring the school's performance, relying too much on the headteacher for guidance. Plans are in place to formalise arrangements for regular governor

visits to school. Based on its recent performance the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

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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?	3
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	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?	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>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	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

18 February 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Unstone Junior School, Unstone, Nr Dronfield, Derbyshire, S18 4AB

This letter is to thank you for the welcome you gave me when I came to inspect your school recently. I would like to thank you for helping me with my work and to tell you what I found out about your school.

You told me that you are very happy in school and enjoy the work you are set. You behave well for most of the time, but, just occasionally, a few of you do not behave well enough in lessons, making it difficult for other children to learn. You are aware of what you need to do to be healthy and many of you take part in the activities organised by the school to help you get exercise. You attend school regularly and this helps you to make progress.

Your school council tells me that you all get on well together, and this was clear for me to see during your Problem Solving Day on Friday, when the older ones helped the younger children well. You told me that you like your teachers and that you think that they help you well with your learning. You say that if you have a problem the staff will always help you to overcome it.

In order to make the school even better, I have asked Mrs Kelly, the staff and governors to

- Help you to learn more and make better progress in science.
- Make sure that all of you, especially those of you who finding learning easier, have work which will help you to make the best progress you can.
- Make sure that you are taught well in all lessons.

With all best wishes for the future.

John D Foster

Lead inspector