

Uphill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109095
Local Authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	337214
Inspection dates	13–14 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Anthony Shield

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	309
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stewart Castle
Headteacher	Chloe Langson
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2006
School address	Old Church Road Weston-super-Mare BS23 4XH
Telephone number	01934 626769
Fax number	01934 414011
Email address	uphill.pri@n-somerset.gov.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 14 lessons or parts of lessons, and 14 teachers were observed. Inspectors held meetings with governors, members of staff and pupils. They also observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation, including the self-evaluation form, safeguarding and other policy documents, the school improvement plan and records of pupils' progress. In reaching their judgements, they took into account the views of 129 parents and carers, in addition to those of pupils and staff, expressed in questionnaires.

Inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at the following:

- whether the downward trend in attainment and progress has been reversed and whether improvements are securely rooted in good provision
- the extent to which teaching is improving and consistently challenging for all pupils
- the impact of action taken to tackle identified weaknesses and how well leaders and managers at all levels are contributing to school self-evaluation and improvement.

Information about the school

The school is an above-average-sized primary school that draws its pupils from Uphill Village and beyond. Most pupils are from a White British background, with only a small number from other ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than is found in most schools. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The school has received a number of awards in recognition of its work in promoting healthy lifestyles, ecological awareness and sporting activities. Governors manage a breakfast club and a privately run after-school club the 'Fabulous Fun Club' takes place on the school premises, which is subject to a separate inspection.

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

Uphill Primary is a satisfactory school, and has decisively 'turned a corner' and reversed the recent downward trend in standards. The headteacher's determined leadership has inspired confidence and trust. She has worked successfully to raise expectations, and tackle some long-standing weaknesses. Governors and staff know there is much still to be done to build securely on this foundation, but there is a good spirit and sense of teamwork throughout the school community. Improvements are well founded on realistic self-evaluation which is informed by a detailed analysis of performance data. This lends confidence to the view that the school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

There are a number of key strengths and some weaker areas.

- Attainment is broadly average, although better in English than in mathematics. Standards are now rising and in Year 6, attainment is above average in writing, with some particularly good imaginative writing seen. Most pupils take pride in the quality and presentation of their work. Attainment in mathematics, although improving, is close to the average.
- Given their starting points, pupils' progress is satisfactory. However, progress is uneven, and while some pupils make good progress, expectations are not consistently high and in lessons, pupils are not always challenged enough because work set is either too easy or too hard for them.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are keen to do well in lessons and are kind and considerate to each other in the playground.
- The school's thoughtful attention to pupils' care, guidance and support encourages pupils to feel safe. Good relationships between adults and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are at the core of the school's work.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Most eat healthily and participate enthusiastically in an active lifestyle, despite the current lack of hall space for physical education.
- In lessons, there is a hard-working and purposeful atmosphere. Some teaching is good, but not all. Progress is more limited when teachers, particularly in Years 1 and 2, fail to make clear what pupils are going to learn. While questions are often used skilfully to deepen the learning, this is not consistently the case.
- The curriculum has many strengths and a thematic approach is encouraging links between subjects. Nevertheless, opportunities for pupils to use and apply their basic skills, particularly mathematical skills, in real-life contexts are limited.
- The governing body is providing good support and challenge. The governors are

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knowledgeable and committed partners in the school's leadership.

- While the headteacher and her deputy headteacher provide strong leadership and a clear vision, leadership and management at other levels are uneven, because not all staff have the skills and confidence to contribute to school self-evaluation and improvement. The school's plans for improvement set out the way forward, but lack clarity and a sharp focus on key priorities which will lead to sustained improvements in pupils' progress.

Most parents and carers are pleased with the school, and a very large majority say they are happy with their child's experience at school. Typical of several comments made to inspectors were: 'the school is a very friendly school with a great community spirit' and 'our child has had a very happy primary education, she has progressed both in her studies and personally'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve and accelerate the learning and progress of all pupils, particularly in mathematics by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - making more consistently better use of assessment information to set and modify activities in lessons to meet the needs of individual pupils and challenge them all to do their best
 - making clear what pupils are going to learn in lessons, especially in Years 1 and 2
 - making better use of questions to deepen pupils' understanding and make pupils think more carefully
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in real-life contexts
 - developing teachers' confidence and skills in teaching mathematics.
- Sharpen school improvement planning by:
 - focusing priorities on key targets which will improve pupils' progress
 - extending the confidence and capacity of leaders and managers at all levels to make a stronger contribution to self-evaluation and strategic planning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Most pupils say they learn a lot in lessons, and they clearly enjoy school. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have varied in recent years, but have hovered around the average. Attainment in English has been consistently better than in mathematics, where pupils often lack confidence in manipulating numbers and in solving problems independently of the teacher. Nevertheless, pupils' progress is improving in all classes, as the impact of measures introduced takes effect. Some good progress was seen. In a Years 5 and 6 English lesson, during which pupils were presenting their advertising promotion for a breakfast cereal, pupils expressed their ideas confidently both orally and

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in writing. They were given the confidence to do so by skilful teaching which challenged them to reflect on their own learning. Outcomes were enhanced by the good pace of learning and the teacher's sharp awareness of how well individual pupils were progressing. There are no significant differences between the outcomes for boys and girls, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress.

Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in the improving levels of attendance, which is now above average. When given opportunities, pupils take their responsibilities to contribute seriously. The thriving school council makes an important contribution to the running of the school, and to the design of some of the school's policies, including the behaviour policy. Members of the gardening club take considerable pride in keeping the school's gardens looking attractive. Pupils' basic skills, including computer skills, are satisfactory, although pupils do not confidently apply these in different contexts. They develop good interpersonal skills and teamwork, which prepares them satisfactorily for their future lives beyond the primary school. Pupils have a keen interest in others' beliefs, feelings and values, and took immense pride in taking part in the end of term production of Oliver.

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	3
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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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How effective is the provision?

Much teaching is good and characterised by well-managed learning, and activities which excite and fire the imagination of the pupils. In the most effective lessons, expectations are high and tasks encourage pupils to think for themselves and reflect carefully on their own learning. Teachers use questions adroitly to probe for understanding and prompt all pupils, including the most able, to think more carefully. However, not all teaching is of this quality, and questioning in particular is uneven. Planning does not always cater effectively for the range of pupils' abilities in the class and, sometimes, expectations are not high enough as teachers do not always make good use of assessment information. Occasionally, particularly in Years 1 and 2, planning merely lists what activities pupils will do, rather than what they are going to learn. In mathematics, not all teachers have confidence in their own mathematical skills. Some pupils say they do not know how well they are doing at school, and this is because of the inconsistent way in which teachers feed back to pupils on their progress.

The introduction of a more integrated and creative curriculum is providing a strong framework for involving pupils in their learning. As a result, learning is frequently practical and active. During the inspection, Years 5 and 6 pupils were relishing the opportunity offered by the critical challenge project to develop their writing, musical, artistic and presentational skills. The school maximises links with the local area to provide a range of visits and visitors helping to ensure that pupils understand the relevance of their learning. A wide-ranging programme of clubs further enriches the opportunities for pupils.

Both pupils and parents believe that the school does a very good job of caring for, and supporting, pupils. Good transition arrangements exist and the school links well with the nearby secondary school. The school ensures pupils who attend the breakfast club are well looked after. Care for vulnerable children is well managed and the learning mentor works sensitively to ensure these pupils feel included and valued. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported through sharply-focused support.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Informed by the school's vision of encouraging 'caring, confident, creative, curious and

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collaborative learners for life', the headteacher has inspired commitment and hard work on the part of all staff. She has fostered teamwork and taken determined action to bring about improvements. Key to these improvements is the improved analysis of performance data to plan support and intervention programmes for pupils at risk of underachievement. Regular pupil progress meetings are used to check individual progress and to hold teachers to account. This development has enabled the school to have a clear view of progress and is a secure basis for realistic self-evaluation.

Monitoring is regular, and frequent monitoring reports given to governors ensure full accountability. There is a strong commitment to inclusion, equal opportunities and the removal of barriers to achievement. Data are analysed carefully to check the progress of different groups within school. While the leadership of both literacy and numeracy provide good models, not all staff have the skills and confidence to contribute and make a strong contribution to school improvement.

All statutory requirements are met, including those in relation to the safeguarding of pupils. All policies to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils are in place, and staff understand their responsibilities in respect of child protection and pupils' safety. Parents and carers are seen as key partners in their child's education. The school works hard to keep them in touch through such events as workshops and family curriculum evenings. Nevertheless, some parents remain apart and the school still has much to do to regain the support and trust of all parents. Although the school does much to promote community cohesion within the school and the immediate locality, its plans to extend its horizons are at an early stage and there has been little consideration about how the curriculum as a whole might contribute. Nevertheless, the school involves itself with a broad range of community activities locally, including the village fete and a Remembrance Service.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	2
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3
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Early Years Foundation Stage

On entry, children's attainment is just below expected age-related levels. Children make good progress and by the time they enter Year 1, they have developed into independent workers, attentive and curious in everything around them. Clear systems ensure that children take turns fairly, can be relied on to take safety precautions, such as wearing helmets for cycling, and enjoy healthy snacks. Children achieve well in acquiring the key skills that underpin future learning in literacy and mathematics. Detailed planning means that there is a well-balanced diet of activities and mix of child-initiated and adult-led tasks. Indoors, the spacious premises are well organised to accommodate different areas of learning, but this has not been replicated outside, although plans are underway. Shared planning across both classes creates a fluid approach to learning because both teachers follow the same scheme. A variety of assessment methods are used to build a comprehensive pictures of each child's development. Children play together happily, confident in the kind relationships which permeate the classrooms. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led. The leader has a good understanding of the provision's strengths and has clear ideas for developing it further.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents responding to the questionnaire were very appreciative of the school, although a very small minority are unhappy with their child's experience. Almost all believe that their children are safe and most think their children are doing well at school, and that the school meets their particular needs. Many parents and carers who added comments said how much they appreciated the manner in which the school had helped their child develop self-confidence. There were very few negative comments, but most of these concerned the state of the school buildings and the hall in particular. Others commented that their child could make more consistent progress, comments with which the inspection team agree.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Uphill Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 129 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 309 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	75	58	45	35	7	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	84	65	43	33	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	29	72	56	10	8	5	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	55	43	53	41	12	9	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	45	35	64	50	10	8	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	36	62	48	16	12	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	39	59	46	13	10	2	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	54	42	59	46	5	4	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	37	58	45	17	13	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	33	55	43	9	7	5	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	32	55	43	16	12	5	4
The school is led and managed effectively	44	34	59	46	7	5	8	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	68	53	46	36	8	6	5	4

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



15 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Uphill Primary School, Weston-super-Mare BS23 4XH

I am writing to thank you for helping us during the inspection of your school. We especially enjoyed listening to your views, which we have taken into account in writing this report. Uphill Primary is a satisfactory, and improving school. Here are some of the main findings from the report.

- You enjoy your lessons, and impressed us by how hard you work. Your good attitudes and behaviour make a big difference to the progress you make.
- You told us you feel safe in school, something your parents also like. This is because the school takes good care of you and you get on well with everybody.
- You have a good understanding of how to live an active and healthy life and your contribution to the running of the school, such as peer mediators and buddies, is good.
- Most of you are reaching the standards we would expect of you in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Most teaching is good and teachers are finding more ways of making the things you learn interesting and exciting, both during the school day and afterwards. We were very sorry to have missed the Years 5 and 6 production of Oliver, but I heard how good it was!
- The headteacher is working successfully to make the school better.

To help the school to improve we have asked the staff to:

- help you to reach higher standards, especially in mathematics
- challenge you more in lessons and ensure teachers use information about how well you are doing to set you work which matches your level of ability
- make sure all teachers become involved in improving the school.

Thank you once again for your help during our visit, and best wishes for your work in the future!

Yours sincerely

Tony Shield

Lead inspector

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