

Upton Heath CofE Primary School

Upton Lane, Upton Heath, Upton-By-Chester, Chester, Cheshire, CH2 1ED

Inspection dates 25–26 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. Most pupils make at least expected progress and many make even better progress. Attainment is above the national average by the end of Year 6.
- Most teaching is good. Adults give pupils a lot of praise and encouragement. This motivates them to work very hard and helps them to develop excellent attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved and is now outstanding. They show high levels of respect for each other and for adults. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and that they are looked after very well.
- Attendance is high and reflects pupils' high levels of enjoyment of school life.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governing body provide very strong and determined leadership. They have been the driving force behind the significant improvements made since the previous inspection.
- The curriculum is improving. The school provides an increasing range of interesting and enriching activities that develop pupils' talents and their personal and social skills. Pupils say they particularly enjoy working in teams, outdoors in the school grounds and in the forest area, and taking part in the many sporting and creative activities.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While most teaching is good, there is still some teaching that requires improvement. Work is too easy for more-able pupils in a small number of lessons so they do not always reach their full potential.
- Not all marking of pupils' work gives clear enough guidance on how they can improve.
- Some children, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Key Stage 1, make slower progress in writing than they do in in other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons and made several other short visits to lessons to observe teaching and learning.
- They scrutinised pupils' work, observed break times and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, school staff, senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- A number of documents were examined. These included the school's view of its own performance, records of the checks made on teaching and learning, the school improvement plan, information about pupils' progress and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of 54 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Fiona Gowers, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Anthony Buckley	Additional Inspector
Marilyn Massey	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from armed service families and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Typically about a tenth of the pupils come from armed service families.
- A larger than average proportion of pupils join and leave the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 at other than the usual times.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- At the time of the last inspection, an Interim Executive Board (IEB) was in place. The governing body took over the governance of the school in January 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Boost pupils' progress in writing, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, by improving pupils' knowledge and use of letters and the sounds they make.
- Raise pupils' overall attainment and improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - providing a greater level of challenge for more-able pupils to extend their skills further
 - ensuring pupils receive consistently clear guidance on how to improve their work through feedback and marking and that they are given time to act upon the guidance provided.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills that are typically as expected for their age. The large majority of pupils achieve well and attainment is above average by the end of Year 6.
- Levels of attainment fluctuate a little, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, because of a larger than average proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times. However, inspection findings confirm that most pupils throughout school make expected levels of progress, relative to their starting points and many do even better.
- Achievement in mathematics has improved because pupils are increasingly encouraged to consolidate and extend their skills through tasks that have more than one answer.
- Many pupils are growing into confident and fluent readers and most pupils make good progress in reading. However, some pupils make slower progress in their writing, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. This is because pupils' knowledge of letters and the sounds they make is not always good enough to help them write unfamiliar words.
- More-able pupils achieve well in some lessons and the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in national tests increased in 2012. However, more-able pupils are not always given hard enough work to do in a minority of lessons and this sometimes impedes their progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those supported at school action or school action plus, generally do as well as other pupils in school, relative to their starting points. Extra support helps them understand their work more easily and learn more quickly.
- Pupils supported by pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families, generally make good progress. The funding has been used to provide additional academic and pastoral support. In the 2012 Year 6 national tests these pupils attained similar standards to other pupils in the school and many attained more highly than similar pupils nationally.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted for both of these groups. Additional support is helping them do as well as others in school, relative to their starting points. School leaders are clearly focused on tackling discrimination and preventing pupils from falling behind in their learning.

The quality of teaching is good

- Excellent relationships between teachers and pupils help create classrooms conducive to learning.
- Most of the teaching seen during the inspection was good. Nevertheless, there is some teaching that requires improvement. A scrutiny of the work in pupils' books by inspectors and the school's records of the checks made on teaching, indicate that its quality is typically good.
- In the best lessons, teachers are knowledgeable about the subject they are teaching. Pupils learn quickly because the work teachers set interests them and helps pupils to learn well whatever their ability. In such lessons, teachers expect the best from pupils and ask very searching questions to get them thinking and to see how much they have understood.
- Pupils learn particularly well through the regular opportunities they have to learn outdoors. For example, in a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson, pupils decided to collect some data so they could find out 'who was the best Olympian in the class.' They had great fun and worked extremely well in groups together to collect the data from various timed sporting challenges. They were very interested in this activity and were motivated to work hard.
- Pupils frequently have the opportunity to discuss their ideas and this is helping them to make faster progress. For example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children enjoyed developing their own 'adventure' on an imaginary space trip, which involved building models of rockets and

discussing what would be useful to take with them on their journey.

- However, in a small number of lessons pupils do not learn as quickly. These lessons are not planned well enough to get the best out of all of the pupils. In such lessons, the work is often too easy for more-able pupils in particular, and so they do not always do as well as they should.
- The school is developing a more consistent approach to the marking of pupils' work. Teachers' comments about pupils' work sometimes helps them to enhance their work but this is not always the case. Pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve their work and they do not always have time to reflect and act upon the comments made.
- The teaching of reading has improved and pupils now have access to a wider range of books and reading material.
- Pupils say the 'Virtual Learning Platform' is helping them learn and motivating them to complete homework tasks.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are very friendly, polite and courteous. They behave exceptionally well at almost all times.
- Pupils of all ages are very keen and eager learners and work very well in teams together. They express their own ideas with confidence and listen with a great deal of respect to the views of others.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire consider that their children are happy, safe and well looked after at school and that the school successfully encourages pupils to behave well. Pupils confirm that bullying is rare and that if they raise any concerns they are very swiftly dealt with by adults in school. Pupils have a good understanding of what may constitute different types of bullying.
- Incident logs show that behaviour is outstanding most of the time. Incidents of misbehaviour, bullying or racism are very rare. The school has very rigorous and appropriate procedures for investigating the very small number of concerns that have been raised.
- Pupils' pride in their school is shown by their excellent conduct around the school. They are extremely articulate and talk enthusiastically and very positively about their activities and experiences at school. Attendance is consistently high. A group of pupils agreed that they would certainly recommend their school to any new families moving into the area.
- Pupils respond very well to the school's behaviour management procedures and to the praise and encouragement they receive. They explain that they think it is very important to always behave well and try their best.
- The school provides very good support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Residential visits for pupils in Year 2, Year 4 and Year 6 help to develop very positive relationships. Pupils are very thoughtful and reflective and work tirelessly to raise funds to support others who are less fortunate than themselves.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and how to avoid potentially unsafe situations.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders, including governors, show great determination in driving forward improvements and have a clear view of the strengths of the school and how the school can be improved further. Leaders and managers have improved many key aspects of the school's work since the previous inspection.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved and the curriculum is improving. Attainment is rising at the end of Key Stage 2 and many pupils are making better than expected progress. This is because pupils' progress, including those supported by pupil premium funding, is checked rigorously and school leaders quickly identify those pupils at risk of falling behind with their work. Nevertheless, school leaders are aware that a few inconsistencies still remain in the quality of teaching and

learning.

- There is a clear sense of teamwork and all questionnaires returned by staff during the inspection were completely positive. Senior leaders encourage staff to work together to help improve the quality and consistency of teaching. For example, staff and senior leaders recently worked in small groups to explore how they could help pupils learn more effectively whilst working outdoors.
- Teachers' performance is well managed and is linked appropriately to decisions about increases in salaries.
- Subject leaders are becoming more responsible for pupils' progress in their subject area and other members of staff are starting to take the lead in managing school initiatives. For example, involvement in 'facilitator groups' provides opportunities for staff and parents to work together on issues such as home learning and revising the school's behaviour policy.
- The local authority has a well-informed view of the school's work and is confident that the school is able to maintain its trend of improvement without any external support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors provide a high level of challenge to the school while also being very supportive.
 - The changeover from the Interim Executive Board (IEB) to a full governing body was very carefully managed. The governing body's committee structure has been revised and individual governors have been able to develop the necessary skills and expertise to ensure that checks on the school's work are very thorough, for example, evaluating the impact of the pupil premium funding.
 - Governors have a clear view of how well pupils are achieving and of the quality of teaching. They are closely involved in the leadership of teaching and learning and the evaluation of teachers' pay and performance. For example, governors have been directly involved in developing a clear set of expectations which relates teachers' performance to increases in salary.
 - The governing body ensures that safeguarding procedures are reviewed regularly and meet current requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	131684
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	400140

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	365
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr H Ziman
Headteacher	Mrs P Moreton
Date of previous school inspection	5 April 2011
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