

Urmston Junior School

Hereford Grove, Urmston, Manchester, Lancashire, M41 5AJ

Inspection dates 11–12 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' progress and standards of work have improved rapidly since the previous inspection.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average at the end of Year 6.
- Teaching quality is never less than good and some teaching is outstanding.
- Pupils learn at a good pace, enjoy their lessons and are extremely keen to learn more.
- Pupils' outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning contribute greatly to their good achievement. They feel safe, are attentive and hard working in the classroom, and act as exemplary ambassadors for their school at other times.
- At the root of the school's rapid improvement are outstanding leadership and management. All leaders, including governors, have an exceptionally clear vision for the school's success. They know how good the school is and how it can become better.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is scope to raise the achievement of the most able pupils further in reading, writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw 20 lessons and part lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with members of staff, pupils, a group of parents, a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body.
- Also taken into account were 46 responses from parents via the online questionnaire (Parent View), as well as questionnaire completed by staff members.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a wide range of documentation that included: national curriculum data and the school's own assessments; the school's planning and own view of its work; minutes of governing body meetings; local authority reports; samples of pupils' work and safeguarding documents.

Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stephen Wall

Additional Inspector

Lesley Bowyer

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average sized junior school, in which the large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- An average proportion of pupils are supported by school action.
- The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The Basic Skills Primary Quality Mark (2) has been achieved recently in recognition of the school's work to improve standards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement further by making sure that the most able pupils in the school always reach their full potential in reading, writing and mathematics and achieve the highest standards by:
 - consistently setting the highest challenges and expectations for those pupils in all subjects
 - using the most effective practice to model different ways of challenging the most able pupils
 - ensuring the effectiveness of marking in all subjects matches that seen in writing books and always with clear pointers to improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils enter Year 3 with standards that are generally above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils build well on their earlier learning because the school sets very challenging targets for them.
- From Years 3 to 6, the rate of pupils' progress has increased rapidly since the previous inspection. Current school assessments and pupils' work show that significant proportions of pupils in each class are on track to make better than expected progress.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have also improved significantly. They rose to above average in 2013, having been average previously. Pupils' current work shows that standards are again above average, continuing to improve and on track to be sustained.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. They make good progress from the time they enter the school. By the end of Year 6, pupils read regularly both for learning and pleasure. They read aloud confidently, use good expression and understand what they read.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are exceptionally well provided for in both their learning and pastoral needs. First class additional help begins in Year 3 to boost the skills of all less able pupils in the school. As a result, they gain ground very quickly and work confidently alongside others.
- The most able pupils are identified at an early stage and the school provides additional challenges in writing and mathematics, as well sports, for those with exceptional talents. A notable proportion of pupils in the current Year 6 are expected to achieve the highest level (Level 6) in writing or mathematics.
- Nevertheless, leaders recognise that given their starting points, more pupils could achieve at the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Those supported by pupil premium funding make good progress. The 2013 results showed a gap between their attainment and that of others in the school. However, the number of pupils was small and their individual needs were very varied. School leaders are fully committed to providing equality of opportunity. Consequently, in the current Year 6, the school's accurate assessments show that the gap is virtually eliminated and that those known to eligible for free school meals achieve as well as others in all subjects.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is more effective than it was at the time of the previous inspection because all staff have embraced the training and support provided by senior leaders and the local authority, and responded well to leaders' determination to improve pupils' learning and progress.
- Pupils' learning is planned well, usually taking account of their varying abilities, although sometimes different expectations, especially for the most able pupils, could be clearer in lessons.
- Imaginative ways of introducing topics capture pupils' interest well and encourage them to learn more. In an English lesson, for example, pupils came up with some exciting ideas for their writing as a result of listening to a well-chosen performance poem and the discussion that followed.
- The most effective work across all subjects is not drawn on sufficiently by the school to use as a model, and plan challenges for those pupils who may be most capable of reaching the highest standards in all their work.
- There is always a good measure of practical activity to help pupils to learn well. No time is wasted in starting work. A strong feature of learning is that if pupils feel confident at one level of the work planned for the class, they can decide whether or not to tackle the next level. Pupils are always keen to challenge themselves in this way and enjoy the opportunities they have in lessons to prove their skills.

- English lessons focus strongly on developing grammar, punctuation and spelling skills. There are many opportunities for pupils to apply those skills in their writing across a range of subjects and some excellent examples can be seen, for example, in science, history and social studies.
- Pupils are expected to think things out for themselves when learning mathematics. Using knowledge and understanding of number to solve problems features strongly in lessons. Expectations are high. For example, in a Year 5 lesson some pupils were asked to create a design then show ratios and proportions within the pattern expressing them as fractions and decimals. Pupils quickly took up the challenge and showed good perseverance in thinking their way through the task without relying on adults in the classroom to help them.
- There is good learning in other subjects. History, geography and science topics are planned well. Art and design are popular activities in which pupils learn a good range of skills and techniques. Pupils have noticed the improvement taking place in physical education over the past year.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They are a strong element of an effective teaching team. They are well trained and their skills and sensitivity to pupils' particular needs is an asset to learning in the school.
- Good questioning provides valuable information about pupils' understanding. Progress in lessons is checked systematically and pupils keep records of their own progress. Whole school systems for checking progress and setting new targets are thorough and used well.
- Pupils' writing is generally marked well and the 'two-way' method means that pupils regularly correct any mistakes and know what to do next. This quality of marking is not consistent across all subjects and opportunities to challenge pupils, especially the most able, to make improvements in some other subjects are missed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Their excellent attitudes to school and above average attendance are major factors in their rapidly improving achievement.
- Pupils take pride in all that they do. They arrive in school punctually, are neatly dressed in uniform and ready to learn. They present their work tidily and are always willing to help each other out in lessons.
- Behaviour around the school is excellent. Pupils enjoy each other's company in the playground, either to chat quietly or play a game. They adjust their behaviour accordingly during assemblies or when enjoying lunch together. Pupils are very courteous towards one another and their manners, at all times, are delightful.
- Pupils make an excellent contribution to the everyday life of the school. The school council actively gather pupils' views to discuss at their meetings and have brought about many improvements. The garden area, for example, developed by pupils with its seating arrangement is a popular meeting place for pupils who want to talk or read during playtimes. There are plans to add fruit trees to the range of things they grow. They are keen to be buddies when children start school. They take responsibility for recycling paper, and the team of librarians carries out its duties very well.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils feel entirely safe and say that they are extremely well cared for in school.
- Pupils' exceptional awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe is the result of first class provision for their personal, social and health education. They are fully aware of potential risk situations and are well versed in how to deal with them. Pupils are very well prepared to deal with instances of bullying in all of its forms, including cyber-bullying. They state firmly that there is no physical bullying in school and that offensive name calling is extremely rare.
- Parents unanimously support their children's view about how well they are cared for and cannot speak highly enough of the pastoral care provided for potentially vulnerable pupils or the way that parent-school relationships have developed over the past two years.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, supported by a strong senior leadership team, has changed the way that the staff and governors think about their work and consequently how they do it.
- As a result of this cultural change, the whole work of the school is refreshed.
- It is a vibrant community in which staff, governors, pupils and parents have a voice. The vision is clear and fully shared, and the commitment to continued improvement is unquestionable.
- Leaders leave no stone unturned when checking the school's work. They are careful to take pupils' views into account to make sure their needs are being met. They have a very accurate picture of the school's effectiveness.
- The local authority recognises the school's rapid improvement and the strength of its leadership. Having provided effective support they are now confident about leaders' ability to manage improvement on their own.
- Central to this success is the outstanding leadership and management of teaching and learning with its unfaltering focus on pupils' achievement. All teachers are aware that whatever their particular role is in the school they are accountable for progress. Teaching quality is checked very robustly. Training and support to improve teaching skills are well planned and focused on the school's priorities as well as teacher's personal professional development. As a result, teaching quality is now never less than good and there is no complacency in the school about driving it towards outstanding, thereby taking more pupils to the very highest levels in their work.
- Middle leaders, responsible for managing improvement in subjects, are exceptionally clear about their roles and there is a consistent and highly effective approach to driving improvement. They have an accurate understanding and knowledge of their subjects, as well as opportunities to check the quality of work in order to maintain standards and plan further improvement. Their evaluation is accurate and an important contribution to leaders' overall view of the school's work.
- The impact of the school's allocated sports funding is very good. Pupils have noticed the increased and more varied range of activities provided to promote their health and well-being. Thoughtful use of the funding also provides chances for staff to improve their skills by working with physical education experts to raise the quality of their teaching in the subject.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have tackled issues from the previous inspection vigorously and with remarkable success. A critical self-examination of their role led to an intensive programme of training that equips them very well to challenge the school and check its work rigorously. They insist on thorough and accurate checks of the school's academic performance and have forged exceptionally strong links with the school whereby they can see school routines for themselves. Funding for sports and the pupil premium and their impact on pupils' achievement are checked regularly. Financial management overall is efficient. Governors have a very accurate overview of teaching quality in the school and how that is linked to teachers' salary progress. Safeguarding arrangements meet all government requirements. Overall, governance has improved enormously and is now providing excellent support and challenge which is pivotal in holding the school to account and driving improvement.

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	106314
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	442341

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	278
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Derek Brown
Headteacher	Sarah Jones
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2013
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