

Upperwood Academy

Dartree Walk, Darfield, Barnsley S73 9NL

Inspection dates

12–13 July 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The determination and focus of the headteacher and deputy headteacher have driven improvements in pupils' outcomes in English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan work that meets pupils' needs, and ensures that they make good progress. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- Leadership, teaching and learning in the early years are good. As a result, children make good progress from their starting points.
- Middle leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be improved. They have put in place effective actions to bring improvements in their areas.
- Provision for pupils' personal development and welfare is excellent. Pupils flourish in the school's caring provision. They grow in confidence and become responsible young citizens.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They value their time in school and attendance is good.
- The well-planned curriculum provides pupils with many interesting experiences and opportunities to understand their own community and the wider world.
- Governors have a good understanding of the schools' strengths and priorities for improvement. They provide effective challenge and support to leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Several different aspects of teaching, albeit relatively minor ones, are currently preventing it from being outstanding so that all pupils make the best possible progress with their learning.
- The early years outdoor provision does not fully develop children's learning in reading, writing and number.
- Middle leaders' skills to check the impact of actions to bring school improvements are not yet fully developed.
- Leaders' evaluation is sometimes too generous.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching across the school to achieve outstanding outcomes by:
 - further raising expectations for the most able pupils
 - providing greater opportunities for reasoning and problem solving in mathematics
 - ensuring that the high-quality writing that is a consistent feature in English becomes a regular feature in other subjects
 - improving the consistency of the use of the school's marking scheme
 - improve the quality of early years outdoor learning provision to fully develop children's reading, writing and number skills.

- Further develop leadership capacity by:
 - developing the roles of middle leaders, particularly in relation to checking the impact of their actions
 - ensuring that leaders more systematically use the range of information about the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes to have a sharper view of the strengths and priorities across a wider range of curriculum areas.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has set a clear, ambitious vision to improve the school. Along with the deputy headteacher and other school leaders he has accurately identified the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. As a result, pupils' outcomes in English and mathematics have improved and pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Staff understand the goals the school aims to achieve and are well motivated to accomplish the best outcomes for pupils. Parents' views of the school are very positive and this is confirmed by their responses to the Ofsted Parent View online questionnaire.
- The mathematics subject leader, who is relatively new to the role, has put in place appropriate plans to further improve mathematics. Along with the headteacher he has begun to check the impact of these actions and identify relevant next steps. As a result, pupils' outcomes in mathematics are particularly strong.
- English subject leaders understand the priorities for improving their subjects. Leadership actions to improve pupils' outcomes in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) have brought a substantial improvement in results. The subject leader for writing is new to the role and has just begun more formal checking of the strengths and areas for development in this subject.
- The leadership of provision for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities is good. Well-planned provision in classrooms and additional interventions enable these pupils to make at least expected progress. Effective links are made with specialist agencies to ensure that these pupils' needs are accurately identified and the appropriate support is provided.
- The curriculum is well planned to meet the interests and needs of pupils. The school's focused approach on improving pupils' understanding in phonics, reading, writing and mathematics is paying dividends. Specialist teaching of physical education, music and modern foreign languages is used to improve pupils' skills. The school's extensive extra-curricular opportunities enrich the curriculum.
- The school's assessment system is linked effectively to the curriculum. It has enabled teachers to gain a good understanding of the age-related expectations in the national curriculum. Senior leaders make effective use of this information to regularly check pupils' progress. Appropriate interventions are put in place where pupils are working below the standards expected for their age.
- Systems to manage staff performance are thorough. Careful checks on staff performance are completed by the headteacher and senior leaders. This information is used to provide governors with a clear overview of staff performance.
- The pupil premium funding is spent to good effect. Rigorous monitoring by the headteacher and governors ensures that this funding has a positive impact. Pupils entitled to pupil premium show good progress and often more than expected progress in English and mathematics.
- The additional funding for sport and physical education in primary schools is well deployed to increase the opportunities pupils have to enjoy physical activities and learn from specialist teachers. Opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive sports and after-school clubs have developed. The quality of the sport teaching and the impact this has on pupils' personal and physical development has been recognised regionally.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Their wide range of roles and responsibilities around school, visits to a variety of places of faith and Eco Club are some of the examples of how the school develops pupils' citizenship.
- The school's plans for improvement address relevant priorities and are making a difference to improving pupils' outcomes, particularly in English and mathematics. The headteacher along with other leaders completes a range of self-evaluation activities to check improvements in the school. However, self-evaluation judgements by leaders, including governors, are too positive. Not enough account had been taken of the quality of pupils' work and their progress across the full range of the curriculum.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors know the school well and provide effective challenge to senior leaders. A detailed governors' action plan demonstrates the actions taken by governors to improve leadership and pupils' outcomes, and the impact of these actions. Governors actively seek to appoint staff to address the school's priorities.
 - Governors ensure that performance management systems are rigorously implemented to ensure that pay progression is well linked to staff performance.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders, staff and governors give the highest priority to keeping pupils safe. Current safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are of high quality. Careful checks are carried out for all staff, governors and volunteers. Safeguarding policies are regularly reviewed to ensure that all requirements are met and all staff understand the procedures and

their own responsibilities. Staff and governors receive regular and appropriate training so they know how to keep pupils safe. Close links with external agencies ensure that pupils and their families receive the help and support they need to keep pupils safe and in education.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is good**

- The quality of teaching over time is good and this is why pupils are making good progress.
- Very positive relationships between staff and pupils create a constructive learning atmosphere in lessons. Pupils are largely interested in their work and are motivated to learn.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge is evident in the quality of their explanations and the way they demonstrate learning for pupils. This helps pupils to readily grasp key learning, particularly of basic skills in English and mathematics.
- Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well through both support in lessons and targeted interventions. They have a good understanding of what is to be taught and of pupils' individual needs.
- Mathematics teaching ensures that pupils make good progress, particularly in number work. The opportunities for developing reasoning skills or using mathematics in different contexts are less well developed.
- Writing is well taught through opportunities for pupils to write at length and about topics which interest them. A focused approach to teaching key skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar has a positive impact by the end of Year 6. However, sometimes pupils have too detailed a framework of support for their writing and this limits their responses. Teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' writing in other subjects, for example science, are not as high. As a result, the very good-quality work found in writing books is not found in other subjects.
- A well-structured approach to the teaching of phonics is adopted across the school. This is ensuring good continuity of the development of reading skills from the early years and through key stage 1. Pupils read well and enjoy reading both in and out of school.
- Teachers make good use of regular assessments to plan lessons that are largely well matched to the needs of pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities are well supported in lessons and this helps them to make good progress. However, the most able pupils sometimes have work which is too easy and does not provide them with enough challenge.
- The school's marking policy is understood by pupils. However, it is not consistently used by teachers and opportunities to reinforce or deepen learning are missed.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is good**

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are self-confident and prepared to put forward their views in lessons. They listen carefully to the ideas of other pupils.
- Opportunities to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities have a very positive impact on pupils' personal, creative and physical development. The 'Polish Club' helps pupils to understand cultures within and beyond their community.
- Assemblies inspire pupils to reflect on personal qualities such as perseverance and resilience. For example, pupils were highly attentive during an assembly to announce the 'Upperwood Academy Sports Personality of the Year'. Their generous applause for the winner demonstrated their appreciation of the qualities valued across the school.
- Pupils' physical and emotional needs are very well met by the school's curriculum. The school's staff, including the parent support adviser, provide superb support for pupils and parents, including those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.
- Pupils' citizenship qualities are well developed through the curriculum and by links with a primary school in Ethiopia. School councillors play an active role in how the school develops. For instance, requests to have quieter areas in the playgrounds have been met by the introduction of staggered playtimes to create more space, allowing space for both quiet and active games to take place.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They understand the different forms of bullying. Pupils confirm that they are confident that any misbehaviour, including bullying incidents, will be dealt with appropriately by staff. Incidents of racial bullying are extremely rare and are followed up rigorously by leaders. Parents and staff strongly agree that the school is a safe place to be.

- The school is very inclusive and works hard to ensure that all pupils, including those who need guidance to behave well, are successful. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are well behaved, keen to learn and generally work hard. On occasions, when pupils are not enthused by their work their attention wanders. During playtimes and lunchtimes pupils behave well, socialise suitably and engage in lively, friendly games.
- Pupils are courteous, polite and show respect to one another, to adults and visitors. They display a strong sense of pride in their school. For example, pupils' adherence to the school's uniform code is universal across school. Pupils are particularly delighted if they are chosen to wear a 'golden tie', which is a reward for personal or academic achievement.
- Rates of attendance are above the national average. Good attendance has a high profile around the school. Pupils are keen to come to school and know that regular attendance and good punctuality support their learning.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes for pupils are good because pupils' progress from their starting points is good across the school. Progress in writing and mathematics is particularly strong in key stage 2. However, this very high level of progress is not found across the curriculum, for example in pupils' science and topic work, and this is why outcomes are not yet outstanding.
- From their starting points pupils make good progress in key stage 1. In 2015, the proportion of pupils attaining at least the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national averages. Current pupils have maintained good levels of attainment in reading and mathematics this year. Outcomes in writing at the end of Year 2 are not as strong in comparison.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils are making the progress expected of them over time in reading and significantly better than expected progress in writing and mathematics. In 2016, greater proportions of pupils achieved the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics compared to those found nationally.
- Pupils' achievement in the Year 1 national screening check for phonics is good and the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard was above the national average in 2015. This year a larger proportion of pupils achieved the expected standard. The gap between the phonics results of disadvantaged pupils and their peers is closing.
- By the end of Year 6, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils is often better than that made by other pupils in the school and nationally. The key stage 2 attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally has closed in mathematics, although there is still some work to do in reading and writing. The school's information shows that the majority of these pupils are currently making at least expected progress and often more than expected progress. Attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in key stage 1 are not closing as quickly as in key stage 2.
- The most able pupils in key stage 2 generally build on their earlier achievement and attain high standards. By the end of Year 6 the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics is above that found nationally. However, at the end of Year 2 the numbers of pupils achieving the higher levels is below national averages. The school's assessment information shows that currently the most able pupils generally make at least expected progress and some are making more than expected progress.
- A large majority of Reception children are well prepared to start Year 1. Year 6 pupils are well prepared for starting secondary school as the proportions achieving the expected levels of attainment are above national averages.

Early years provision

is good

- Children start in the early years with skills and abilities that are generally below those typical for their age, particularly in communication skills. From their starting points, children, including those entitled to pupil premium funding, make at least good progress. As a result, an increasing proportion of children are well prepared for Year 1.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. Staff make good use of assessments to plan work that is well matched to children's needs. In the indoor provision, strong teaching provides an effective balance of teacher-led activities and opportunities for children to explore and learn by themselves. However, the

opportunities for children to practise their skills in reading, writing and number work are not as well promoted in the outdoor learning provision as indoors.

- Early years staff work well with parents. Well-established systems provide effective communication between the school and parents. Information for parents gives helpful guidance on how they can help their child make good progress in school. Parents are very positive about the support provided by the early years staff.
- There are good partnerships with other professionals. This helps the school address children's developmental or special educational needs promptly. Visits to the feeder nursery schools support effective transition into the Reception classes.
- The early years leader has a sound understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the early years. Well-considered plans with relevant priorities, such as improving children's communication skills, are having a positive impact. However, systematic checking by the early years leader is not fully developed and at the time of the inspection leaders' judgements for the early years provision were too generous.
- Children feel safe and secure. Safeguarding is effective and all welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	138615
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10011016

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	287
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Velda Hulme-Cocking
Principal	Alistair Budd
Telephone number	01226 754 336
Website	www.upperwoodacademy.co.uk
Email address	schooladmin@upperwoodacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	7–8 November 2011

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is similar to that found nationally. (Pupil premium is the funding the school receives for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability support is well above that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is above that found nationally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed a range of lessons and part lessons in all classes. The headteacher joined the lead inspector for five of the observations in lessons on the first day of the inspection.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around school and reviewed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The inspectors observed pupils in the playground and during lunchtime.
- The inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in their books and in the learning journals of children in the early years.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and teachers responsible for leading phonics, reading, writing, mathematics, the early years and physical education, as well as the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body.
- A group of pupils discussed their opinions about the school, their attitudes and their learning with an inspector. Inspectors listened to a total of six pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 read.
- Inspectors took account of the 74 responses on Ofsted's online parent survey, Parent View. Inspectors held discussions with parents at the beginning of the school day.
- The lead inspector considered the responses of 17 staff questionnaires and 39 pupil questionnaires.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including minutes from meetings of the governing body, pupils' achievement information, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Michael Reeves, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Peter Bell	Ofsted Inspector
Alan Chaffey	Ofsted Inspector
Beverley Clubley	Ofsted Inspector

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