

Upton Heath CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131684
Local Authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	341194
Inspection dates	23–24 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Stephen Isherwood HMI

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

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	403
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Sayle
Headteacher	Mrs Claire Lyons
Date of previous school inspection	8 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence including: the school's safeguarding procedures; the school improvement plan; the tracking of pupils' progress; minutes of governors meetings; the work pupils were doing in their books and the questionnaires completed by 53 parents.

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

- How well pupils achieve from their starting points.
- The effectiveness of the school's care and safeguarding arrangements.
- The quality of pupils' learning and engagement in lessons and across the curriculum.
- The quality of teaching and use of assessment.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers in embedding ambition and driving improvement.
- The capacity of the school to sustain improvement.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average school in an area of social advantage. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage with a small number from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average, as is the number of pupils eligible for free school meals. At the time of the inspection the headteacher was on long-term absence. An acting headteacher, Mrs Paula Moreton, was appointed from the beginning of this current term. The school was placed in a category of causing concern by the local authority in August 2009. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two Reception classes.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading and managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvements.

The overall effectiveness of the school has declined since the last inspection in 2007; it is now inadequate. Pupils achievement is inadequate because many do not make enough progress considering their starting points. The school does not meet the minimum requirements on safeguarding. Systems and structures to safeguard the pupils' well-being are not up to date and require immediate attention.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good. However, pupils underachieve and should be doing a lot better than they are. Low expectations have become the norm. Significant questions from governors and parents regarding pupils' progress, particularly the more able, have been largely ignored for too long. The school does not have a range of procedures to check how well it is doing.

Pupils make insufficient progress in their work, particularly in Years 3 to 6. More able pupils across the school are not challenged to apply and deepen their knowledge. This is because of inadequate teaching overall and poor use of assessment data by staff to pitch work at the appropriate level for all learners. Although good examples of teaching exist, some teachers are unaware of what constitutes effective learning and have little idea of what good practice looks like. Much of the teaching is over-directed and pupils are not always engaged in their learning. Across the curriculum, opportunities that encourage independent thinking, where pupils can use and apply their knowledge in different situations, are limited.

The school's deficiencies stem from inadequate leadership and management and ineffective teaching. Until two weeks before the inspection there had been no effective leadership and management team in place. Senior leaders, including governors have not taken decisive action to improve the school and have had little impact on the school's performance. The school's capacity to improve further is, therefore, inadequate.

The recently appointed acting headteacher is leading the school very well and in a matter of weeks has impressively gained the confidence and trust of the school community. She has a very accurate view of the school's priorities and the action required to bring about sustained improvement. With the support of most staff, the local authority, governors and parents, she is beginning to change the culture of the school and lay the foundations for improvements in pupils' learning and in raising their

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achievement. However, these improvements are very recent and all parties are under no illusions about the task that lies ahead and acknowledge that much remains to be done to get the school back on track.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- As a matter of urgency ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met by:
 - establishing clear procedures that are regularly reviewed and understood by staff
 - ensuring that the school's central record of checks on the suitability of adults to work with children is up to date
 - ensuring that all staff and governors receive appropriate training.
- Raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress, particularly for the more able by:
- raising the expectations of staff
 - broadening the range of teaching styles to stimulate pupils greater involvement in learning
 - improving the quality of the curriculum to encourage pupils' independent skills
 - making better use of assessment information to track pupils' progress and ensuring that lessons are more exciting and challenging
 - ensuring leadership is effective in driving improvement and establishing clear procedures to check on the quality of the school's performance

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Pupils' current work, as well as the test results from 2008 and 2009, shows that standards in Year 6 are broadly average but pupils' achievement is inadequate. Too many learners across the school, particularly boys and the more able, are not achieving as well as they should because of ineffective teaching and gaps in their learning. As a result, the overall rate of progress made by pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is not good enough. Pupils start Year 1 with skills that are above those typical of their age. By the end of Year 2, standards are generally above average and pupils have made satisfactory progress. Progress in Years 3 to 6 slows markedly and is inadequate overall. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Too many pupils are not reaching the potential they showed at the end of Year 2. This is because teaching has low expectations and the work presented to pupils does not interest or challenge them. There are too few opportunities for pupils to think, investigate and find things out for themselves. Much of their learning is characterised by insufficient time given to activities where pupils can direct their own work and are able to discuss and share their ideas with others.

Pupils say they enjoy school and feel safe. This is mirrored in their good attendance and

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in their commitment to the range of activities that the school provides. Pupils have positive attitudes to their work and behave well. Even when activities are less engaging, they concentrate well and always try to do their best. Pupils recognise the difference between right and wrong and get on well with each other. They develop a strong social conscience and show that they are aware of the needs of others in the community through their regular charitable donations and in their commitment to participating in local events. Pupils are generally aware of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle through regular exercise and a balanced diet. However, pupils acknowledge that too many of them continue to eat crisps and biscuits at break times.

A lack of attention to pupils' independent learning combined with their slow progress in basic skills and inadequate provision in information and communication technology, (ICT), means that pupils are not prepared well enough for their future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Although some good examples of teaching were observed during the inspection, much of it was just satisfactory and some was inadequate. Teaching is inadequate overall

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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because it is not succeeding in helping pupils make enough progress by the end of Year 6. In too many lessons pupils are passive, the pace of learning is slow, teachers over-direct and activities are not stimulating enough to engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Too many worksheets are used. Many of the tasks lack sparkle and are not well matched to pupils' abilities so that pupils are not stretched and challenged in their thinking. As one pupil commented, 'Maths is really easy'. Assessment information is not used well enough to pinpoint exactly what pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, can do and what they need to learn next. In addition, teachers' marking is inconsistent and does not give pupils enough guidance on what they have done well or how they can improve their work.

The curriculum has significant shortcomings in meeting the needs of pupils and has little positive impact on their progress. It does not provide sufficiently well for the development of pupils' independent thinking and self-help skills nor does it make provision to support the learning needs of the more able and those that require extra support. In addition, it does not meet statutory requirements in the provision and coverage for ICT. Although there are some good enrichment opportunities whereby, for example, all pupils in Year 5 have the chance to play a musical instrument, the overall planning of activities lacks rigour and balance. In some year groups pupils have very little religious education.

Care and support systems for pupils are not good enough because the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures are inadequate.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	4

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are inadequate in all aspects and underlie further reasons why pupils' attainment is not high enough and pupils underachieve. Senior leaders have not demonstrated the ability to improve provision. There is no ambition within the school as expectations for pupils are far too low. Systems for identifying weaknesses in teaching and pupils' work are not robust enough and there is no detailed insight into the performance of individuals and groups across the school. As a result, the school's commitment to equality of opportunity is inadequate. The school is, therefore, ineffective in improving pupils' life chances and in tackling discrimination.

The school's understanding of its strengths and weaknesses is poor. The school's improvement plan is not sharply focused enough on actions to raise achievement and

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does not identify strategies to measure success. As a consequence, there is no shared vision on how to improve the school and many staff do not appreciate the key challenges that the school faces.

The school's engagement with parents is inadequate. There is considerable disenchantment amongst parents with the school and communication is poor.

The school's safeguarding procedures are inadequate. Systems are not well established or reviewed on a regular basis. Key staff are unaware of certain policies and not all have received appropriate training. The school's central record of recruitment and vetting is not up to date.

The school's promotion of community cohesion is ineffective. Senior leaders do not plan or evaluate the school's contribution and have not contrasted the school community with local and national communities. The school has not considered its context in regard to faith, ethnicity and culture and socio-economic factors.

The governing body have little impact on the direction and work of the school and in holding it to account. Governors are not well informed about the school's performance and as a group have been slow to respond to the key issues for improvement identified at the last inspection.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	4
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

The judgements for the overall effectiveness, provision and leadership of the Foundation Stage have been graded inadequate because the school's procedures for safeguarding are inadequate. Nevertheless, children make satisfactory progress from their starting

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points. When children enter the school, their skills and levels of learning are above those typical for their age. Within a short period of time, they settle quickly in to well structured routines that are targeted appropriately on key learning goals that match well with their stages of development. Children show positive attitudes to their learning, behave well and have increasing confidence to initiate activities for themselves. Staff continually assess how well children are achieving and use this information to plan further activities, some of which could be more challenging for the more able. By the time children transfer to Year 1, most have exceeded the levels expected and have made satisfactory progress from entry. Parents are invited into discussion with staff before their children start school and at certain times during the year.

The satisfactory quality of teaching and learning stems from sound leadership and management. Improvement plans are tackling areas of weakness and there are plans to develop boys' writing and the outdoor provision.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4

Views of parents and carers

Although the response to the questionnaires was relatively low, a large majority of parents considered that the school was not led and managed effectively. There were also concerns about children's progress, the support they receive and communication with school. Inspectors agree with these concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Upton Heath CofE 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 53 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 403 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	58	18	35	2	4	2	4
The school keeps my child safe	23	44	26	50	1	2	2	4
The school informs me about my child's progress	7	14	24	48	14	28	5	10
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	15	23	44	15	29	6	12
The teaching is good at this school	8	16	37	73	4	8	2	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	5	10	24	47	17	33	5	10
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	24	30	61	5	10	2	4
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)	9	19	30	64	5	11	3	6
The school meets my child's particular needs	7	14	26	52	14	28	3	6
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	13	29	63	6	13	5	11
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	9	22	49	13	29	6	13
The school is led and managed effectively	2	4	12	24	16	31	21	41
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	19	27	52	12	23	3	6

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



25 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Upton Heath Primary School CH2 1ED

Thank you for helping the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed chatting to you in lessons, in the playground and in the interview with pupils. You expressed your views very clearly and they were very helpful to us. This is what we found out.

We looked carefully at your school and found that it should be better. We have decided that your school needs 'special measures'. This means that your teachers will get extra support to help them improve. Inspectors will return to the school on a regular basis to check that things are getting better.

We found that many of you are not learning as well as you should, given what you could do when you started school. Some of your work is too easy for you. However, we were pleased to see how well you behave and how you help one another in class and around the school. We were particularly impressed with the way in which you continue to work hard, even when some of your lessons are not that exciting.

We have asked your acting headteacher, governors and teachers to make Upton Heath more effective by:

- making sure that all the checks to keep you safe are up to date
- making your teachers more aware of how much more you could achieve
- making sure that more of your lessons give you opportunities to learn in different ways
- improving the curriculum so that it is more exciting and gives you more opportunities to do things for yourselves
- getting your teachers to look more closely at how well you are learning so that they can plan more challenging work for you
- making sure that all the leaders and staff work together to improve the school.

You can help them by continuing to work hard and by telling your teachers what makes your lessons interesting and what helps you to learn.

We wish you all the best for the future.

Steve Isherwood

Her Majesty's Inspector

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