



Uplands Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120035
LEA Leicester City
Inspection number 280713
Inspection dates 23 May 2006 to 24 May 2006
Reporting inspector Barbara Crane AI

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Type of school | Junior | School address | Melbourne Road |
| School category | Community | | Highfields |
| Age range of pupils | 7 to 11 | | Leicester, Leicestershire LE2 |
| | | | ODR |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 0116 2538407 |
| Number on roll | 478 | Fax number | 0116 2621673 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mr F Haider |
| Date of previous inspection | 22 November 1999 | Headteacher | Mr C Bowpitt |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large junior school serving an area of high socio-economic disadvantage. About a third of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Nearly all of the pupils speak English as an additional language and many are at an early stage of learning English. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. There is a very high level of mobility amongst families in the area, with pupils often joining from overseas. This means that a high proportion of pupils join the school in later years. Attainment on entry is below average. The headteacher was appointed almost three years ago, after an unsettled time for the school when there was no permanent headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Uplands is a good school. This reflects the school's view of its effectiveness. It has some outstanding features. It provides good value for money. The school is a happy community in which pupils from different cultures and backgrounds get on extremely well. Parents and pupils are rightly proud of the school. Good teaching means that pupils achieve well. Pupils who join the school at different points get a warm welcome and the effective support they receive means that those who are at an early stage of speaking English get off to a flying start. Pupils' different abilities are mostly well recognised and catered for and so they make good progress throughout the school. Assessments are particularly well used to set targets in English and these are closely followed up when teachers mark pupils' writing. As a result, pupils know exactly the next steps to take. In other subjects, teachers' marking does not always help pupils to understand how to improve. Expectations of what more able pupils can achieve are not always high enough and this slows a few pupils' progress.

Pupils flourish at the school because of the high quality of care and support provided. Their personal development and well-being are outstanding, and behaviour is exemplary. They show a high level of respect for adults and each other. The good curriculum is very well enriched by extra activities that broaden pupils' experiences, but opportunities are not planned well enough for pupils to use their skills in writing in some subjects.

Good leadership and management have led to good improvement since the last inspection and the school has the capacity to improve further. The headteacher is an inspirational force and he has the confidence of pupils, staff and parents. He leads a hard working team who put the pupils first. Good quality and accurate self-evaluation means that the school's planning reflects the right priorities. Excellent links with parents and other agencies enhance pupils' learning and well-being.

What the school should do to improve further

Ensure that teachers' expectations of more able pupils are consistently high. Improve teachers' marking so that pupils understand how to improve. Ensure that pupils have better opportunities to use their skills in writing across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and standards are broadly average. Challenging targets are set and are met. Results over the last three years confirm that the school is continually improving the progress that pupils make. Pupils make good progress from a below average starting point. Standards for Year 6 pupils in 2005 were broadly average in mathematics and science but were exceptionally low in English. However, this year group had a high level of pupils who joined the school late and were at an early stage of learning English. The school's good monitoring revealed that pupils'

writing needed to improve, as this was much weaker than reading. Improvements to teaching over this year have meant that standards in writing have improved significantly and this is reflected in pupils' current work. More able pupils are making good progress in English throughout the school, but a few should be doing better in other subjects such as mathematics, science, history and geography. Pupils from different ethnic groups and boys and girls make equal progress. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English make very rapid progress because of very effective support. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress towards their individual targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. They are well prepared for the future because of the good progress they make in acquiring the basic skills in their work and because they are confident and know how to work with others. Relationships are excellent. Pupils from different cultures and backgrounds relate very well to each other and accept and celebrate their differences. They show a high level of respect for each other and the adults in school. New pupils quickly make friends. Attendance is good. Pupils are very enthusiastic learners and enjoy school. As one pupil put it 'We are excited about learning because school is so interesting.' Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils commented that they appreciated the clear expectations of behaviour and the consistency of staff in reinforcing these. Pupils have a strong understanding of how to stay safe and lead healthy lives. They are pleased that their views over healthy eating are reflected in the lunchtime menus and the tuck shop. The school council and environmental group take responsibility for helping improve both the school and wider community. Recycling and planting initiatives have benefited both communities. The school council has overseen the introduction of the buddy system and those trained to support others through difficulties are proud of their achievements.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Very positive relationships lead to pupils enjoying their work and taking pride in their success. Pupils relish using what they have learned in new situations. This was seen during the inspection when Year 6 pupils created autobiographical accounts using computers to present slide shows of text and photographs. Good teaching for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities means that these pupils reach their targets. Teachers are expert in promoting pupils' speaking and listening and writing. It is here that expectations are consistently high. Teachers use assessments very well to set targets for pupils in writing. Learning is at its best when teachers have high expectations and build in a good level of challenge for more able pupils, through questioning and tasks that extend these pupils' thinking. This is

most consistent in Year 6. In other year groups, the school recognises that work is not always adapted to meet more able pupils' needs and so a few pupils' progress is slower. The high quality teaching for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English is based precisely on a clear analysis of pupils' needs and is carefully tailored to meet them. When needed, these pupils are given very good extra support through teaching in their home language. Pupils are developing the ability to assess their own work and there are examples of very effective marking by teachers, but the guidance given to pupils on what they need to do next is not consistent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is greatly enriched by the excellent range of visits, visitors and clubs. For example, working with local artists has resulted in pupils producing high quality work in art and design. The school achieves a very good balance of responding to local needs and broadening pupils' understanding of wider society. Many pupils take part in activities that stimulate their interest in learning as well as supporting their personal development. Years 5 and 6 pupils, for example, eagerly tackled a climbing wall and knew that they had to use their physical skills and also put their trust in classmates who were controlling the safety ropes. The curriculum is well adapted for pupils who get extra support because of specific needs. The school has identified correctly that pupils do not get enough opportunities to practise their writing across the curriculum. The strong emphasis on personal, social and health education very effectively boosts pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding and support pupils' achievement and personal development very well. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their protection are extremely robust. There is very good support for pupils who are new to the school and at an early stage of acquiring English. Staff have a keen insight into pupils' individual needs and boost their confidence very well through the very positive relationships in the school. Pupils know what their targets are. They have clear targets set to help them improve their work. Outstanding relationships with parents mean that they know how well their children are doing, what they are learning and how they can help at home. Many parents come to the 'inspire' mornings where they share with their children the type of activities done at school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Parents and governors say that the headteacher's exceptional leadership has revitalised the school. The staff are happy to be there and work very well as a team. Their commitment to the excellent provision for ensuring the full inclusion of all pupils in activities is at the heart of their work.

This is very well reflected in the school's harmonious community and the extent to which pupils feel valued as individuals.

Effective monitoring of teaching and the analysis of data inform good self-evaluation. Staff with management responsibilities have identified precisely the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' achievement and areas in which teaching needs to improve. This means that the school has the right priorities for improvement. Staff know that they need to check that initiatives put in place to raise expectations of more able pupils or for better consistency in teachers' marking are fully supporting all pupils' good achievement. The school's capacity to improve has been well demonstrated in the way in which standards in writing have improved and in its overall good improvement since the last inspection. Governors play a full part in the school's daily life and are well informed about its priorities.

Parents' and pupils' views are taken seriously and used well when deciding on changes that need to be made, such as the planned introduction of school uniform. The school reaches out to its community very well and so, for example, business links enable volunteers to support pupils' progress in reading in school.

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Inspection judgements

| | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall | 16-19 |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 | NA |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 1 | NA |
| The quality and standards in foundation stage | NA | NA |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 | NA |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | Yes | NA |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes | NA |

Achievement and standards

| | | |
|--|---|----|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 | NA |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 3 | NA |

Personal development and well-being

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 | NA |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 | NA |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 | NA |
| The attendance of learners | 2 | NA |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 | NA |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 | NA |

The quality of provision

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 | NA |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 | NA |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 | NA |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 | NA |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 | NA |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review | 2 | NA |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 | NA |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 | NA |
| The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected | Yes | NA |

| | |
|---|-----|
| The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy | |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise | Yes |
| Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse | Yes |
| Learners are educated about sexual health | Yes |
| The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe | |
| Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements | Yes |
| Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place | Yes |
| Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism | Yes |
| Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them | Yes |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution | |
| Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships | Yes |
| Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community | Yes |
| The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being | |
| There is provision to promote learners' basic skills | Yes |
| Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams | Yes |
| Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form | NA |
| Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy | NA |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for the brilliant welcome you gave us when we came to your school. It was a privilege to meet you. This is what we found out.

You really enjoy school and do well in your work because of the good teaching and extra help. Your behaviour is excellent. You all get on very well with each other and show respect for others. The grown-ups take very good care of you and we are glad that you know who to turn to if you have problems. You have plenty of interesting things to do. Our memories of seeing Years 5 and 6 pupils on the climbing wall will last for a long time!

Your school is well run and everyone works hard to give you the best start in life. We have asked the staff to make things even better for you by:

making sure that the work is a just a bit harder for some of you giving you extra chances to write more in lessons that are not English lessons making sure that teachers always help you to improve when they mark your work.

You have a good school and are right to be proud of it. Keep working hard and enjoying being together. We wish you all the very best in the future.