School report

Upton Priory School

Berwick Close, Off Prestbury Road, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK10 3ED

Inspection dates	8–9 January 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Teaching is good. As a result, pupils make good progress in lessons and over time.
- By the end of Year 6, attainment in both mathematics and English is above average. Pupils' progress from their various starting points is good in both English and mathematics.
- Carefully tailored support for pupils with special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils enables them to make good progress and to participate fully in activities.
- Behaviour is good and attendance is above average. Pupils have very positive attitudes, enjoy coming to school and have very good relationships with each other and with adults. They feel safe in school.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, strongly supported by the deputy headteacher and governors, provides outstanding direction. Senior leaders have an excellent understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school further.
- In the very short time that the headteacher has been in post, he has acted swiftly and decisively and this is already having an impact upon standards and progress. The headteacher has rapidly gained the confidence of staff, pupils and parents alike.
- Good promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development enables pupils to thrive in a very supportive learning community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Work is not always matched to pupils' needs and capabilities so that some pupils, particularly the most able, do not achieve their full potential in all respects.
- Pupils are not always given good guidance about how to improve their work nor do they always act upon the comments their teachers make.
- Some reading sessions are not organised well enough to help pupils progress quickly.
- Subject and curriculum leaders are not yet fully involved in driving improvements in teaching and learning in their subjects and across the wider curriculum.
- Children in the early years provision are not always given enough opportunities to extend their learning through purposeful play activities, particularly in the outdoor area.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 28 part lessons and made short visits to other activities led by teachers and trained assistants. Of these observations, eight were carried out jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Two groups of pupils met with inspectors and inspectors talked to a number of pupils in lessons and around the school. Discussions were also held with staff, including senior leaders. Meetings were conducted with the Chair and members of the Governing Body and an inspector had a discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 81 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and letters from parents. They also held discussions with some parents.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work with senior leaders and read a range of documents. These included documents about the school's strategies to enable leaders to gain an accurate view of its performance, school improvement plans, pupils' current progress, policies and records on safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Judith Tolley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Maria McGarry	Additional Inspector
David Deane	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Upton Priory School is a much larger-than-average primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is lower than that usually found.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is lower than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children attend the early years provision full time in Reception and part time in Nursery, moving on to full time when appropriate.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been changes in staff; several new teachers have joined the school. The headteacher took up his post in September 2014.
- Before- and after-school provision, the *Upton Beehive Club,* is run on the school site by external providers. This is inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently outstanding across the school and thereby raise standards and further increase pupils' rate of progress in English and mathematics, by:
  - ensuring tasks are always set at the right level to challenge pupils to achieve the best they can, especially the most able
  - making sure pupils are always given guidance about how to improve their work, particularly the accuracy of their spelling, and that teachers check that pupils respond to the advice or the further challenge they are given
  - making sure that all reading sessions are organised well so that pupils are helped to develop their reading skills to the full.

- Further develop the role of subject and curriculum leaders by involving them fully in improving the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects and across the wider curriculum.

- Ensure children in the early years provision are given more opportunity to engage in purposeful play activities, particularly outdoors.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Although the headteacher has only been in post for a very short time, he has an accurate view of what the school does well and what needs to be improved.
- He provides very clear direction and has acted swiftly and decisively to improve the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, there has already been an improvement in the standards pupils reach and the progress they make in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders use regular and rigorous monitoring procedures to check pupils' progress, effectively hold teachers to account and identify training needs. The school places great emphasis upon training for teachers and this, together with the introduction of whole-school policies for assessment and marking, has been an important factor in securing recent improvements in teaching and learning.
- The school works hard to ensure all pupils have an equal opportunity to achieve their potential. The pupil premium funding is used to good effect to support disadvantaged pupils. As a result, gaps in the performance of disadvantaged pupils have closed in reading and writing and are closing rapidly in mathematics. Similarly, additional sports funding is used to good effect both to provide specialist coaching for pupils and to improve the quality of teaching in physical education across the school. This has also led to increased participation rates in extra-curricular and sports activities across the school.
- Subject leaders are involved in the school's self-evaluation and school improvement planning procedures. However, they are, as yet, at the early stages of developing their roles, for instance in monitoring teaching and learning in their subjects, in working alongside teachers to improve their practice or in driving improvement in their subjects across the wider curriculum.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced; it meets pupils' needs and aspirations well and prepares them well for citizenship in modern Britain. It is enriched by music, including instrumental lessons for all pupils in Years 5 and 6 and the opportunity to play in the school orchestra, as well as drama and French. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in physical education, music and French. They also take part in regular trips and visits, including residential visits, which extend their learning outside the classroom.
- The teaching of reading is effective and children enjoy their reading. Most read fluently and with understanding, are able to explain in detail what they have read and make inferences. However, opportunities are missed to develop their reading skills to the full in reading sessions guided by adults.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust and meet government requirements.
- The school is working closely with parents and actively encourages them to be involved in the school's work and their children's learning through, for instance, workshops on specific subjects, as well as meetings with teachers. In discussion, parents say that they appreciate the increased opportunities they have to talk to teachers and be more fully involved in their children's learning. The school works closely with families whose children do not attend regularly enough. As a result, persistent absence has decreased and attendance and punctuality have improved.
- The local authority provides appropriately little for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need to be improved. Its members regularly check the school's performance, including data that show pupils' standards of attainment and progress. The governing body has recruited members with a good range of experience and expertise. They are able to talk confidently about how the school is narrowing gaps in the performance of different groups through successful intervention. They have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and the performance of staff, including how good performance is rewarded, and any underperformance is tackled. The efficiency of spending is scrutinised, for example, the effectiveness of the use of primary school sport funding and pupil premium funding. They are actively involved in the life of the school and have strong, positive relationships with senior leaders, built on mutual respect and trust. As a result they are able, through open and honest challenge and support, to hold leaders very effectively to account.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their conduct is usually outstanding. They are courteous and polite. In lessons and around the school, it is clear that they have excellent relationships with each other and with adults in the school. They routinely help younger pupils around the school, play well together and help

one another in lessons when working with a partner or in small groups.

- Pupils take responsibility very seriously and are proud of their contribution to the school, for example as school councillors and as monitors and mentors for other children.
- Pupils come to lessons equipped and ready to work. They take pride in their school and take care of their classrooms and playground. They work responsibly and with enthusiasm. On rare occasions they lose concentration when activities are too easy or the pace of learning slows. They listen carefully to others and respect each other's views.
- Some pupils enter into a lively written dialogue with their teachers about how to improve their work; however, this is not always the case.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe and are confident that any poor behaviour is dealt with promptly and effectively. They are aware of the different forms of bullying that can take place, such as name-calling, homophobic bullying and cyber-bullying and know how to deal with these should they arise.
- Pupils know how to stay safe and have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy using the equipment in the playground. They are enthusiastic about the wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sport, that are provided and which have a positive impact on their health and well-being.
- Pupils who on occasions have challenging behaviour are supported very effectively to make good choices and, as a result, they are able to learn effectively and make good progress alongside their classmates. Incidences of poor behaviour are very rare.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good across the school over time, and some results in pupils making outstanding progress.
- Whole-class, group and paired activities effectively increase pupils' confidence and their speaking skills; pupils work effectively with their peers to share ideas and to solve problems.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together well and ask pupils searching questions to see how much they have understood. Year 2 pupils made swift progress understanding lines of symmetry because their activities were very well matched to their needs. Clear demonstrations coupled with very effective questioning enabled pupils to move on rapidly from recognising simple patterns to understanding symmetry and creating their own detailed patterns in 3D, confidently mirroring their partners' work. They were presented with an increased level of challenge or extra help when necessary as the lesson progressed. This was as a result of the teacher's very close monitoring of individual progress.
- However, this is not always the case. On occasions, pupils find tasks too easy or too difficult because work is not always so well matched to their capabilities. In particular, the progress of the more able is sometimes slowed because they have to sit through explanations to the rest of the class about things they already know rather than starting their own work.
- Pupils are confident when explaining their ideas to a partner but do not always get the opportunity to explore ideas for themselves or present their working to others.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and there are examples of outstanding practice. Where this is the case, information about pupils' progress determines the next steps for individual pupils and this feeds directly into lesson planning. Pupils themselves maintain a dialogue with teachers about what they need to do next and are given extra challenges to complete. However, marking and advice is not always to this high standard. Pupils do not always receive the specific guidance they need to help them improve their work, particularly the accuracy of their spelling.
- Reading is generally taught effectively and even the youngest take pleasure in applying their knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) to read and write words and simple sentences or to read out what they have written. The effectiveness of reading sessions when guided by an adult varies across the school. In some lessons, activities lack variety and pupils do not have enough opportunity to explore texts or to examine, for instance, how authors use language to create atmosphere or depict character.
- The impact of teaching on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have frequent opportunities to increase their understanding of cultures other than their own.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The proportion of pupils making and exceeding the progress expected of them from their starting points compares favourably with national figures. Most children enter Year 1 with skills and knowledge above those typical for their age and are confident learners, well prepared for the Key Stage 1 curriculum.
- Overall, pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. By the end of Year 6, standards in mathematics, reading and writing are above average. Over the last three years, standards have risen in all subjects. Standards in mathematics have improved rapidly because of the whole-school focus on mathematics and are now in line with those in reading and writing.
- Work seen during the inspection indicates that standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen over the last year and the rate of pupils' progress has also increased so that the proportion of pupils making more than the progress expected of them has also increased.
- The most able pupils usually make good progress from their starting points in mathematics, reading and writing, with some reaching the highest levels by the end of Year 6. However, the school has not yet focused well enough on planning how to move the most able onto extra challenges, either of their skills or of their thinking, when they have mastered the main objectives of a lesson.
- Pupils write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences and use a good range of vocabulary and structures. However, inaccuracies in spelling and untidy handwriting sometimes mar their work.
- Progress in reading is good. Pupils are taught phonics effectively and are able to apply their knowledge in reading and writing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same good progress as their peers as a result of the extra help they are given, according to need, both in class and in groups. Teaching assistants usually provide sensitive and effective support, enabling these pupils to participate successfully in whole-class activities.
- The extra support, such as extra help in the classroom and support from teaching assistants that the school provides through the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, enables these pupils to reach their targets and to make the same good progress as their peers. Gaps between the attainment of these pupils and that of their classmates in English have closed; in mathematics, they are closing rapidly. In mathematics, over the last three years, disadvantaged pupils have moved from being up to one year behind other pupils in the school and all pupils nationally, to being about one term behind. In English, they reach the same standards as other pupils in the school and higher standards than disadvantaged pupils nationally.

The early years provision is good

- Children make good progress and achieve well in the Nursery and Reception classes as a result of consistently good teaching. Many children start in the early years provision with skills that are broadly typical for their age.
- As a result of very well established routines and very effective procedures for making sure their transition from home or pre-school settings is a smooth one, children settle in quickly and behave well. They clearly enjoy the activities planned for them, take turns and learn and play well together.
- They make particularly good progress in developing their reading, writing, and their mathematical, personal and social skills.
- The provision is well led and managed. Adults work together very effectively to ensure all children are able to make good progress. They monitor individual progress on a daily basis and use this information effectively to plan next steps for children's learning. However, the steps individuals have made are not always clearly recorded in their journals, making it difficult for parents to track the progress their children are making.
- Activities led by teachers and teaching assistants are well planned and designed to excite and interest children. For instance, one group of children in the Nursery delighted in retelling the story of *The Gruffalo* with puppets while others in a Reception class played a game based on what they had been learning in their phonics lesson. However, this is not always the case in the activities children choose themselves, particularly in the outdoor areas. Opportunities are missed to capture children's imagination to extend their learning by linking play activities with learning in the classroom. As a result, some children's play is without purpose.

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	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. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	135255
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	453249

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	460
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sian Roswell
Headteacher	Steve Kendrick
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2009
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