

Upton St James Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113402
Local Authority	Torbay
Inspection number	335193
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Mark Lindfield HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Watling
Headteacher	Claire Pryn
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2007
School address	St James Road Upton Torquay TQ1 4AZ
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out at no notice by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited 11 part lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's improvement plan, pupil assessment data, safeguarding arrangements and curriculum policies.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the current rates of progress for pupils in Years 3 to 6
- the quality of teaching and assessment
- the systems to assess, record and make effective use of information on pupils' performance
- the effectiveness of leadership and management of subject coordinators and governors.

Information about the school

Upton St James is a smaller than average-sized primary school. It is located in a residential area near to the centre of Torquay. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Almost all pupils are from White British families and few pupils speak English as an additional language. At the time of the previous inspection, the school was made subject to special measures.

There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for 15 children in the school's Reception class

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Upton St James has been led out of special measures by a dynamic headteacher who initially drew on the support of the local authority and a national support school. With increasing self-reliance and independence, she has developed rigorous systems and procedures that provide the school with a satisfactory capacity to improve. Senior leaders have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and have encouraged subject leaders to prepare appropriate and realistic action plans to address weaknesses and further increase the school's capacity to raise achievement across all curriculum areas. For example the Early Years Foundation Stage leadership with support from the local authority, has compiled clear action plans to increase opportunities for children to play outdoors.

Regular analysis of English and mathematics assessments has ensured that teachers have a clearer understanding of pupils' expected rates of progress in these subjects. This information is used effectively to identify any lapses in pupils' progress and specific weaknesses in their understanding. Well-trained and conscientious teaching assistants provide additional support, helping those pupils with special educational needs to make good and occasionally outstanding progress in English and mathematics.

Teaching across the school has improved since the last inspection and is developing some clear strengths. Teachers consistently set pupils challenging individual targets and explain clearly what is expected of them. English and mathematics lesson plans regularly identify a range of learning intentions that match the differing age and abilities of pupils in the class. However, progress is satisfactory overall, rather than good, because in other subjects lessons are often pitched at a single ability level and do not sufficiently challenge all pupils.

The curriculum has effectively focused on improving pupils' knowledge and understanding of reading, writing and mathematics so that they make good progress in these subjects. The school has been successful in ameliorating previously weaker achievement by weighting the timetable in favour of these areas. They plan to dedicate a more equitable allocation of time to other subjects and provide more regular access to information and communication technology to develop learning across the curriculum. The curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage currently provides limited opportunities for children to initiate their own activities and develop their independence. The school is an inclusive and friendly environment and places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' social and emotional well-being. Pupils show care and consideration

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for each other and their behaviour is consistently good. Their spiritual development is good; however, pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures is no better than satisfactory, as are the school's links with other communities nationally and internationally.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching and the curriculum meet the needs of pupils and help to raise achievement in all subjects to match that in English and mathematics by:
 - more closely matching teaching in all subjects to the full range of abilities
 - integrating the use of information and communication technology across subjects
 - providing a more balanced time allocation to the curriculum.
- Ensure that pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of other faiths and cultures, and the school more actively promotes community cohesion both nationally and internationally.
- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - providing increased opportunities for children to initiate their own activities and develop greater independence in their learning
 - increasing children's opportunities to move freely indoors and outdoors to more fully develop their knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative skills.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The progress that pupils make from their starting points has improved since the last inspection, and especially so in mathematics and English, where the majority of pupils now make good progress. However, achievement is satisfactory overall because the progress that pupils make in other subjects is not as pronounced. Generally, pupils' attainment has improved steadily over the last three years and by the end of Year 6 pupils now reach average standards.

Pupils contribute to the school's friendly and caring environment with their well-mannered and polite conduct. Their spiritual development is good and the school has close partnerships with local churches. Pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures is satisfactory as there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop a broader and deeper understanding of cultural diversity. Their behaviour in lessons is good and they pay careful attention and participate willingly. They have been encouraged to take a more active role in lessons and now readily discuss their ideas with each other and willingly evaluate their own progress. Good relationships are evident across the school; staff are approachable and engender in pupils a strong sense of feeling safe and well looked after. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with good support from teaching assistants. The progress made by these pupils is good because the school ensures that extra sessions are closely matched to pupils' needs and

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carefully monitored.

Pupils make a strong contribution to the life of the school, taking their responsibilities seriously and showing obvious pride in their roles. All ages play together cheerfully and older pupils show consideration and kindness by organising games and activities for younger ones. Pupils recognise that the school places a high degree of trust in them and they respond appropriately. Pupils of all ages put forward their views by placing their suggestions on the school council display board and these are regularly acknowledged and acted upon in a system that works well. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory when compared with similar schools. A friendly school administrator responds efficiently on the first morning of any absences and the local authority has recently revised its procedures in following up on more persistent absences, although this has, as yet, had limited impact.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching has improved across the school and is now more responsive to the needs of individual pupils. This is because teachers make better use of accurate assessments,

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, to modify their planning to suit pupils' varying ability levels. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards with increasing confidence to explain solutions to mathematical problems. They monitor pupils' work during lessons and use questions to pick up on and resolve pupils' misconceptions. Marking is regular and is linked to individual targets for pupils so that they are clear about how to improve their work.

The curriculum has effectively focused on improving pupils' basic skills and understanding with a significant proportion of the timetable set aside for the core subject areas. Recent adaptations to the curriculum have placed a greater emphasis on raising pupils' achievement across all subjects, although these changes have not had sufficient time to make a noticeable difference and this remains an area for improvement. Teachers' planning identifies opportunities to use information and communication technology, trips and visitors to link subjects and enrich the curriculum. For example, the school recently invited artists and authors to work with pupils, and pupils spoke enthusiastically about their visits.

The school provides good levels of care and guidance in creating a welcoming environment for learning and in the support provided for all groups of pupils. There are several examples of pupils who, despite their challenging circumstances, have responded positively to the school's approach and made good progress in their personal and academic development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has transformed the school; she has set a clear direction of improvement with exacting expectations clearly communicated to all members of the school. With good support from external partners, the school has developed thorough systems for monitoring the progress of each individual pupil in English and mathematics. This information is used effectively by senior leaders to identify the strengths of the school and to set clear and detailed improvement plans for areas of weaknesses. Staff share responsibility for checking and evaluating the progress of the school. They have used a range of monitoring activities to raise standards and secure satisfactory or better teaching and learning across the school.

Governors know the school's strengths and areas for development and play a role in holding the school to account for key aspects of performance. Their direct involvement

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in monitoring the performance is currently satisfactory and governors have recently divided their roles to more actively monitor individual subject areas.

The school places a strong emphasis on providing an inclusive education and through concerted action has brought improvements in the achievement of previously underperforming groups of pupils. The school knows its pupils well and has a realistic understanding of the procedures to ensure their welfare. All safeguarding regulations are met, new members of staff are appropriately checked for their suitability to work with children and the school has effective procedures for sharing concerns with other professional agencies.

The school has a good understanding of the local community and actively promotes a close and cohesive school community. While senior leaders are reaching out to make links with other communities, there is little evidence of the school's success in promoting community cohesion nationally and internationally.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the school with skills and knowledge generally below expected levels for their age. By the end of their Reception Year, children have made satisfactory progress in all areas of learning and good progress in some. The introduction of a more focused approach to learning letters and their sounds is having a good impact, helping children to make good progress in their early reading and writing skills. Children's behaviour is good and the friendly and caring relationships between staff and children ensure that from an early age they cooperate well together. The children are appropriately

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supervised and consequently understand dangers and how to stay safe. Children are encouraged to be healthy; they enjoy their snacks and participate enthusiastically in physical education lessons. The indoor activities provided allow children to make sensible choices and decisions with adult support. However, opportunities to learn independently and explore for themselves are more limited.

Children are regularly observed and the small steps they make in their learning are carefully assessed. Learning diaries provide a clear record of the progress children are making and record their personal interests. These have been used to provide activities that match the needs of different groups of children and in particular for the high proportion of boys in the class. Parents are made to feel welcome and are kept informed about their child's well-being and progress. This friendly approach helps children to settle in and enjoy their first experiences of school. The Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactorily led and managed and has benefited from the support of the local authority. Together, they have accurately identified the areas for development and drawn up an appropriate action plan. They have recognised that access to the outdoor environment is not freely and readily available and limits more rapid development of children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative skills.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents are positive about the school. They are kept informed of their child's progress and requests for further contact or information are followed up promptly. Staff are very approachable and parents feel that their children are kept safe and well-cared for. Parents of pupils with special educational needs commended the support from the school in general and especially from the learning support assistants. Parents were quick to recognise the part played by the headteacher and the difference she has made to the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



13 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Upton St James Church of England Primary School, Torquay, TQ1 4AZ.

I am pleased to let you know that with your hard work and best efforts, and with the strong support from all staff, you have helped the school to improve. Your headteacher has made a real difference and with the help of adults from outside the school has made Upton St James much better. The school is now providing a satisfactory standard of education and no longer requires special measures. You are now making good progress in your mathematics and English across the whole school. This is because teachers make it clear what you have to do in these lessons and give different work to each of the different groups. This does not happen so much in other subjects where sometimes you are all given the same activity to do. All staff look after you well and are ready to listen and sort out your worries or problems when you need them to. Teaching assistants really help groups of you to understand things that you have found difficult and help you to catch up.

You spend a lot of time each day on your reading, writing and mathematics, and this has really helped you. However, we have asked the school to make sure that you spend a little more time on other subjects as well as these. Your behaviour is good and we recognise how well you all get on together and look after each other. You enjoy assemblies and visit the local church but you do not know as much about other cultures and religions. We have asked the school to give you more opportunities to make contact and learn about other people in our country and from other countries around the world. The children in the Reception class enjoy school from the moment that they start. They are well looked after by the adults in the class and parents are made to feel welcome. We have asked the school to give children in Reception more freedom to choose activities for themselves and for adults to provide more opportunities for children to learn both indoors and outdoors.

It has been a real pleasure to get to know many of you and to find out just how friendly and kind you are. I will miss visiting you and just want to wish you all the very best.

Keep up the good work.

Yours sincerely

Mark Lindfield

Her Majesty's Inspector

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