

Upton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130862
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	315631
Inspection dates	19–20 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Andrew Swallow

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	452
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sue Bolton
Headteacher	Mr Paul Franklin
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2003
School address	Waggon Lane Upton Pontefract West Yorkshire WF9 1JS
Telephone number	01977 723845
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Upton is a larger than average sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils come from the local community, which is a socially and economically disadvantaged area. Almost all pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of those requiring support for learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school has the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Artsmark Silver, Activemark, and Investor in People awards. It is also affiliated to the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Upton Primary is a good school. It provides good value for money. It fully meets its aim to ensure that school is an inclusive and exciting experience. Parents believe that adults are very attentive to their children's needs and say that 'they always come home happy, full of stories of what they have learnt each day.' Although the school has moved a long way in recent years, staff know that there is still more work to be done, particularly in improving further pupils' achievements and the standards they reach in English, mathematics and science. Children enter school with well below average language and mathematical skills. They make good progress throughout their time in school to reach broadly average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science, by the end of Year 6.

The Foundation Stage gets children off to a good start because of the stimulating activities and the good quality teaching of early communication skills and constructive play. As pupils move through the school they encounter a wide range of visual stimuli and creative experiences that encourage them to develop very positive attitudes to learning and excellent behaviour. They know that they can make mistakes, without fear of failure. 'Teachers are great! They never let you down', they say. Good teaching provides a firm foundation for learning. However, not all teachers use information from assessments effectively in lessons to involve pupils in understanding how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work further. Consequently, not all pupils are clear about what they are aiming for, or how to get there. Plentiful opportunities exist for pupils to extend their knowledge through a really inspiring curriculum, which offers a wide range of imaginative and artistic experiences, as well as additional cultural, music and sporting opportunities.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils take delight in their time in school. They develop into self-confident individuals, largely as a result of the friendly relationships with all staff, and the many activities and visits outside normal school hours. They derive a real sense of pleasure from contributing to their school and local communities. Their enthusiasm for sport helps them to live healthily. Their improving literacy and numeracy skills and imaginative use of modern technology, prepare them well for their future lives.

The school provides outstanding personal care and support, and particularly so for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils confirm they enjoy coming to school because, 'it's fun and the adults really care'. Accurate tracking of progress now allows staff to set pupils clear targets for sustainable academic achievement, although procedures to provide pupils with guidance tailored to their individual learning needs are at an early stage of development.

Upton Primary enjoys a positive reputation within the local community. The many excellent links with community services, local businesses, other schools and educational providers enhance pupils' learning and well-being. Good leadership and management by the headteacher and senior leaders, coupled with good governance, provide firm direction for the school. The school has an accurate view of itself. However, its procedures are not yet sharp or rigorous enough to analyse accurately the impact of teaching strategies on pupils' achievement and progress. This hinders the next stages of improvement and is reflected in its satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle quickly and happily into school and get off to a good start. Good teaching, both in the Nursery and in Reception, enables them to make good progress, particularly in mathematical concepts, language acquisition, and personal and social development. The vast majority of children enter school with skills well below those typically seen in all the areas of learning. Although most are working below expectations by the end of Reception, they make clear gains in recognising sounds in words, speak more confidently, learn to take turns, show good listening skills and begin to demonstrate an understanding of small numbers. Outstanding indoor and outdoor provision, which is both stimulating and imaginative, encourages children to make choices, learn to share with others and become independent in their work and play. Children enjoy and are enthusiastic about their learning. Systems to assess children's progress are good and their welfare is promoted well. Those who find learning more difficult make good progress, particularly in their personal and social development, because of the many opportunities to play actively and interact with adults who are good role models. Parents are encouraged to become involved in their children's learning, and the provision is very well led and managed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment information more effectively in lessons to involve pupils' more in understanding how well they are doing and what they need to do to further improve their work.
- Sharpen current procedures to evaluate more rigorously the impact of teaching strategies on pupils' rates of learning and progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. From a well below average starting point, they do well to reach average standards in writing by the end of Year 2. Standards in reading and mathematics are slightly below average, as confirmed in the most recent national tests. Current information indicates that strategies to improve pupils' progress in reading are impacting positively on pupils' achievements. In Years 3 to 6, pupils progress well overall, attaining average standards in science, and just below average standards in English and mathematics. Current Year 6 pupils' work shows that standards are set to rise significantly in English and mathematics. Girls make especially good progress. High attaining pupils perform well in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well. This is because teachers place significant emphasis on assessing their needs and on providing them with well designed tasks and adult support. The school sets increasingly challenging targets to raise attainment and has been successful in achieving them to date.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' outstanding personal development is reflected in their friendly, confident, outgoing manner and their great enjoyment of school life. They are exceptionally well behaved, both in lessons and around the school. A particular strength is the progress made by vulnerable pupils, and those with learning difficulties and /or disabilities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

education is outstanding. Links with schools in South Africa and regular lessons in cultural studies make powerful contributions to their understanding of other cultures. A wide range of sporting activities and after-school clubs, including Yoga Bugs and the 'Healthy Eating' cookery club, as well as personal and social education lessons, contribute to pupils' excellent understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. Through the work of the school council, fund-raising events, and responsibilities such as behaviour monitors and playground buddies, pupils make effective contributions to the school and local communities. They make good progress in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT). These skills, together with their high levels of self-esteem, prepare them very well for their future lives. Nevertheless, attendance remains stubbornly below average. This is despite the school's exhaustive efforts to encourage pupils to attend regularly and to remind parents of the link between regular attendance and their children's progress. A significant proportion of families continue to take annual holidays during term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are lively and interesting, with regular opportunities for pupils to collaborate, share ideas and work in teams. Interactive technology is used thoughtfully to engage pupils' interest and to provide a practical dimension to learning. Teachers are skilled at posing probing questions which help pupils to understand new concepts. They encourage the pupils to talk purposefully with their partners, so improving their speaking and listening skills. In a very small proportion of lessons, teachers' expectations are not high enough. Not all pupils know how to improve their work and are not involved sufficiently in assessing how well they are doing. Throughout the school pupils are very attentive and show excellent attitudes to each other and their teachers. Well trained and committed teaching assistants support pupils' learning very effectively, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that they make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school offers a vibrant and exciting curriculum, with a rich range of experiences that captivate pupils' interest. High emphasis is placed on the arts. A group of gifted and talented children worked on a 'Birds' project with an art specialist, creating outstanding sculptures from natural organic materials. Teachers make natural links between subjects so that pupils see relevance, at all times, in their learning. Modern technology is used very well to support pupils' learning and to make lessons fun. Pupils use video-conferencing equipment to link to local companies and compose simple tunes using computer software. In addition, they enjoy a wide range of art, sporting and theatrical activities and visits, all of which enrich their experiences, enabling them to develop new skills. A French foreign language assistant encourages pupils in Years 3 to 6 to learn a European language. Many pupils across the whole school sing in the choir and learn a musical instrument. The outstanding 'Inspire' initiative involves parents as true partners in their children's learning. For example, during the inspection, parents worked alongside their children from Year 6 to create 'Gaudiesque' chimneypots out of clay.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care provided by all staff is outstanding. As a result, pupils achieve well and thrive in their personal development. They enjoy activities in the 'Rainbow Room' which develop their social, speaking and listening skills. Individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are used well to check pupils' progress and set new targets. Arrangements to safeguard pupils' welfare, including close links with a range of agencies, are very securely in place. Procedures to provide pupils with guidance tailored to their individual needs are at an early stage of development. Pupils have group targets in writing and mathematics, but do not yet have enough detail about how well they are achieving individually and what they need to do next to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides far-sighted leadership and innovative qualities that have brought about improvements since the last inspection. He has created a stimulating and friendly environment in which the needs of the child are of paramount importance. Staff share his passion for high quality education and care and have confidence in his vision of a fully inclusive school. The senior leadership team works hard to encourage teachers to try out new ideas and to share what works well with each other. Staff are using the school's recently enhanced tracking procedures, with increasing confidence. This is designed to trigger suitable support for individual pupils who may not be achieving as well as they should. Systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory, but there is not enough analysis of the impact of teachers' work on pupils' learning. The school's self-evaluation provides an accurate view of strengths and areas for development. Action plans target appropriate priorities, but do not always describe intended outcomes, simply and specifically. Governors are very supportive and increasingly confident in understanding what the school does well and how it needs to improve.

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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	3

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?	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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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?	1
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	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**

I am writing to thank you very much for your friendly welcome when the inspectors visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting you all and seeing how very well you all get on together. We judge that you go to a good school and that your teachers are providing you with a good quality education.

We decided that all the corridors and classrooms were really inviting and stimulating, and were very impressed with how well you respect all the interesting books, pictures and objects on display. Our discussions with you at lunchtime, during lessons and around the school were very helpful. You speak very highly of your teachers and show very caring attitudes to each other. Children in the Nursery and Reception do well and enjoy all the exciting activities the adults plan for them. Higher up in the school you are willing to work hard and do your best. You know a lot about health and safe lifestyles and make the most of the excellent art, music and sport activities during and after school. It is very clear how much you all enjoy being a part of Upton primary school!

You told us how much you enjoyed your lessons and we agree that they are fun and stimulating. The standards that you reach in reading, writing, mathematics and science, by the time you leave school, are improving. This is because your headteacher and all the staff care about you and want you to do as well as you can. We did notice that not many of you are confident about your targets and what you need to do specifically to improve your work. We have, therefore, asked your teachers to make clearer what you are doing well and how you can make even better progress. We have also asked your headteacher to improve the way the school checks on how well you are learning in lessons so that the school can understand clearly where you could do better.

We very much hope that you continue to enjoy your time at Upton. We would also like to encourage you and your parents to make sure you come to school regularly.