

Upperby Primary School

Uldale Road, Upperby, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA2 4JT

Inspection dates

27–28 February 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Too few pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve well in English and mathematics by the end of key stage 2. Although things are beginning to improve under the school's new leadership, a legacy of underachievement means that pupils currently in the school are having to work hard to close gaps in their learning.
- Despite the important changes that the new senior leadership team has made, too much teaching is ineffective and requires further improvement.
- Teaching does not routinely provide pupils, including the most able, with work that challenges them sufficiently, especially in writing. This has a negative impact on the progress that pupils make over time.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their important reading, writing and mathematics skills across a wide range of subjects. In most subjects, leaders' understanding of progress is at an early stage of development.
- The teaching of phonics in key stage 1 does not routinely provide pupils with the challenge they need in order to make good progress from the end of the early years foundation stage.
- Governors do not ask leaders enough challenging questions about pupils' progress, including that of disadvantaged pupils, to enable them to hold leaders fully to account.
- Improvements that leaders and governors have made to the curriculum are at too early a stage to have had an impact on pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have used professional development opportunities well to improve teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics. Current pupils are making better progress in mathematics as a result.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Teachers' high expectations of pupils mean that most develop good attitudes to learning and behave very well.
- Provision for children in the early years is good. Children benefit from good teaching that helps most to make strong progress from their various starting points.
- Leaders and governors have established very effective systems for keeping pupils safe from harm. Good training helps staff to be vigilant, and pupils say that they feel safe in school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - governors ask more challenging questions about leaders' progress towards meeting their improvement priorities, so that they can hold them more stringently to account for the outcomes of all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged
 - subject leads develop a stronger understanding of standards in their subjects, so that they can monitor pupils' progress more effectively.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teaching routinely provides all groups of pupils with work that challenges them, especially in writing and phonics, so that they make strong progress and attain well
 - pupils have regular opportunities to practise their reading, writing and, where appropriate, mathematics skills across a wide range of subjects.
- Improve outcomes by ensuring that more pupils make the strong progress they need to reach at least the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- A period of turbulence in the school's leadership following the last inspection has taken its toll on pupils' outcomes. The challenge of appointing both a new headteacher and a new deputy headteacher at the same time meant that governors' attention was taken away from addressing the recommendations for improvement following the last inspection.
- By the time the new leadership team was in place, outcomes had declined further because the necessary improvements to the quality of teaching had not been made quickly enough. The result has been a legacy of underachievement, especially for older pupils in key stage 2. Too few have made enough progress to reach the expected standards in the key stage 2 national tests in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the relatively short time since her appointment, the new headteacher has galvanised everyone into action. She has set a clear vision that is strongly focused on improving outcomes for pupils. This has already earned her the respect of all staff and governors.
- Ably supported by the new deputy, the headteacher has focused her energies sharply on making much-needed improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. These improvements have been successful in arresting any further decline in standards and are now beginning to make a positive difference to pupils' achievements. However, pupils' progress, especially in key stage 2, is still not strong enough to leave Upperby pupils with the right skills to succeed in secondary school.
- Leaders have effective plans in place to develop the curriculum across a range of subjects. The implementation of these plans is at a very early stage, so their impact on pupils' knowledge and skills across these subjects is not fully developed.
- Subject leaders are becoming more involved in activities to monitor the quality of teaching in their subjects. However, in most subjects, their understanding of standards is not yet sufficiently secure to enable them to identify more precisely where teaching needs to improve.
- Leadership of mathematics is effective. The mathematics leader has used his specialist knowledge to change and update the school's approach to teaching mathematics, ensuring that pupils develop mathematical fluency and then learn to use their mathematical skills practically. This is having an impact on the progress that pupils currently in school are making in mathematics.
- Leaders have recently implemented changes to the ways in which teachers plan for the development of pupils' reading skills. These changes are having an impact on the progress that pupils make, especially in their comprehension skills.
- Leaders' progress in making improvements to the teaching of writing has been slower to have an impact on pupils currently in the school, especially in key stage 2. Teaching does not routinely challenge pupils enough, especially the most able, to enable them to make strong progress.
- Effective leadership of the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) means that these pupils generally make strong progress

from their individual starting points. Leaders and teachers work together to ensure that pupils with SEND receive the support they need from the appropriate agencies.

- Leaders make effective use of the physical education and sport premium to encourage more pupils to participate in sport and to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils have access to a range of experiences and are encouraged to engage in competitive sports events. During the inspection, the school's gymnastics team received confirmation of its place in the national finals of a competition it had entered.

Governance of the school

- Since her arrival in post, the new headteacher has made sure that governors have a wide range of important information, including about pupils' achievements. The quality of this information has enabled governors to understand more fully the extent to which pupils' outcomes need to improve. They now have a more accurate view of the school's current priorities for development.
- Governors are highly committed to the school and fully support the headteacher's vision to raise standards for pupils. However, records of their work show that they challenge leaders insufficiently in relation to their efforts to improve the school. They are too reliant upon the information that leaders provide and do not ask enough questions about the achievements of particular groups of pupils. As a result, they do not hold leaders sufficiently to account for pupils' outcomes, including those of disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors are committed to improving their effectiveness. They have embraced the opportunities available to them from the local authority to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses and to devise plans for improving the effectiveness of their work. These plans are at an early stage of development.
- Governors involve themselves enthusiastically in the life of the school and understand very well the community that the school serves. They visit the school regularly and provide an important point of contact for parents and carers, for example during parents' evenings. This helps them to understand the views of parents, which are generally highly supportive of the school's work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors have established a culture of safeguarding in the school. Checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are thorough, and records of these checks are carefully monitored to make sure that they are up to date. Staff and governors have regular training on important aspects of safeguarding.
- Leaders and governors have made a number of important improvements to the security of the school's premises in order to keep pupils safe. Parents who spoke to inspectors said that they value these changes.
- Leaders make sure that all staff are well trained to recognise the signs of abuse and to take the right actions in order to keep pupils safe from harm. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They know how to keep themselves safe online and know who to go to if they need help or are worried.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Too much teaching is ineffective and requires further improvement.
- Where learning is planned effectively, pupils settle to work quickly because they know what is expected of them. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 5, pupils lost no time in becoming involved in their learning because they understood the clear learning objectives that their teacher had set. Pupils were highly attentive because the work they received was challenging. They focused well on their learning and made progress.
- Where learning is not as well planned, time is not used effectively. Pupils sometimes have to wait too long for further instructions before they are able to proceed. Some pupils, especially the most able, find the work too easy and finish quickly, while pupils of lower ability sometimes struggle to understand. When these things happen, some pupils become distracted and disengaged from their learning and so make less progress than they otherwise would.
- Where teachers' subject knowledge is secure, they build well upon pupils' prior learning because they know what pupils need to learn next. They use questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding and to encourage them to think more deeply. For example, during the inspection, skilful questioning in a Year 4 lesson enabled pupils to realise how much they could predict about a story from the book's cover. Pupils had time to discuss what they had learned and to practise their skills, and as a result they made strong progress.
- Where teachers' subject knowledge is less well developed, they do not build systematically enough upon pupils' prior understanding. Pupils find it more difficult to make links between their experiences and they do not deepen their understanding sufficiently as a result.
- Learning is generally well planned in mathematics, because the training that leaders have provided has enabled teachers to develop strong subject knowledge. Most pupils receive work that challenges them to apply their skills in a range of ways. This helps them to develop 'fluency', so that they know how to tackle different kinds of problems and questions. Most pupils currently in the school, including those who are disadvantaged and the most able pupils, are now making stronger progress in mathematics.
- Information gathered from observations and from pupils' work shows that in writing, teaching does not routinely provide pupils with work that is sufficiently challenging. Too frequently, pupils, especially the most able, receive work that does not stretch them or enable them to develop better technical skills for improving the quality of their writing. This prevents them from making the strong progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have established strong relationships with pupils that have a positive impact on their attitudes to learning. Teachers and staff have a good understanding of the learning needs of their pupils and share important information that contributes to the assessment of pupils' progress. This helps them to provide the right support, including for pupils with SEND. Most pupils stay focused as a result.
- The quality of the teaching of phonics for younger children is too variable. Where it is stronger, especially in the Reception class, teachers' strong subject knowledge ensures that children build securely upon what they already know so that their learning

develops and their understanding deepens. In key stage 1, the teaching of phonics does not routinely build sufficiently upon what pupils have already learned, and they make less progress as a result.

- There is inconsistency in the extent to which pupils practise their reading, writing and, where appropriate, their mathematical skills across a range of subjects. In subjects such as history and geography, for example, pupils have more opportunities to read and to write at length. This enables them to practise and refine the skills they have learned in their English lessons. However, in most subjects there are fewer opportunities for pupils to practise writing and especially to practise their mathematical skills. Consequently, pupils do not apply their developing knowledge and skills in a wide enough range of situations.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have established very clear systems for staff to share a range of information and to report any concerns about pupils' welfare. Teachers and support staff value these systems and say that they have improved their understanding of the range of factors that have an impact on pupils' readiness to learn. This helps teachers to plan better to meet pupils' needs.
- The good relationships between pupils, teachers and staff encourage pupils to develop good attitudes to learning. For example, teachers help pupils to see mistakes as opportunities to learn. Pupils particularly enjoy striving for 'You Can Do It' points, which they exchange for 'Upperby pounds' that they can spend in the school shop. Pupils say that this encourages them to try harder in lessons.
- Pupils develop an understanding of fundamental British values and recognise the importance of tolerance, respect and democracy. They learn to appreciate diversity in their community and in the wider world. They talk confidently and positively about different faiths, cultures and beliefs and understand differences in families. Through discussions in class, they learn to share their ideas and to listen to each other's views. Those who spoke to inspectors were very keen to share their views on a range of topics, including current political issues in the media.
- Pupils enjoy participating in a range of after-school clubs and extra-curricular activities, ranging from chess to gymnastics, football and dance. Leaders provide opportunities to broaden pupils' awareness of their local area and the wider region and to develop their social skills through trips, visits and residential stays.
- Older pupils in key stage 2 develop an understanding of how their learning is helping them to prepare for the next stage in their education. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 had the opportunity to take part in the school's first 'careers fair', where they met representatives from local businesses and organisations such as the National Health Service. This enabled pupils to ask questions in order to find out at first hand the skills and knowledge they might need in order to prepare for particular careers.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and respectful to their teachers, to visitors and to each other. They conduct themselves well and the school is a happy, orderly place. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that bullying is rare but that if it does occur, they know it will be dealt with quickly.
- Leaders have successfully maintained pupils' good levels of attendance at school. Information from the school's records shows that attendance is currently at least in line with national averages. Pupils are encouraged to develop good attendance habits, for example through the awarding of certificates for coming to school every day. Leaders have established effective systems for monitoring pupils' attendance over time. They work well with families and, where appropriate, external agencies in order to improve the attendance of pupils whose absences are persistent.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics have been slow to improve. In 2018, the proportions of pupils in Year 6 making enough progress to reach at least the expected and higher standards in the national key stage 2 tests in reading and mathematics and in the teacher assessments for writing were well below the national average. Only half of all pupils reached at least the expected standard in all three subjects combined. These proportions were even lower for disadvantaged pupils, very few of whom were well prepared for secondary school as a result.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics in the key stage 1 national tests in 2018, although improved from 2017, was still below the national averages at both the expected standards and at greater depth.
- Recent improvements to teaching and to the school's systems for assessment, introduced by the new senior leadership team, are beginning to change things for the better across the school. Information from these systems together with the work in pupils' books suggest that more pupils currently in the school are making progress towards reaching the expected standards for their age. Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making progress that is similar to, and in some cases better than, that of other pupils with similar starting points.
- Current pupils are making strong progress in mathematics. Improvements that leaders have made to teachers' subject knowledge mean that work is now typically more challenging in most year groups, including for the most able pupils. However, it is too early to see the impact of these improvements in published information about the school's outcomes at the end of key stage 2.
- Information from the school's assessments together with other evidence gathered during the inspection suggest that recent changes introduced by leaders are having a positive impact on pupils' progress in reading, particularly in their comprehension skills. Most pupils are on track to reach the expected standards for their age. Pupils say that they enjoy reading and choosing books from the attractive library areas that leaders provide.

- Pupils do not make sufficient progress in writing. Where inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching of writing, work does not challenge pupils sufficiently. This is particularly the case for the most and least able pupils across the school and for pupils generally in lower key stage 2, who make less progress as a result.
- The outcomes of younger pupils in the national phonics screening test at the end of Year 1 have been slow to improve and have remained below the national average in recent years. Pupils of higher ability in particular are not challenged enough to enable them to make the strong progress of which they are capable. Consequently, outcomes in phonics still require further improvement.
- Changes that leaders have made to the curriculum are enabling pupils to learn across a wide range of subjects, including science, geography, history, art, and design technology. Assessment of their progress in these subjects is at an early stage.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders and managers have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. As a result of the good teaching they receive, children in the early years make strong progress from their typically low starting points. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has increased steadily since the last inspection. Differences between disadvantaged children and others nationally are also diminishing over time.
- Leaders and managers have successfully established strong partnerships with parents and other agencies. This enables them to share information about children's progress and to secure support for children whose development is causing concern. Parents who spoke to inspectors said that they value greatly the information they receive from the school.
- Children have access to a wide range of resources indoors and outdoors that they can select for themselves, as well as to activities that adults lead. They develop curiosity and a willingness to try things out for themselves and quickly become engrossed in learning as a result.
- Leaders and adults ensure that children have opportunities to develop their early literacy and mathematical skills. For example, during the inspection, children in the Reception class enjoyed using the available space to spread out and order their number tiles, while a boy in the Nursery listened carefully as his friend read him a story from a favourite book. Adults have made improvements to the outdoor areas to promote children's developing literacy and numeracy skills. These improvements are at an earlier stage in the Nursery.
- Leaders and managers have established effective systems for assessing children's learning and development. These help them to plan well for children's learning. Adults generally use questioning skilfully to encourage children to share their thoughts and ideas, so that they can assess their understanding. This also helps children to develop their speaking and listening skills as well as to think carefully.
- Arrangements for safeguarding children in the early years are effective and are aligned with those across the school. Staff are appropriately qualified and there are no breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the early years foundation stage.

- Children's behaviour in the early years is good, because adults have established simple but clear routines and rules for them to follow. They learn to share resources and to cooperate, and they tidy up readily when the time comes to put things away.
- Children with SEND are well supported in the early years. Leaders and adults work effectively with parents and other agencies to identify and address children's varying needs and to help them progress well.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 112243 |
| Local authority | Cumbria |
| Inspection number | 10057923 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 419 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | William Atkinson |
| Headteacher | Jose Hodgkins |
| Telephone number | 01228 815460 |
| Website | www.upperbyschool.co.uk/ |
| Email address | upperbyinfo@upperbycdc.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 3–24 November 2016 |

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school roll is increasing in size.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.
- More pupils than average have an education, health and care plan.
- There are fewer pupils than average who speak English as an additional language.
- The school has a Nursery class and offers some places for 30 hours per week for children whose parents meet the necessary criteria.
- The school runs a breakfast club and a range of after-school clubs.
- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher and a new deputy headteacher have been appointed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons.
- Meetings were held with senior and subject leaders, school staff and the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke informally with pupils in lessons and during breaks. They also spoke formally with a group of pupils and with some parents.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work during lessons and work produced over time in a range of their books. They also listened to a selection of pupils from key stages 1 and 2 reading.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at the latest school performance information showing the current pupils' progress.
- Other documentation scrutinised included plans for school improvement, safeguarding information, behaviour logs, attendance records and minutes of governing-body meetings.
- Inspectors took account of 45 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and to the free-text service. They also took account of 105 responses to the pupils' survey and 16 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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