

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Ms Alison Edgcombe
Headteacher
Upminster Junior School
St Mary's Lane
Upminster
Essex
RM14 3BS

Dear Ms Edgcombe

Short inspection of Upminster Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 13 December 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Despite the significant changes in leadership since the previous inspection, pupils have continued to achieve good outcomes overall. The recommendations from the previous inspection have mostly been dealt with effectively. Pupils develop the necessary phonics knowledge when reading unfamiliar words. Work with the partner infant school has ensured a common understanding of current standards through accurate assessments. Teachers ensure that work matches the abilities of pupils.

Since your appointment in September 2016, the school has continued to improve. You have quickly secured the commitment of the whole staff, who share your vision to continue to raise standards. Your sharp analysis of the school's performance has led to an accurate evaluation of its strengths and areas for development. The unvalidated attainment outcomes for 2016 indicate that the overall results for pupils at the end of key stage 2 were above national averages. However, leaders identified that progress from pupils' starting points, particularly for boys in writing, was an area that needed improvement.

Middle leaders now adapt resources to engage boys' interest and teachers provide greater opportunities for sustained writing across the curriculum. This work is already showing an improvement in the quality of boys' writing across the school. As a result, the gender difference for progress in writing is closing.

Subject targets are used regularly to measure pupils' progress against age-related expectations. Leaders use good teaching practice across the school to model high expectations for all staff.

Leaders regularly monitor the levels of pupils' attendance. Pupils like the rewards for coming to school regularly. Where persistent absence is identified, support is quickly put in place. As a result, these pupils attend school more regularly. Overall attendance is currently above the national average.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all staff and governors give safeguarding a high priority. Recruitment procedures are fit for purpose, and the school's leaders and the safeguarding governor check records regularly. Training has included recent government requirements, including that on female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation and guidance on the 'Prevent' duty for staff to spot signs of potential radicalisation. Thus, staff are confident in using the school system when raising concerns with school leaders. Pupils speak confidently about online safety. They say that the school staff deal with any bullying swiftly.

Inspection findings

- Since the previous inspection, leaders and governors have made sure that the school has sustained the high attainment for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. The latest results for the end of key stage 2 in 2016 show that attainment was above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You and the senior leaders rightly identified that progress from key stage 1 starting points could be better for some groups of pupils, in particular boys. Leaders regularly analyse current school data. This enables staff to quickly identify pupils who need additional challenges. Consequently, pupils are making better progress from the time they enter the school, particularly in writing.
- The school uses pupil premium funding efficiently to diminish the differences in progress between disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally. Leaders rigorously analyse the performance of this group to identify any barriers to learning. The pupil progress meetings between teachers and leaders highlight where pupils may be at risk of not making expected progress. Leaders put interventions in place and use skilled teaching assistants effectively to support identified groups of learners. Currently, the school's disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are making improved progress across the school, particularly in writing.
- The teaching of reading is consistently good. Younger pupils are using phonics strategies to sound out unfamiliar words. Pupils read widely and often. They can talk confidently about their favourite authors. Guided reading lessons enable pupils to successfully acquire higher reading skills. As a result, the 2016 unvalidated reading attainment outcomes, including those for pupils reaching the higher standard, were above national averages.
- Mathematics is taught well and the pupils use a good level of the associated

vocabulary in this subject. Pupils' progress is improving because of the good standard of teaching across the school. The latest results show that pupils' attainment is above national averages, including for the most able.

- Following the analysis of the 2016 set of unvalidated results in writing, teachers have been successful in engaging the interest of boys in their learning. The pupils' books show how basic skills are applied to longer pieces of writing in a range of subjects. This has already had a positive impact on current pupils' progress.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They recognise the successful changes you have made to keep them safe in school. Pupils demonstrate the school values in their conduct, attitude in lessons and as they move around the school.
- The Ofsted online survey, Parent View, shows that most parents are confident that their children are well cared for and safe while at school. They agree that their children are making good progress and are taught well.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress from their starting points improves, particularly for boys in writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Sara Morgan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector agreed to prioritise the following areas with the school at the start of the inspection:

- the effectiveness of safeguarding in the school
- the action taken to address the weaker writing profile, in particular for boys
- the use of pupil premium funding to diminish differences between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally with the same starting points.

The inspector carried out the following activities to explore these areas during the inspection:

- meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, special needs coordinator, a group of middle leaders and members of the governing body
- teaching was observed jointly across the school alongside the headteacher
- a discussion was held with a representative from the local authority
- pupils from Years 3 to 6 were heard reading
- a range of school documents, including the safeguarding records and policies, minutes of meetings of the governing body, behaviour logs and a wide range of school policies, was scrutinised
- a range of pupils' books was reviewed during lessons and through a work scrutiny with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher
- 45 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, were considered.