

Uffculme Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113111
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311110
Inspection dates	12–13 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Jonathan Palk HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Greenhough
Headteacher	Kandi Smith
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2005
School address	Ashley Road Uffculme Cullompton EX15 3AY
Telephone number	01884 840282
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Uffculme Primary is slightly smaller than the average sized primary school. Most pupils are White British, although there are a few children from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families. Whilst the number of pupils with statements of educational need is typical of most schools this size, the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. The proportion of children joining the school other than at the start of the Foundation Stage is above average. There has been a significant turnover of teaching staff in the last two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Uffculme Primary School provides a good standard of education for its pupils. The headteacher provides good leadership to the school, ensuring that it has a strong focus on raising academic standards and standards in pupils' personal development and well-being. There is strong team work and senior staff and subject leaders provide clear direction within their areas of responsibility. The dedication of the staff and their warm relationships with pupils and parents make it a joyful place to learn. One parent captured the mood of parents when writing, 'The school is always open for parents to be a part of children's learning.'

The personal development of the pupils is good and one of the key strengths of the school. Pupils develop self-confidence, have pride in their work and tackle lessons with a positive attitude. The school has worked effectively on encouraging listening and speaking skills and this supports some excellent social development. The curriculum is satisfactory. It makes a good contribution to helping pupils understand the importance of keeping healthy and staying safe and gives them good opportunities to learn important life skills such as working together and managing money. There are good opportunities for pupils to follow their own lines of enquiry and they learn good research skills through topic work. However, there are limited opportunities to promote a greater understanding of the cultural diversity of Britain's modern society and this limits their cultural development. Standards are average throughout the school but continuing to improve. Most pupils achieve well. Effective teaching in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2 helps those who start school below the expected levels to make good progress. The teaching effectively tackles the shortcomings in pupils' language and communication by providing worthwhile opportunities in writing. Pupils' independence and excitement in learning is developed well by teachers, through closely matching activities to the needs of the pupils. Good teaching in Years 3 to 6 builds on this. Staff track progress carefully and they make good use of the well trained support staff to supplement their teaching. However, some of the more able pupils are not given hard enough work in mathematics, so they do not achieve as well as they should.

A particularly effective aspect of the school's good quality care, guidance and support is the way all the adults and pupils help those who join during the school year fit in and achieve their best. Pupils' views are frequently sought. They are involved in making sure playtimes and lunchtimes are safe and happy, helping with the activities that ensure pupils stay fit, play harmoniously and learn to cooperate.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and governors have a shared vision and work hard to achieve it. They are successful at drawing the community into the school. Subject leaders are always looking for ways to make the school an exciting place to learn. However, the high turnover of staff has meant that evaluating the content of topic work to ensure it provides for continuity in the development of skills has not been as effective. The leadership team is good at measuring how well pupils are making progress in English, mathematics and science and implementing the action needed to improve it further. They are not yet adept at measuring the impact of their initiatives in other subjects. The school has good capacity for further school improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision has improved rapidly because adults are now very clear about the skills children have gained in all areas of their learning and prepare activities that meet their needs well. The tracking of progress is regular and details the small gains children are making on a weekly basis. There is a strong emphasis on the personal and social development of children, which ensures they learn to make good choices from the activities offered. The good quality displays of children's work help build their confidence as learners. Adults are good at encouraging children to learn together and establish clear routines that encourage them to make independent choices. This they do well. A very effective partnership with parents ensures children feel well supported and this contributes to their good progress. The classroom and outdoor areas are stimulating. Play areas are inviting but do not always offer children problems to solve that challenge their ideas and thinking.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the challenge for the more able mathematicians.
- Ensure there is more rigour in the planned objectives within topic work, so that pupils develop their skills further.
- Refine school improvement planning so that the impact of action on standards is clear.
- Improve opportunities within the curriculum to prepare pupils for life in multi-cultural Britain.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From the below average starting points of the children when they enter the school, they make good progress to reach average standards at the end of Year 6. Children in the Reception class make good progress in all areas of learning. By the start of Year 1, the large majority have achieved the standards expected but a small minority have not. The progress pupils make by the end of Year 2 is good. This results from the good emphasis given to securing positive attitudes to learning and the very good opportunities provided for pupils to learn to read and write and learn through practical activities. Progress through Years 3 to 6 is good. Most of the lower attaining pupils at the end of Year 2 continue to make good progress to reach average and in a few of cases above average standards by Year 6. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive high quality and well targeted support and make good progress. The highly effective settling-in arrangement for pupils joining during the year ensures they too make good progress. The emphasis on investigations and the focus on challenging boys in order for them to reach higher levels in writing is working. The challenge offered to mathematicians that are more able is inconsistent through Years 3 to 6 and this results in satisfactory rather than good progress for this group.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils quickly develop positive attitudes to learning. They much enjoy all their lessons and classrooms are characterised by very well motivated, attentive learners. Although attendance is satisfactory it continues to improve and pupils are prompt into school. Their attitudes to each other are good and they behave well in the playground and in lessons. Pupils are very aware of and talk knowledgeably about the benefits of healthy snacks and healthy eating

options at dinner times. Sporting skills are highly valued and many of the older pupils invest time in helping others develop these as playground friends. Pupils are keen to stay on at school to take part in clubs and extra sporting activities. Pupils' views and opinions are regularly sought and have been instrumental in the improvements to toilets and playground resources. Spiritual, moral and social development is good. The pupils respect and value each other and work together to support and look after each other well. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the local community but have a narrow appreciation of other cultures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Throughout the school relationships between adults and pupils are excellent and this sets a positive tone for learning. Teachers plan exciting lessons and there is good attention paid to learners with different needs and abilities. All teachers are good at engaging pupils in talking to help them develop their ideas and choice of vocabulary. This encourages them to organise their writing effectively. This was seen to good effect in an English lesson for pupils in Year 2 when they were preparing to write about African animals. Whilst extension work is planned for the more able pupils in mathematics, it is not always sufficiently demanding. Clear expectations at the start of lessons ensure pupils know what they will be learning. Teaching is well supported by a committed group of teaching assistants. They are very clear about what pupils are expected to learn from activities and have a good level of expertise in the areas in which they are working. Teaching assistants play an important role in aiding the learning of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities when pupils work with their response partners. The school is giving priority to encouraging pupils to evaluate their own progress against the targets set with their teachers. Marking is supportive of this. In some lessons, questions and discussions were not challenging enough to help the teachers assess and deepen pupils' understanding of their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The imaginative curriculum leads to enjoyment and excitement for pupils through the school. There is a good range of enrichment activities to motivate learning through a programme of local visits, but relatively little in the curriculum to promote pupils' cultural development and understanding. Topic work helps pupils make connections between subjects and good attention is paid to developing their reading and writing skills. However, topics do not systematically develop skills in other subjects because of a lack of rigorous planning for this. The recently introduced programme for social and emotional learning is a good addition to the school's already proven ability to build a sense of self-worth and respect for others.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's caring ethos means that pupils are valued as individuals, thrive and grow in confidence. Teachers know their pupils very well and the overwhelming majority of parents are confident that their children are well cared for. Parents and teachers enjoy working together and this helps motivate the pupils. Pupils feel very safe in school. Procedures for ensuring the protection, safety and well-being of pupils are exemplary. The school has good procedures to assess and track pupils' progress through each year group. Progress data is used well to aid

those who begin to fall behind. Pupils say that the marking helps them know how well they are doing. The regular progress meetings with subject leaders ensure teachers provide good, timely academic guidance for pupils. However, these procedures are not yet sharp enough to guide more able pupils to achieve all they can in their mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school knows what it is good at and where it needs to improve. It has used its knowledge well to drive action that has led to good improvement since the last inspection. Governors are very involved in this. The organised programme of visits allows them to raise the critical questions that serve as an additional level of monitoring. Leaders at all levels are determined to build on the successes in reading, writing and science to ensure that more pupils attain higher standards in all subjects. They use data well to set high expectations for all pupils, and these are routinely reviewed. However, some improvement plans are not as useful as they might be because they do not include measurable outcomes for pupils against which school leaders and governors can judge the success of their actions. Staff training has focused on ensuring that senior leaders and subject managers lead effectively and this is bringing sharpness to their work across the school. The headteacher sets high store on working with all parents. The complex nature of pupils' mobility is managed extremely well and intervention to support children and families is precise and effective.

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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	3
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	3
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	3
The behaviour of learners	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	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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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	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	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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Uffculme Primary School, Uffculme, EX15 3AY

We were very pleased to visit your school. You made us feel really welcome. We think you go to a good school. Your classrooms and central area are really attractive and full of your good work. We agree with parents that this helps you to be enthusiastic about your learning. You all make good progress in your reading, writing and science and we were pleased to see that standards have continued to improve since your school was last inspected. These are the good features of your school.

- Your teachers and support staff are good at helping you to do your best.
- You greatly enjoy school and concentrate well in lessons. Your behaviour is good in lessons and at playtimes.
- You have a good number of clubs, trips and visits that add interest to your learning.
- Your workbooks are tidy and you present your work in interesting ways.
- The school works very well with your parents and carers to help you with your learning. Your parents tell us how involved they feel and this is a good thing.
- The headteacher, staff and governors manage the school well and work hard to keep looking for ways to make it better.
- You have interesting things to do in lessons, for example in your topic work and science investigations.
- I have asked the teachers to do a few things.
- Provide harder work for some of you in mathematics lessons; you can help by telling the teachers if the work is too easy for you.
- Make sure they map out how the topic work is going to build on your previous skills.
- Think about ways they can show their improvement plans are having a good effect.
- Help you learn more about the different groups of people who live and work in Britain.

Well done and I wish you all the very best.

Jonathan Palk HMI



17 March 2008

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