

Upton Priory School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135255
Local Authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	329064
Inspection dates	4–5 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Carmen Markham

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	388
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	Mrs Greeba Jones
Headteacher	Mr Johnathan Rowley
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Berwick Close off Prestbury Road Macclesfield Cheshire SK10 3ED
Telephone number	01625 383011
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This large school opened as a new school in 2007 following the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools that were situated on the same site in separate buildings. It admits children part time from the age of three years into its Early Years Foundation Stage. The school serves an area of mixed housing and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is a little below the national average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small number are from other ethnic groups: very few are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Overall the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little below average but the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is significantly larger than average because the school admits pupils with physical and complex needs. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Upton Beehive Club is run by a private provider and operates from the school site. The provision is subject to a separate inspection and will receive a separate inspection report.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Upton Priory is an outstanding school. Within two years of amalgamation the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, with his strong leadership team and able governors, has enabled a new, harmonious and very successful school to emerge. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and typically comment that, 'It is a credit to the team that the amalgamation process went so smoothly with the end product providing a truly holistic approach to education in a school where the child really does matter.' The school's capacity to improve is outstanding.

Since the school opened it has focused on raising standards by improving teaching and introducing a variety of support strategies to help pupils with individual needs. This has been very successful and detailed pupil progress records demonstrate that pupils in both key stages are making much better than expected progress in English, mathematics and science. By the end of Year 6 standards are above the national average in each of these three subjects. As most children start Nursery with skills below those expected for their age, and a significant number of pupils join the school with very complex needs, this represents outstanding achievement for all pupils. This includes the very able, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with a statement of educational need.

The leaders, managers and governors of the school work together as a very strong team to deliver their vision of an inclusive school with the happiness and academic success of pupils at its heart. All who work at the school share this vision. Challenging targets are set and high quality staff have been appointed and trained to deliver an outstanding curriculum that motivates pupils and develops basic skills. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is very well planned to develop a whole range of personal skills. This underpins pupils' excellent understanding of how to stay safe, fit and healthy. Subject leaders and their teams plan together very effectively and have done much to ensure good transition between the key stages. Teaching is outstanding: teachers know their pupils well, carefully track their progress and use assessment to plan lessons that meet the needs of all pupils. However, the use of individual learning targets and teachers' marking is not fully consistent across the school. As a result, pupils are not always clear about how to improve their work, to ensure they sustain their very rapid rates of progress. The accommodation and resources are very effectively managed to improve learning and the school provides outstanding value for money.

The school works very closely with parents and carers to ensure the well-being of their children. The care of pupils is outstanding. The development of excellent partnerships with the local high school, specialist agencies and a range of providers who enrich learning ensures that all pupils greatly enjoy their learning and are able to succeed. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are swiftly identified and skilfully supported by staff. High expectations in relation to behaviour and attendance and a strong ethos of mutual respect and cooperation have created a safe environment for pupils to grow in confidence and become independent learners. This strong provision has made a very significant contribution to the outstanding personal development and well-being of the pupils. They are very well prepared for their future economic well-being as their achievement in basic skills is impressive and all pupils contribute to high quality enterprise projects. Pupils are highly responsible, make an excellent contribution to their own community and take very good care of each other and their environment. They understand and value diversity in the community but lack experience of different communities as the school has not had time to systematically develop community cohesion with a policy and action plan.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Since the opening of the new school, work has been ongoing to extend the quality and consistency of provision in the Nursery to the Reception class. Children start in the Nursery with skills that are below those expected for their age, especially in their social and emotional development, and language and number skills. However, they settle quickly into school routines and learn to work and play extremely well together because of the excellent role models and high expectations of the adults who work with them. They quickly gain confidence and independence. Good emphasis is placed on developing children's language skills, although adults occasionally miss opportunities to develop role-play discussions. Children's achievement is good in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Good quality teaching enables most children to attain the skills expected for their age at the end of the Reception class and some children exceed expectations. Well planned, practical activities and interesting visits stimulate children's interest, curiosity and sense of fun. The outdoor area in the Nursery is extremely well organised and very well resourced. This provision is now being extended to the Reception outdoor area.

Good leadership and management are strengthened by effective team work.

Planning and assessment systems are good. Children's progress is carefully tracked and activities planned to meet their individual needs. Children are exceptionally well cared for in a safe and secure environment and all welfare requirements are fully met. Excellent support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures that they are fully included in all activities. There are excellent partnerships with parents/carers and other providers. Parents are very pleased with the quality of the provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils have targets to help them to improve their work and clearly identify the steps that they need to take to meet those targets.
- Develop a policy and action plan for the development of community cohesion to extend pupils' experience of different communities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

In Key Stage 1 standards improved significantly in 2009 in reading, writing and mathematics. Writing has been the focus for improvement and the impact of this work is very evident in the recent assessments, particularly in terms of the increasing proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels. Similarly, standards have improved in Key Stage 2. English has been consistently strong and Year 6 pupils have traditionally attained significantly higher than expected standards. Standards in mathematics and science were above average in 2008. However, evidence seen during the inspection demonstrates that standards have risen. Pupils are now significantly exceeding national expectations in mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 and their achievement overall is outstanding. Although girls do a little better than boys overall the gap is much smaller than nationally. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress. Pupils with statements of special educational need also do extremely well and often attain standards that are significantly above national expectations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy school: They say that, 'lessons are interesting and we love the school trips'. Therefore their attendance is good. They are kind and considerate of others and their behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are able to work harmoniously together on activities in class, musical and drama events and on the sports field. They clearly know how to stay safe and healthy and almost all participate in some sports activity. They willingly take on a range of responsibilities around school like playground buddies. They have a strong voice in school through the school council that has introduced many initiatives to make the school environment more healthy, pleasant and accessible to pupils. Pupils take their responsibilities very seriously and make a very positive contribution to the school community. They also make very good contributions to the local community and are very responsive to charity appeals. This does much to develop their outstanding economic well-being, as they plan projects to produce vegetables and goods to sell, and manage the sale and financial aspects very well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They benefit from a curriculum that introduces them to many cultures and they have links with pupils in Uganda and in the United States. Events like arts week, music and drama also make very good contributions to pupils' personal development and well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Pupils make outstanding progress in lessons. They have excellent attitudes to learning and relationships are very good. They are independent learners who enjoy working cooperatively on a variety of tasks and activities that engage and motivate them. Teachers have high expectations of pupils who take great pride in their work. This is reflected in consistently high quality presentation seen in books and displays. Teachers use very good questioning skills to extend pupils' understanding and speaking and listening skills. There is a very good emphasis on providing practical learning experiences. Teachers rigorously assess pupils' work to inform their planning and to check pupils' progress. Lessons are well planned and take account of the learning needs of pupils. Teachers work very effectively with teaching assistants to ensure that all pupils have full access to the curriculum. Pupils are regularly involved in assessing their work. Very good use is made of a range of resources, including information and communication technology (ICT). All classrooms are extremely well organised and managed and provide a very happy and safe place where pupils can learn.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The rich, stimulating curriculum is extremely well planned to meet the needs and interests of all the pupils and contributes in great measure to their outstanding achievement and personal development. In Key Stage 1 very effective strategies, in place to improve standards in writing at the higher levels, have had considerable impact on current standards. Pupils use their basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills very well to support their learning in other subjects and these links make learning much more exciting and relevant for all pupils. Stimulating displays of pupils' work celebrate their successes and show that their work is valued. The curriculum promotes personal, social and health education extremely well. This equips pupils exceptionally

well for later life. Provision and resources for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are excellent, enabling them to be fully included in all that the school has to offer. Enrichment opportunities are outstanding: sports activities and visual and performing arts are strengths of the school. Pupils talk very enthusiastically about the many interesting and exciting visits, clubs and visitors to the school, which extend their learning experiences extremely well and often develop new talents and skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pupils' health, safety and well-being are at the heart of the school's work and pastoral care is outstanding. Staff know the pupils very well and all safeguarding systems, including child protection, health and safety and risk assessments, are well documented and meet current requirements. Parents recognise that pupils thrive on the exceptionally high levels of care and support they receive in this secure and harmonious learning environment. Relationships are excellent and pupils feel very safe and valued as individuals. The excellent links with the neighbouring high school throughout the year ensure a very smooth transfer for Year 6 pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive excellent support from highly skilled and dedicated teaching assistants and outside specialist help as necessary. Academic guidance is good. Pupils' progress is meticulously tracked and this information is used very well to identify where extra support or challenge is needed. However, the use of individual learning targets and teachers' marking is not consistent across the school. As a result, pupils are not always fully clear about how to improve their work and how they can continue to sustain their very rapid rates of progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school benefits from a very dedicated headteacher and a very able governing body. Together they have ensured that the recent school amalgamation has been very successfully led and managed. Their vision for an inclusive school where all pupils can achieve their full potential is evident in all classrooms and around the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are valued members of the school community. The school is now working very effectively as one school. The school's needs have been evaluated effectively. Correct priorities for improvement have been identified and challenging targets set. The impact of these priorities is clearly visible in rising standards and improving achievement. All staff are involved in decision making and action planning. This enables them to feel fully involved in the management of the school and encourages their own enterprise, initiative and awareness of their responsibility for their work. Performance management is used very effectively to deliver the school's priorities and to identify training needs for staff. Although many aspects of community cohesion are in place the school has not produced a policy or action plan to ensure that all aspects are systematically covered.

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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	NA
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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	2
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?	2

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?	3
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	1
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**

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome in your school. You were all very helpful and polite. I admired the beautiful displays of your work on the walls in your classrooms and the corridors. I particularly enjoyed looking at your Every Child Matters displays. You obviously know a lot about healthy eating and keeping fit. The Year 3 work on the life cycle of a butterfly was very well written and beautifully presented and the Year 4 work on the Iron Man showed a lot of imagination.

You attend an outstanding school. Your personal development and behaviour are excellent. You are ready to listen and learn! Well done! The house system really encourages you to work hard and behave well. I am very impressed by how well the school council represents the pupils in school. You are very considerate and kind to other people and take good care of each other so that you can all enjoy school. You attend school regularly and make the most of all the exciting activities the school provides during and after school. Many of you also value opportunities to work with staff and pupils from Fallibroome High school. Your school has very good links with the community and you enjoy fundraising for others.

The leadership of the school by the headteacher, his team and the governors is outstanding. The school has improved a lot because of all their hard work and good ideas. They have made sure that teaching is outstanding so you achieve very well. By the end of Year 6 pupils reach standards that are higher than those reached nationally. Staff are excellent at looking after you and you feel safe and happy in school. You make good progress in lessons because your teachers plan them carefully so you have work that suits you. Teachers also make sure that they involve you in a lot of interesting topics and visits to make your learning more interesting.

One of the reasons for my visit was to see how your school can improve. I have asked your teachers to make sure that you all have targets to improve your work and to help you to understand what you need to do to reach these targets so you can continue to do so well in the future. I have also asked your headteacher to plan for ways in which you can all learn about and experience communities that are very different to your own local community.