

Uplands Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120036
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	327181
Inspection date	4 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Hazel Callaghan

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	477
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Mugglestone
Headteacher	Jill Fletcher
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Melbourne Road Highfields Leicester LE2 0DR
Telephone number	01162 625280
Fax number	01162 625280

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- whether all pupils continue to achieve well
- the school's strengths in teaching, curriculum and care
- reasons for inconsistencies in the school's judgements and consideration of the effectiveness of procedures for self-evaluation.

Evidence was gathered from the school's assessments of pupils' standards and progress and an analysis of the results of the 2008 tests. There were observations of teaching and discussions took place with senior leaders, staff, governors and pupils. Parents' responses to the Ofsted questionnaire were also analysed. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified; they were in fact overly modest. These also have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Uplands is a very large infant school. All of its pupils come from minority ethnic groups. The largest group is from an Indian background, with others coming from Bangladeshi, Pakistani and other Asian backgrounds. A growing number of pupils are from a Black African heritage. Most of these are originally from Somalia. The vast majority of pupils do not have English as their first language and they are in the early stages of learning it as an additional language. An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school admits pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities but this is a similar proportion to that found in most schools. The local population is fairly mobile and in the past a high proportion of pupils joined or left the school in all age groups. This movement of pupils is reducing but it is still above the national average. Most children start at Uplands in one of the Nursery classes (F1) which is part of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school has successfully achieved Healthy School status and the Investors in People Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Uplands Infant School provides an outstanding education. It is an exceptional school where truly 'every child matters'. All staff share a passion and commitment to ensuring pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve as well as they can and that their personal and academic needs are effectively met. This results in pupils' outstanding achievement. Children start school with a much narrower range of skills and experiences than is expected for their age and with little knowledge of English. Despite this-well-below average beginning, children make excellent progress to reach standards that are significantly higher than those attained by other schools in similar circumstances. This excellent achievement is the result of many very positive elements.

The personal and pastoral care given to all pupils is exemplary and all safeguarding procedures are rigorous. They consequently feel safe and secure and grow in confidence not only in the adults around them, but also in their own abilities. Teachers and support staff together provide a range of successful teaching styles that support and engage pupils, ensuring they make excellent progress in their learning. Notable is the strength of the strategies and support for pupils in learning English. Pupils' abilities and needs are identified quickly so that the right levels of support are given, both in the use of their home language to promote good understanding and in additional activities to help them absorb an increasing range of vocabulary and skills. By the end of Year 2, standards are in line with the national average and a good proportion of pupils reach the higher levels. Standards in pupils' writing and mathematics are higher than in reading because, although they make good progress, pupils' full understanding of the meaning of words in the text they are reading is still developing. This is the school's continuing focus for improvement.

Excellent progress starts in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where a wide range of opportunities are provided for children to learn through their own interests, to experiment and explore under the sensitive care and inventive skills of the teachers and other staff. In Years 1 and 2 their learning continues to grow because of the skilled teaching and an outstanding curriculum that very effectively engages children's keen interest and the desire to do well. Teachers use positive strategies to help pupils understand how to succeed. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their activities and this is another reason for their excellent progress. The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development extremely well. They develop a thorough understanding of how to develop healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe. Pupils behave extremely well, showing care for one another. Pupils' spiritual development and cultural understanding is excellent. The school builds on children's strong religious heritage and promotes their respect and understanding of each other's beliefs and cultures. This, and pupils' good learning skills and ability to work together collaboratively, ensures they are extremely well prepared for the next stages of their learning and the world beyond.

The school recognises the strong family bonds that surround their pupils and the importance of parents as co-educators. To this end they have developed very good systems that encourage parents into school to gain a greater understanding of what their children are learning. A large proportion of mums, dads and carers come in to enjoy the 'Early Bird' sessions each morning with their child. Families from all sides of the community say they feel welcomed into the school, that there is a strong sense of harmony. The school works extremely hard to improve the below average attendance and it is now rising. The pupils play an important part in improving the life of the school community through the work of the school council, and they work with members of the local community both in and out of school. Pupils also have good opportunities to meet

children in other schools where there is a very different mix of cultures and backgrounds. Newly-arrived families to the area are welcomed into the school by staff who talk to them in their first language. This supports the whole family and so children settle more quickly. Parents who in other circumstances might be difficult to reach feel part of the school community. Through its many activities here and abroad the school is strongly promoting community cohesion.

It is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher that has created this extraordinary school despite its difficult building. She has developed an exceptionally strong team of senior leaders who in their own ways provide excellent leadership and management for the school. All staff play their part in reviewing and evaluating the school's provision. They have a secure understanding of the school's strengths but are modest in their recognition of achievements and so some of the school's judgements do not always reflect the full quality of their work. They are well supported by the work of the governors and there is outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent and children make very good progress through Nursery and Reception classes (F1 and F2). Children enjoy coming to school and play well on their own as well as with others. They share very good relationships with adults and other children. Staff have an excellent understanding of how children learn and support them very well by talking to them in their home tongue. This supports their understanding in all areas of the curriculum as well as effectively promoting their understanding of English. Staff encourage children's own ideas. There is a strong focus on providing stimulating resources and opportunities to learn through children's own choice of activities, which they support and extend. Children behave very well and show great enthusiasm about their learning. They feel safe and are kept safe. Children's learning and welfare needs are extremely well met and there are good links with outside agencies to support children with specific needs. Very good links with parents ensure there are good levels of communication about children's welfare and learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage team is extremely well led and staff work closely together. The role of key workers has recently been extended into the Reception classes and all adults now play an important part in assessing children's progress and in identifying their next steps. The senior staff analyse information from these assessments to set appropriate new goals for improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop an increasing range of strategies to support children's understanding of what they read so standards in reading rise to equal those in writing.

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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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

5 February 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Uplands Infant School, Leicester LE2 0DR

Thank you for making us so welcome and answering our questions when we visited you recently. You are rightly proud of your school and what it does for you. You and your parents are correct in thinking that you go to a really special school that has lots of outstanding features. Here are some of the things we found out.

- You make excellent progress, especially in learning to speak English, and you reach standards that are better than pupils in similar schools.
- Your behaviour is excellent. You are polite, friendly and helpful to everyone. You have an exceptional understanding of how to keep yourselves safe and healthy. Your respect for each others' religions, cultures and feelings is excellent. You want to do well in your work and you are prepared very well for your future education.
- You are taught extremely well and all your teachers work hard to make sure that your lessons are fun, and you have a good understanding of how you can get better in your work.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team provide strong leadership for the school and the staff all want you to do very well.
- Everyone in the school works together as a strong team and there is an excellent partnership with your parents and others who can help you to learn. The staff look after you extremely well so you feel safe and happy.

Even though Uplands Infant School is excellent, there is something it can do to make it even better. We have asked the headteacher and governors to:

- help you understand what you read so that the quality of your reading becomes as good as your writing.

Thank you again for helping us and remember, you can help to ensure your school continues to be really special by continuing to work hard and helping one another.

Yours faithfully

Hazel Callaghan

Lead inspector