

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



18 December 2017

Mr Chris Legg
Headteacher
Upottery Primary School
Upottery
Honiton
Devon
EX14 9QF

Dear Mr Legg

Short inspection of Upottery Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 December 2017, 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 November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. The period since the previous inspection has been a turbulent time with three changes of headteacher and two periods of interim leadership. The interim leader who stepped up on both occasions ensured that pupils continued to make good progress in their learning and in their personal development.

You have, in a very short period of time, accurately assessed the school's strengths and rightly prioritised areas for improvement. You have shared your evaluation with governors and have begun to develop plans to bring about further improvements, particularly with respect to the quality of teaching and learning.

The governing body has remained stable since the previous inspection. The appointment of two further governors, recently, adds additional capacity. The recent audit they have carried out has identified areas where further training is required. Plans are in place to ensure that all governors have the knowledge they need to fully and accurately fulfil their duties.

I found the pupils to be very kind and caring towards adults, visitors and each other. When one child fell, other pupils quickly and sensitively looked after her while a first-aider was called. Pupils who joined the school recently commented on how they received a warm welcome and settled in within a few days. Almost all parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school

to other parents.

Safeguarding is effective.

Staff have ensured, through their teaching and the activities they arrange, that pupils are safe and know how to stay safe. Every pupil I spoke with and every parent who completed Parent View agree that the pupils are safe. Pupils were all very quick to tell me whom they would go to if they were worried, and they were very confident that adults would 'sort things out straightaway'. Pupils are aware of many of the risks they face. The youngest pupils explained clearly about their understanding of road safety and the need to take care near fires.

I found staff to be suitably trained and alert to the indicators of harm pupils may face. Leaders who have specific responsibilities for safeguarding are alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. They involve external agencies when necessary so that pupils and their families receive the support they need.

You are aware that some of the record-keeping is not as strong as it ought to be and have plans in place to remedy this in the coming weeks. Similarly, you recognise that there is room to strengthen governors' evaluation of safeguarding arrangements.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, the first area I focused on was the progress made by pupils in reading. This was identified as a weakness following a three-year decline in the progress pupils make in their reading by the end of both key stages 1 and 2. Teachers have undertaken thorough analysis of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in their reading. Common shortcomings have been identified, such as making inferences from their reading and using the text to explain or justify a response. Class teachers are increasingly planning whole-class learning activities to address these deficiencies.
- Teaching staff continue to promote reading in school and at home. Parents are provided with useful resources, such as prompt questions, that they can use with their children to explore the text in more detail and deepen children's understanding. The well-stocked library is regularly refreshed with new books and pupils are keen to explore different authors and genres. As a result of these strategies, pupils' reading skills are improving.
- The second area I explored was the quality of teaching phonics in Reception and key stage 1, particularly for the girls. In recent years, few girls have shown the same strong phonics knowledge and understanding that the boys have. During the inspection, teacher-led sessions were successful in securing good phonics knowledge which pupils use effectively when they are reading in key stage 1. Consequently, most pupils in Year 1 are working at the standard expected for their age. Most of the girls were able to accurately use their phonics knowledge to read unfamiliar words. A few pupils struggle with more complex words and do not recognise some of the sounds that combinations of letters make. In Year 2, pupils are making good progress. Assessments are generally accurate and used

effectively by the teacher to extend pupils' understanding.

- However, children in Reception are not making the same strong progress. Many struggle to recognise initial letter sounds and teaching assistants are not sufficiently well prepared to develop children's knowledge and understanding of phonics.
- I also reviewed how well the most able pupils in key stage 2 are progressing. Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils reaching the highest scores have been lower than seen typically nationally in reading and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. You and your teaching staff are aware of this. As a result of changes to the curriculum and teachers planning learning that better meets the most able pupils' needs, they read with increasing confidence. They read with inflection and appropriate emphasis. Teachers are challenging pupils to read more complex texts, and recent work on developing pupils' understanding of texts is beginning to bear fruit.
- The most able pupils write with accurate use of grammar and punctuation. However, their spelling and presentation of work need further development.
- Finally, I investigated the impact that pupil premium funding is having for disadvantaged pupils. The school has a lower proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals than seen typically nationally. However, the number of children looked after is higher. Leaders ensure that robust transition plans are in place for disadvantaged pupils so that they settle in swiftly when they join the school and are successful when they move class or leave for secondary school.
- Those disadvantaged pupils who show particularly challenging behaviours are well served. Staff make good use of effective support by external agencies to bring about change and ensure that pupils are ready to learn. Intervention work for some pupils is effective in ensuring that they are more ready to learn and can reintegrate into their class in good time. In most classes, teaching staff do not give sufficient thought to developing disadvantaged pupils' skills and resilience.
- Leaders work well with pupils, parents and teachers to craft personal education plans for children looked after. These are of a high quality and are regularly reviewed, with interim reviews being carried out when needed.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a coherent strategy to improve the presentation and accuracy of pupils' written work, including spelling, is implemented
- teaching assistants have the training and support they need to improve their skills and understanding of learning, so that they can fully contribute to accelerating pupils' progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Iain Freeland
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, you joined me in observing learning in all classes. We looked at the work of a number of pupils. I spoke with pupils while they were playing at breaktime and over lunch. I met with a number of parents at the start of the day. Meetings were held with you, the designated leader for safeguarding and two governors.

I scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school's own analysis of strengths and weaknesses, assessment information, safeguarding records and personal education plans for children looked after. I considered the views of 31 parents who responded to Parent View and the 40 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.