

Uplands Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	120035
Local authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	379939
Inspection dates	6–7 February 2012
Lead inspector	Mary Davis

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	475
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Abid Matak
Headteacher	Dr Tim Luckcock and Ruth Gatherum
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2009
School address	Melbourne Road Highfields Leicester LE2 0DR
Telephone number	0116 2538407
Fax number	0116 2621673
Email address	head@uplands-jun.leicester.sch.uk

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Mary Davis Additional inspector

Pamela Matty Additional inspector

Lenford White Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 21 lessons and 18 teachers and spent 14 hours in classrooms. They held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, staff and groups of parents and carers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at: policies; development planning; data related to the tracking of pupils' progress; senior leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning; safeguarding documents; pupils' work and 294 questionnaires from parents and carers, together with those from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Uplands Junior is larger than the average-sized junior school. All pupils are from minority ethnic heritages with the largest group being of Indian heritage. Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language. Almost all pupils are Muslim. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly the same as found nationally. An above average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school meets the government's current floor standards (national minimum academic standards).

There is an infant school on the same site. The school has the Young, Gifted and Equal award and is part of the Disability Equality scheme.

The acting headteacher, supported by an executive headteacher, took up post at the beginning of the current academic year. Over half of the teaching staff are new to the profession.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Uplands Junior is a good school. Much of its work has improved since its previous inspection, resulting in improved pupils' achievement.
- Attainment has been consistently above average over recent years, as have rates of progress. Pupils enjoy their learning and are keen to do well.
- Most teaching is good and some is outstanding. There are a few inconsistencies in the way less-experienced teachers provide appropriate challenge and support to meet pupils' individual needs, particularly for the higher attainers. The quality of marking is not fully consistent and pupils are not always provided with clear advice about how to improve their work.
- Behaviour is good and in most lessons is exemplary. Pupils say they feel safe and well looked after by adults. They particularly value the work of the school council in the support they provide when they have a problem. Attendance rates have improved dramatically and are now above average.
- The interim leadership has ensured that the quality of teaching continues to improve and that standards of achievement are sustained. The strong middle leadership is particularly effective in providing support for less-experienced teachers and promoting an ethos of teamwork.
- The governing body is very effective in providing support for the school and have a clear vision for its future.
- The school is a harmonious community and is model of good practice in the work that it does to promote community cohesion, and in the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed recently established procedures to raise the quality of teaching to ensure that all is consistently good or outstanding across all year groups, by:
 - sharing existing good practice
 - ensuring that learning consistently proceeds at a fast pace and that pupils are engaged actively in their learning
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of all pupils and provide appropriate support and challenge to meet their individual needs,

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particularly the highest attainers.

- Ensure that teachers' marking of work consistently provides clear advice to pupils about how to improve in order to reach their targets and provide opportunities for pupils to respond to this advice.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are broadly in line with national expectations and make good progress. In 2011, Year 6 pupils reached standards of attainment in English and mathematics that were well above the national average. The school's tracking of progress of the current Year 6 indicates that they are set to achieve equally well. Progress accelerates as pupils go through the school as a result of their growing confidence and acquisition of English. Leaders are effectively promoting achievement in reading across the school and, by the time they reach Year 6, pupils reach expected standards with a significant proportion being above average.

Pupils showed great enjoyment in observed lessons and enthusiastically explained to inspectors what they were doing. Pupils show particular enthusiasm when they are presented with a challenge and are keen to do well. For example, in a mathematics lesson they showed excitement when the teacher provided a high level examination problem for them to try; they successfully applied their understanding of positive and negative numbers to measuring temperature. Tasks often promote a high level of discussion as pupils are frequently given the opportunity to explain to each other what they know and decide the best way to tackle a task. As a result, pupils develop well as independent learners. The progress made by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good, as a result of the high level of extra support provided by both teachers and teaching assistants. New arrivals, who are at early stage of learning English, are extremely well supported in small groups, enabling them to build their confidence and to be quickly fully included. The overwhelming opinion expressed by parents and carers is that their children make good progress at the school and inspectors agree. Comments included, 'My children excelled more than I thought they could.'

Quality of teaching

Warm relationships between adults and pupils are evident in all classrooms and the learning environment is calm and purposeful. Almost all parents and carers expressed the opinion that teaching is good, one commenting that: 'Teachers are always kind and caring and they always put children first.' Most teachers have high expectations of what pupils are able to achieve and, in the best lessons, they consistently challenge and probe pupils' understanding with skilled questioning. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson, there was a consistent focus to promote the use

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of adventurous vocabulary and to establish the meaning of new words, by inviting pupils to explain to each other. Learning progressed at a fast pace in response to the teacher's constant encouragement to: 'Think! I want to move you on!' In a mathematics lesson, the teacher's planning enabled pupils to build progressively on their prior learning and he was quick to adapt this plan to move them on quickly once they showed they understood. Teaching assistants are a strength of the provision, providing expert support for pupils who are disabled or with special educational needs, enabling them to be fully included in class activities. In a small minority of lessons, learning is slower paced and pupils have to wait too long before they were involved in active tasks. Here too, teacher's expectations are sometimes not high enough and so planned tasks do not provide sufficient challenge to meet pupils' individual needs, particularly those of highest ability. All teachers provide opportunities to develop skills in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the curriculum, for example, developing appropriate vocabulary to describe a volcano.

Although pupils' work is regularly and thoroughly marked, the quality of advice on how to improve is inconsistent, so pupils do not always know what to do to improve. Opportunities are also missed to link teachers' marking to pupils' individual targets so these are not a key focus for pupils when undertaking a task. All teachers provide frequent opportunities for pupils to gain moral understanding and social skills, which they do exceptionally well, by, for example, working in pairs and groups to develop teamwork and cooperation.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour in most lessons is exemplary. Inspectors were particularly impressed as, during the inspection, bad weather prevented pupils from playing outside, yet they still maintained their concentration and showed positive attitudes. Pupils respond quickly to teachers' instructions and show consideration and respect for adults and for each other. In a minority of lessons, where they are insufficiently involved in their learning, pupils sometimes fidget and lose focus. They told inspectors that behaviour in lessons is usually good and that disruption is rare. They did say, however, that sometimes behaviour on the playground is too lively and that they appreciate the work of the school council, who actively promote good behaviour and provide support for those who need it.

Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying and say that adults deal with rare incidents quickly and effectively so that they are not repeated. They know how to keep themselves safe, including from cyber-bullying. Almost all parents and carers agree that the school keeps their children safe and that behaviour is good. Learning mentors and teaching assistants provide outstanding support for pupils with behaviour difficulties, both in lessons and in nurture group sessions and parents and carers are closely involved in this support. Attendance has improved dramatically during the current year and persistent absentees have fallen as a result of the concerted efforts of leaders, using external agencies for additional support, to meet pupils' individual social and emotional needs.

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Leadership and management

The acting headteacher has been extremely successful in maintaining above average achievement and good standards of behaviour. She has been supported well by the executive headteacher who has provided effective support for policy, procedure and capacity development. They have introduced robust strategies to improve teaching and, in particular, to support the large proportion of less-experienced teachers. This has included regular monitoring, identifying areas for development and providing support through a variety of strategies, including coaching, mentoring and providing whole-school training. Middle leaders, including year heads and subject leaders have been very effective in the support of new staff, including joint planning to promote teamwork and working alongside to build confidence and to share good practice. The school shows a good capacity to improve further and to sustain the improvements made since the previous inspection. Leaders and managers at all levels ensure that assessment procedures are accurate and that there is effective analysis of the progress of different groups of pupils to promote equality of opportunity. They are quick to respond to the underperformance of any groups of pupils by, for example, providing booster classes, and one-to-one and small group tuition. Disabled pupils and those with complex needs are extremely well supported so that they can be included in lessons whenever possible with expert on-to-one care. There is no discrimination. The school provides extremely well for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and safeguarding procedures are rigorous.

The governing body articulates a clear vision for the school, striving for the school to offer outstanding provision and to enable pupils to become good citizens of the community. They know the school well, are active in its work and provide a good level of challenge and support. The school has been identified as a model of good practice in the way in which it provides support and training for teachers at the Madrassa, which is attended by the majority of pupils.

The good curriculum provides many memorable experiences that excite and inspire pupils' learning. They were keen to tell inspectors about 'Robin Hood week' when they dressed up, and their visits to the seaside and to the local airport, stimulating their literacy and numeracy development. The curriculum provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development which is outstanding and a key strength of the school. Pupils work regularly with those from schools in different contexts and are keen to learn about other beliefs and cultures. The 'virtual experience room' where modern technology enables pupils to be immersed in the sights and sounds of, for example a forest, enhances pupils' spiritual development.

The school engages well with parents and carers and fully involves them in the work of the school. This is exemplified by the high response to the questionnaire where over 90% responded positively to each question. The school is a cohesive and harmonious community.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



8 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Uplands Junior School, Leicester LE2 0DR

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school for its recent inspection. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing all that you do. We particularly enjoyed hearing you sing so enthusiastically in assembly.

You go to a good school. You make good progress from your starting points and your attainment is above that of pupils nationally by the time you reach Year 6. You achieve well. Most teaching is at least good and it is sometimes outstanding, but we have asked your school to ensure that you always experience teaching of the highest quality. Your teachers provide interesting and exciting tasks and you told us how much you enjoy your learning and all the activities that are provided for you, particularly the trips and special weeks, such as 'Robin Hood week'. Teachers support you well in lessons, although a few of you told us that, very occasionally, work is too easy for you. We have, therefore, asked your school to ensure that teachers always support and challenge you according to your individual needs. We have also asked that they make it clear how to improve when they mark your work and to provide opportunities for you to respond to their advice.

You behave well and are confident that the school will keep you safe and you know how to keep yourselves safe. You told us how well teachers care for you. Your attendance is improving and is now above average.

We have judged the leadership of your school to be good because of the way in which leaders promote your achievement and care for you. The curriculum you follow is good and enables you to show respect for those from cultures and beliefs different to your own. Leaders are working hard to make sure you continue to learn well and develop well as young people. You can help them by attending regularly and continuing to work hard. I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mary Davis
Lead inspector

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