

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mrs Helen Green  
Headteacher  
Upton Primary School  
Waggon Lane  
Upton  
Pontefract  
West Yorkshire  
WF9 1JS

Dear Mrs Green

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Upton Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 17 June 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in November 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in November 2015, the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure the more rapid progress of those pupils in danger of falling behind, particularly boys and those with special educational needs or disability.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, your deputy headteachers and four middle leaders. I also spoke to the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. You accompanied me on a walk around the school, visiting lessons and looking at pupils' books.

## **Context**

You have instigated change in responsibilities across the whole staff. The two deputy headteachers have been taken out of class to monitor and to develop other staff in school. Five teachers have left the school since the last inspection, and one more is leaving at the end of term. These teachers have been replaced with three experienced teachers, one recently qualified teacher and another newly qualified teacher.

## **Main findings**

You have been robust and systematic in your approach to improving the school. You have rapidly developed the capacity of the deputy headteachers, who are now skilfully and sensitively providing challenge and support to other staff in school. As a result of increased expectations of staff at all levels, the impact of teaching on pupils' learning is rapidly improving.

Senior leaders have provided clarity in the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders so they are now stepping up and effectively driving improvements in their subjects. Middle leaders are enthusiastic about the curriculum they are providing for pupils. Work in pupils' 'learning challenge' books shows the depth and variety of learning that pupils are now experiencing across the curriculum. Marking and feedback is improving as a result of more consistent application of the school's policy and pupils are beginning to act on the advice of their teachers, thus improving their work.

Leaders are now meticulous in their evaluation of the work of the school. Senior and middle leaders know exactly what is expected of them. Detailed timetables ensure that all staff know what will be looked at and when. All staff have been involved in the moderation of pupils' work and professional discussions about the quality of work that pupils are expected to do are regular.

The chair of the governing body has ensured that all governors have explicit guidance which is supporting their monitoring of the school's work. They are regular visitors to school and all understand their roles and responsibilities. Minutes of meetings of the governing body show an appropriate level of challenge to school leaders.

Leaders are regularly tracking the progress of pupils, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Outcomes for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2015 were disappointing. The picture for current pupils is more encouraging, with higher numbers of pupils working at expected levels. However, too many pupils, particularly boys and disadvantaged pupils, are still not reaching levels expected. Leaders have been quick to analyse what needs to change and have implemented small group teaching for disadvantaged pupils and for those in danger of falling behind. Senior and middle leaders, working with all staff, have been resolute in making changes to the curriculum so that lessons are more interesting. As a result of these improvements made to teaching, the progress of pupils is accelerating.

Leaders took the decision to introduce a new scheme through which to deliver phonics (the sounds letters make). This has raised expectations and has brought about consistency in the way pupils are taught. The skills of teachers and teaching assistants have been much improved through training in phonics. As a result of a much more coherent approach, pupils' use of phonics strategies is steadily improving so that in 2016 the proportion of pupils who have achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check is just below national averages.

You have led a total overhaul of practice and provision in early years, so that it is now bright, inviting and fit for purpose. Consequently, the proportion of children who have attained a good level of development has risen by 10% to 55% in 2016, although this is still below national averages.

As a result of consistently high expectations, pupils behave well as they move around school. In lessons, pupils demonstrate good attitudes towards their learning. In key stage 2 in particular, pupils were involved with and concentrated on their tasks. Pupils who have difficulty managing their behaviour are quietly and skilfully managed so that the learning of other pupils is not frequently interrupted.

### **External support**

You have sought advice and challenge from other strong headteachers in the area in order to make considered decisions, leading to the right actions to improve outcomes for Upton pupils. The school improvement partner and local authority have undertaken reviews of teaching and learning to support you in your evaluation. They have assisted with the development of middle leaders so that middle leaders are now effective in their roles. Support from a national leader of education has been highly effective in aiding improvements in early years.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wakefield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Butcher

**Her Majesty's Inspector**