

# Uplowman Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113369
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	311233
<b>Inspection date</b>	5 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jon Palethorpe

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	62
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Barlow
<b>Headteacher</b>	Janet L Norris
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 October 2003
<b>School address</b>	Uplowman Tiverton EX16 7DR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01884 820552
<b>Fax number</b>	01884 820552

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a small village community school. It is a popular school with full numbers in each intake, and some children unable to gain access. All pupils come from White British heritage. They come from diverse social backgrounds, with a number requiring additional support. Attainment on entry varies from year to year, but a significant percentage enter with below average language and literacy skills. A number of pupils start the school later than Reception year, and many of these have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## 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 that takes exceptionally good care of its pupils and provides a good standard of education. The headteacher, all staff and the governors have been successful in working hard as a team to take the school forward, and ensure the required improvements since the last inspection. Parents clearly appreciate the work of the school with such comments as, 'hardworking teachers', 'a warm and friendly atmosphere', 'a close knit family', and 'a wonderful little school'.

Success is based on a good induction into the school, and very effective provision in the Foundation Stage. Year groups vary considerably in ability, but often children start from below what is expected for their age, particularly in communication and language skills. Improvements have been made to provision in this area, and new approaches are already having a marked impact, with children keen to talk and write. Pupils make good progress throughout the school, and are currently reaching good standards in English, mathematics and science in Year 6. Achievement is good. Sometimes, marking of pupils' work does not help progress by indicating how to improve. Writing is still a focus for improvement, and the greater use of writing across the curriculum is having a beneficial impact on standards.

The school successfully encourages personal as well as academic development. The school's strong Christian ethos sets the tone for good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All adults in the school are good role models, treating each other and all pupils with respect. Pupils respond with good attitudes and behaviour in lessons, around the school and in the playground. They help each other by acting as peer mediators, sorting out their own difficulties on the playground and showing a good degree of maturity. Outside specialists, such as the school nurse and the police liaison officer, provide valuable inputs into health and safety. Knowledge of such matters as road safety and risks of harmful drugs is helping pupils to grow up as safely as possible.

Teaching and the curriculum are both good, and are continually developing to meet the needs of the pupils. The revised curriculum in the Foundation Stage is providing more opportunities for creative development in independent learning, and for physical development. The curriculum in the rest of the school is well planned to meet the needs of pupils in mixed age classes. Very good use is made of a variety of adults to give specialist input, such as art, science, French and information and communication technology (ICT). There are effective systems for evaluating teaching and learning. Teachers regularly attend courses and share expertise in order to raise standards. Teachers and teaching assistants give very good support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, enabling them to make good progress. Higher ability pupils usually have suitable work to challenge them. On a few occasions, these pupils would benefit from further extension activities.

Leadership and management are good, giving the school clear direction. The headteacher, teachers, teaching assistants and governors support the school well for the benefit of pupils' learning. The fabric of the building has been greatly improved which, together with the professionalism of all working in the school, provides a high quality learning environment. The school's work in partnership with others, particularly the secondary school, to promote pupils' learning and well-being, is an outstanding feature. There is a good track record of improvement which confirms the school's good capacity to develop further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Effective leadership and management in the Foundation Stage ensure that teaching and learning meet the needs of each child. Rigorous use of tracking and assessment enables the teacher and teaching assistant to provide accurately for the wide range of ability. The curriculum is adapted to ensure that the children receive a rich experience of language to increase their communication skills. There are thorough induction procedures, enabling children to settle quickly and confidently. Parents recognise and appreciate this, and they support learning well because of good communication. Most children reach the expected early learning goals, demonstrating good progress from their starting points. High expectations of behaviour result in children moving around sensibly and behaving well in lessons. Good stimulating opportunities for learning through play in an improved classroom and increased opportunities for creativity enable children to become independent learners. An appropriate mix of child-initiated and adult-directed learning ensures all children access the full curriculum. Although the outdoor facilities are limited, all space has been used creatively, and provision for children's physical development is good.

### What the school should do to improve further

- ensure that pupils are consistently given work which challenges them, particularly those with higher ability
- ensure that all marking enables pupils to know how they can improve their work.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

With such small year groups, standards fluctuate from year to year. In 2007, Year 2 pupils' standards were in line with the national average, but Year 6 pupils' standards were slightly below. However, many of these started from a low base, there was a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and some of them did not start their schooling at this school. In fact, pupils made good progress to reach the standards they achieved. The school analyses its results rigorously, and has identified writing as the weakest area in literacy, and using and applying mathematics as the weakest area in numeracy. Currently, writing is a main focus for development. A positive impact is already being seen, particularly with the multi-sensory approach with younger pupils, where they can hear, say, see and write the word. Current school data supports inspection evidence that Year 6 pupils make good progress and reach good standards in English, mathematics and science. Increased opportunities for all pupils to practise their writing skills across the curriculum are good, again with improvement observed. Targets for 2008 are challenging, but pupils are on course to meet, and sometimes exceed, them. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive strong support and make good, and sometimes very good, progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy school. One, who has also been to other schools, said, 'It's one of the best schools because of friendship. Teachers and lessons are great.' Others say that 'teachers explain really well, teachers are comforting, and everyone's nice!' This enables them to feel safe and secure, and able to talk to adults if they are worried. Peer mediation enables the pupils to support one

another very well and often resolve conflict, and pupils show awareness of each other's needs. Pupils have a particularly good understanding of keeping healthy through exercise and eating healthily. They talk about the benefits of living in the country, so they are not breathing in carbon monoxide! Pupils make a strong contribution to school life, especially through being a member of the school council, even to the extent of interviewing for a new teaching appointment. Pupils engage well with the local community through a variety of visits and visitors. They gain many skills for the future by running their own events, such as fundraising for their school trips and for charity. Pupils' good spiritual and moral understanding is apparent in opportunities such as saying prayers before lunch. Pupils are aware of a multicultural society in Britain today through experiences such as a visit to the Eden Project, where they explored winter festivals across faiths and across Britain.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils make good progress because teaching is good. Planning and preparation is thorough. It includes different work to cater for different ages and abilities in each class. There is often specific planning for teaching assistants, who give very good support. Relationships are excellent and pupils are managed very well. Pupils are treated in a very caring way, building confidence and self-esteem. This means that pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to learn. There is usually a good pace to lessons, keeping pupils motivated and on task. A further motivational tool is the very good use of interactive whiteboards. Marking is often very good, but there are occasions when there is insufficient guidance on how the work could be improved. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good. Good emphasis is placed on developing children's language skills, an identified weakness for many when starting school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support, often from well-trained teaching assistants. Higher ability pupils are often challenged well, but there are a few occasions when they could be extended further.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is effectively adapted to meet the interests and needs of the pupils. For example, it has been reorganised so that opportunities for writing are included across every subject. Speaking and listening opportunities are included for Foundation Stage pupils to underpin their writing. Careful planning ensures that all pupils, regardless of age or ability, have full access to the appropriate curriculum activities. Older pupils have 'real' projects, such as the 'Café Club', which enables them to develop enterprise and business skills for the future. The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme is at an early stage of development, but is helping pupils to understand and deal with their emotions. This is having a positive impact on attitudes and behaviour. There is very good provision for physical education, both in and out of school time. Popular after-school clubs contribute to both physical and social development. 'Enrichment weeks', which enable pupils to work with others across the school on projects such as 'Magical Science', are very much enjoyed and provide good opportunities for developing academic and social skills. The curriculum is successfully enriched through a variety of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. An outstanding example of this is the use of the police community liaison officer to accompany school residential visits.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Pastoral and academic care, guidance and support are of the highest quality and have a positive impact on the personal development and achievement of pupils. Induction of new pupils, both into Reception and at other stages in the school, is carefully managed so that they can approach their learning with confidence. Early identification of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures that their needs are considered and support and intervention strategies are successfully used. Rigorous assessment tracks pupils' progress from Reception to Year 6, and teachers use this well to plan appropriate work. Older pupils know their individual targets for English and mathematics, which helps them to know what they need to do next. Guidance on personal development is equally thorough, which leads to excellent relationships, and pupils growing in confidence and self-esteem. Good behaviour is supported by the use of trained peer mediators who take their responsibility seriously. All procedures for keeping pupils safe are robust and regularly reviewed. Older pupils are involved in developing risk assessments for their off-site activities, which give them a clear insight into the dangers they could face.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school's leadership and management are good. The headteacher is working extremely hard, and is very well supported by staff and governors. They work very well as a team, set clear direction leading to improvement, and use challenging targets to raise standards. Subject leaders are effective in the monitoring and development of their subject. Effective self-evaluation shows a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Equality of opportunity is promoted well, especially for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The use of adults with specialist knowledge, whether teachers, parents or other professionals, is a very good management tool to give breadth to the curriculum. The school development plan is an effective document for improving standards, and good progress is made in achieving its priorities. There are robust tracking systems to monitor pupils' progress, with challenging targets being set from the school's data. Governors have a good understanding of the work of the school, and support and challenge well. The areas noted for improvement in the last inspection have been addressed well, although writing remains an area for development, and marking still needs attention.

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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?	1
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 <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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2
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

<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	1
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**

6 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Uplowman CE Primary School, Tiverton, EX16 7DR

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for being so helpful. It made our short stay with you very interesting and enjoyable. It was good to hear how much you like school and enjoy working there. You had some very nice things to say about your teachers and your lessons.

Yours is a good school, which prepares you well for the future. It is well run by an extremely hard-working headteacher, with very good support from the teachers, teaching assistants and governors, all working together as a team. You also have specialist teachers, some from the secondary school, coming in to help you learn, and this is very valuable. Teaching is good, and teachers set you targets to help you do your best. Those of you who find learning difficult get good support, and you too are doing well. You get a very good start in the Foundation Stage, and this continues throughout the school. By the time you reach Year 6, you reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science.

The school takes really good care of you. Teachers are just as concerned about you growing up as sensible, healthy young people as they are about your academic standards. You show that this is working well by your good behaviour and your good attitudes in class. Your peer mediators in the playground are a very good idea and it seems to be working well.

Everybody has worked really hard to get all the improvements to your school building, and this is making a big difference to the work that you can do.

We have asked your teachers to make sure that you have work that really challenges you, especially those of you who would benefit from extra challenge. We have asked them to make sure that when they mark your work, it shows you what you can do to improve.

Yours faithfully

Jon Palethorpe Lead Inspector

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Jon Palethorpe  
Lead Inspector