

Upshire Primary Foundation School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115310
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338559
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Judi Bedawi

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynne McPheat
Headteacher	Jackie Blackburn
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2007
School address	Upshire Road Upshire Essex
Telephone number	01992 715567
Fax number	01992 710642
Email address	head@upshire.essex.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2010
Inspection number	338559

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

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

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed seven teachers in 13 lessons or parts of lessons. Meetings were held with governors, staff and pupils. A telephone discussion took place with the School Improvement Partner. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, displays and a range of school documentation, policies, monitoring records and data on pupils' attainment. The inspectors received and analysed 92 parental questionnaires.

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

- improvements made to the Early Years Foundation Stage
- strategies to improve attendance
- the school's efforts to raise standards, including in writing, science and reading
- the effectiveness of assessment practice and its impact on pupils' progress.

Information about the school

Upshire is smaller than most other primary schools. Pupils come mainly from the local semi-rural area and most are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and learning English as an additional language is average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and with a statement of special educational needs is below average. Mobility is low, with waiting lists for the Reception class. Since the last inspection, there have been considerable changes in leadership, governance and staffing. The current headteacher was appointed in April 2008. The school has Healthy Schools status and the Activemark award. There is a pre-school on the site but, as it is not managed by the governing body, it is inspected separately.

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

Upshire provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. They benefit from good quality care within a positive environment that helps them to learn. There is a solid focus on raising standards. Parents are clear that: 'The school has greatly improved over the last two years.'

The headteacher has made a good start in leading the drive to move the school forward, following a period of instability. The Early Years Foundation Stage has improved to become satisfactory, with a waiting list for places and greater parental confidence in the provision. The staff have a stronger focus on raising standards and pupils' outcomes. The governing body fully supports senior leaders' work to secure and sustain improvement but governors are still developing their skills in monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the school's performance.

Children enter the Reception class with attainment well below age-related expectations, especially in their social development, early writing and number skills. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through Key Stage 1 and enter Year 3 at broadly average levels due to accelerated learning in Year 2. They also make rapid progress in Year 6 so that most pupils are on track to reach national levels by the time they leave. Despite good progress in some years, achievement is satisfactory overall because progress varies from class to class and too few higher attainers achieve their full potential. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including the tiny proportion with a statement of special educational needs, make steady progress from their lower starting points due to satisfactory learning support. Attainment in science over time is slightly lower than that in English and mathematics; it has improved in 2009 but remains broadly average. There are too few opportunities for extended writing in all subjects. The development of basic skills is satisfactory.

Pupils are happy at school and want to learn. Their attendance has improved and is satisfactory. They feel safe and can easily ask for help should they need it. Their understanding of healthy lifestyles and uptake of sporting activities is good. Pupils make a good contribution to school life and to the wider community.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. Staff know their pupils well and work effectively as a team to provide sound support for targeted pupils. Subject knowledge is secure and information and communication technology is increasingly used well to support learning. In some lessons, pace and learning expectations are pitched too low. There is inconsistency in the use of assessment data and teachers' marking to challenge pupils so they know how to improve their work independently, for both higher attainers and those who fall just short of reaching their targets. The creative curriculum is very

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

recently introduced and not yet embedded: it is too soon to see its full impact on learning.

Self-evaluation of the schools' performance by senior leaders is mostly accurate. The skills of subject leaders, teachers and governors in monitoring, evaluating and reviewing subjects and other areas of responsibility are less developed in gauging the impact on learning. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by:
 - developing pupils' handwriting skills and extended writing opportunities in all subjects
 - providing challenges that hold pupils' interest and accelerate their progress, including that of higher attaining pupils and those just short of reaching their next step.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning to good or better by:
 - extending existing good practice to ensure improved use of time and high expectations of achievement, so that pupils learn more
 - using assessment information to set more precise tasks that enable pupils to build on their different starting points.
 - developing consistently informative marking, so that pupils know how to reach their targets independently.
- Develop the accountability and management skills of subject leaders, teachers and governors by increasing their roles in monitoring, evaluating and reviewing subjects and other areas of the school's work to enhance their involvement in raising standards.
- Around 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may
 - receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5
 - inspection.

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

Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. They usually work steadily, and display satisfactory behaviour, but this wanes when explanations are lengthy or when work sometimes lacks challenge. As a consequence, interest dips, noise levels rise and, opportunities for independent learning are reduced. Pupils say that playtimes are better, with bullying rarely an issue because the '3 Tells' system works well. They feel very safe, easily seeking help if needed; a very small minority of older pupils do not set a sensible example when lining up after play.

Pupils make satisfactory progress so that most reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. This is also the case for those from different minority ethnic groups. Satisfactory support for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English allows them

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

to make steady progress. The school is aware that higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and that handwriting and its use in other subjects is a continuing focus. Science is slightly behind English and mathematics, particularly in recording investigations. To support the achievement of the most able, mathematics sessions involving local secondary school staff have been introduced with similar sessions for able writers. In addition, work on letters and sounds is having a beneficial impact on reading and spelling and is extended across the school. Pupils say they enjoy mathematics and using computers increasingly in different lessons. They relish activities that capture their attention, seen in a Year 6 mathematics lesson that challenged their thinking as they grasped, understood and explained the basic concepts of algebra, aided by good recap of learning and use of the interactive whiteboard to provide visual guidance.

Pupils like staying fit and healthy and there is a good uptake of sporting activities. A pupil, reflecting others' views wrote: 'The school lets you have your opinions and your point of view.' They contribute well to the school community through the school council and by fundraising and learning about other communities with different backgrounds, faiths and cultures. Their spiritual, moral, social and social development is satisfactory; music is joyfully celebrated in the enthusiastic singing of the choir club.

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	3
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

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory and a small proportion is good. Teamwork is a positive feature in all lessons, with sound one-to-one support for those who require additional help, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. In the best lessons, learning is exciting and proceeds at a brisk pace so that no time is wasted, and all pupils including higher attainers are challenged to make good progress. This practice is not yet consistently embedded across the school. When learning is over-directed by teachers, pupils have less time to complete written work or to learn and discover for themselves. Teachers' lesson planning does not fully reflect pupils' prior attainment, so that higher attaining pupils repeat already known activities before they can move on to new challenges; this reduces their progress. Teachers use effective questioning that aids pupils' speaking and listening well. The use of talking partners is secure but, in a very few lessons, teachers do not intervene promptly to stop low level chatter and noise not linked to learning. Teachers' use of assessment information varies in checking pupils' progress, setting challenging work and precise targets for pupils. The quality of marking is variable, with some offering pupils helpful guidance and some work that is not always marked.

Curriculum provision is satisfactory, with creative learning just introduced and at an early stage of development. The focus on letters and sounds and regular guided reading is having a positive impact on pupils' confidence and enjoyment of books. Practical science investigations are established and enjoyed. The curriculum is suitably adapted to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is satisfactory provision for enrichment, such as the 'Stomp Theatre workshops, a residential visit for the oldest pupils and themed weeks, such as the Spanish week. The school has gained the Activemark award, reflecting its good work to promote healthy living.

Pastoral care and support are good. Staff know pupils and their families very well and do all they can to remove any barriers to learning. Parents value this support and the quality of care and attention paid to their children's well-being and emotional health. Parents are kept well informed about progress through regular meetings and reports, with additional external expertise available if needed. The pupils whose circumstances make them most vulnerable are closely supported and encouraged to learn. Good monitoring of attendance has a positive impact on pupils' learning. There are sound behaviour management procedures, known to pupils. Transition is well-planned with well-established and improving links at pre-school and Year 6 so that children settle happily and older pupils are ready and confident to move on.

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

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	
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 positive and approachable leadership of the headteacher provides clear direction and strategies to increase achievement and raise standards. There is now stability and impetus to move the school on, following many changes in the last few years. The headteacher, working with her senior leaders, has introduced effective and thorough monitoring and evaluation procedures which have secured satisfactory improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Additionally, the introduction of phase leaders who regularly monitor, evaluate and provide ideas to improve the quality of teaching is having a positive impact on increasing teachers' skills and on pupils' learning outcomes. Governors are supportive of senior leaders and work soundly to support the school through regular involvement. They are aware that they need to develop their skills in order to improve the way they challenge senior leaders. Subject leaders and teachers have yet to fully develop their management, monitoring and evaluation skills in order to make valuable contributions, alongside the phase leaders, to the drive to raise standards.

Safeguarding is good and exceeds government requirements, particularly in meeting the needs of those pupils and families whose circumstances make them most vulnerable. Parental partnerships are good, with a hardworking parents' association providing additional funds and regular workshops and groups to share parenting skills. Partnerships to promote learning and well-being are also good, particularly welfare links and the use of cluster school facilities to extend learning opportunities. Community cohesion is good especially within the local and wider area. There are links with contrasting schools in the United Kingdom and international links with Spain. The school's audit and action plan are detailed and evaluate current provision well, clearly identifying strengths and future developments. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory and pupils from different ethnic groups value each other so that there is no discrimination or racism. Finances and resources are soundly managed.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2

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	
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly into school life because most already know each other from the shared links with the on-site pre-school provision. Induction arrangements for children and their families are good. Children enjoy a satisfactory range of learning and play activities with an appropriate balance between adult-directed and child-initiated learning. Their behaviour is satisfactory and their social skills develop soundly although they do not always listen as well as they could and sometimes call out rather than putting their hands up to respond. They enjoy expressing their ideas, as seen when they were fascinated and excited by the growth of caterpillars. When one child remarked that caterpillars lose their skin, another was scared that it would happen to him and the teacher immediately re-assured and comforted him. Welfare arrangements and support are strong. Children are less confident in their writing and are still learning to be independent, often needing encouragement to choose writing activities. Assessment of children's progress is satisfactory and the Reception class now receives helpful information on progress from the pre-school setting. Teachers have sound awareness of meeting young children's needs and building their skills. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress each day. Leadership and management are satisfactory and there has been positive improvement since the last inspection.

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

Of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire, all say that they are happy with the school, that teaching, leadership and management are good and that it

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

helps their children to lead healthy lifestyles. The vast majority say that their children enjoy school and that it keeps them safe. Parents also feel that their views are heard, that their children's needs are met well and they are kept well informed of their children's progress and transition arrangements. Most parents say the school helps them to support learning at home. A very few have reservations about behaviour. Inspectors agree that children are happy, safe, are helped to lead healthy lifestyles and enjoy school. The inspectors found leadership and management, teaching, pupils' progress and behaviour to be satisfactory but with room for further improvement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Upshire Primary Foundation 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 92 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 179 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	66	30	33	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	69	75	22	24	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	45	51	43	47	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	59	64	33	36	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	35	60	65	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	41	44	48	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	54	42	46	0	0	0	0
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)	45	49	45	49	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	60	36	39	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	49	42	46	2	2	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	42	50	54	2	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	50	54	42	46	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	58	63	34	37	0	0	0	0

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.



19 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Upshire Primary Foundation School, Upshire, EN9 3PX

Thank you for giving us such a warm welcome when we visited your happy school recently. You go to a satisfactory school and you told us why you enjoy it. You really like working on computers, mathematics, sports and reading. You feel safe and have good friends. We can see that most of you try always to do your best and that you like your teachers.

You make satisfactory progress because your teachers and teaching assistants help you to learn new things. They ask interesting questions that you like answering and this helps you to get better at learning. Most of you know how to behave and act nicely by helping each other in class and at play, but sometimes a very few of you forget to line up sensibly or to listen when other pupils are speaking about their work. Your attainment is similar to that of pupils in most other primary schools. I really enjoyed listening to the sweet singing of the choir.

Your headteacher and the staff want to make your school even better. I have asked them to:

- help you make better progress in English, mathematics and science, especially in writing more and improving your handwriting
- set more interesting challenges for those of you who find work too easy and those of you who do not quite reach your targets
- give you more time to learn in lessons so you make faster progress and help you to know how well you are doing so you can improve your work independently.

We know you enjoy challenges and we are sure you will soon achieve those set for you. You can help by improving your writing, always listening in lessons and telling your teachers if work is too easy. I hope you continue to enjoy your time at Upshire.

Yours sincerely

Judi Bedawi

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.