

Uplands Junior L.E.A.D Academy

Melbourne Road, Highfields, Leicester, Leicestershire LE2 0DR

Inspection dates

12 to 13 March 2019

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has wasted no time in bringing about major improvements to all aspects of the school. He is uncompromising in his determination to raise standards.
- Good teaching is thriving because of strong leadership and good training to improve the teachers' skills.
- The multi-academy trustees check that teaching and pupils' outcomes are continuing to improve, and that all groups of pupils are learning well.
- The school has a culture of success and positivity. Teachers know what is expected of them, and they support leaders' determination to ensure that all pupils have the best education.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good. They plan work that is well matched to the differing needs of pupils.
- Leaders are building a curriculum that helps pupils to build on what they already know. Teachers revisit aspects repeatedly so that pupils remember things automatically.
- The school is a harmonious, multi-faith community. Pupils have a very good understanding of British values.
- Pupils leave Year 6 well prepared for secondary school. Their progress is good and their attainment slightly above that of other pupils of the same age nationally.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school to learn. Their overall attendance is above the national average.
- A range of thoughtfully-planned activities promotes pupils' physical and mental wellbeing effectively.
- Pupils are well-behaved. The very rare instances of bullying are dealt with effectively and quickly by their teachers.
- Pupils are happy and try their best. Their work is neat, and they listen carefully to their teachers.
- Parents have positive views about the school and its leadership. Parents feel that leaders and teachers listen and take note of their thoughts and opinions.
- Several subject leaders are relatively new to their post. Not all of them have a sufficiently detailed overview of the curriculum, or of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all classes, in the subjects they lead.
- More established subject leaders have not had the opportunities to ensure that the changes teachers have agreed to make are being implemented as leaders intend.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further by ensuring that:
 - leaders, for subjects other than English and mathematics, complete their reviews of long- and medium-term planning and check that their colleagues are teaching pupils the knowledge and skills they should
 - subject leaders check that teachers' assessments are accurate, and that the information they collect is passed to senior leaders
 - leaders for all subjects are given opportunities to check that improvements are fully embedded over the longer term, in all classes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher sets an energetic 'can do' example for teachers and pupils alike. He has created a positive ethos and built an ambitious learning community.
- Leaders are determined that all pupils will receive a good education and be well prepared for secondary school.
- Teachers are united in their support for senior leaders. They strongly support the changes that leaders have made, especially those led by the headteacher. This is because they can see the rapid improvements that have occurred in the quality of teaching and in pupils' attitudes to learning.
- The headteacher has a detailed knowledge of the school's performance and is continually analysing its strengths and weaknesses. Evidence from a wide range of sources shows the impact of the actions he has taken to bring improvements. Leaders are sharply focused on implementing the impressive three-year strategic plan, with its milestones against which success can be measured, in order to continue the positive trajectory of improvement.
- Leaders have improved the quality of teaching, to ensure that it is consistently good, by providing teachers with effective, high-quality training. The headteacher noted that pupils were not making strong progress in reading. Through the trust, he identified a highly effective teacher who visited the school to model the best practice in the teaching of reading.
- Experienced subject leaders at the school have also provided good guidance and support to colleagues. The headteacher has supported both his senior and subject leaders to study for nationally accredited qualifications so that they can be highly effective in their role.
- The school is developing a broad and balanced curriculum which is appealing to pupils. The knowledge that they acquire in one academic year is then revisited and added to in subsequent years. This helps pupils to know and remember more. For example, pupils in Year 3 learn about life in the Stone Age. In Year 4, they find out the impact of invasions by the Anglo-Saxons. In Year 5, they study how clothes, jewellery and buildings changed in much later periods, such as the Victorian period.
- The curriculum is supplemented by a wide range of clubs that pupils enjoy, and which help them develop their skills and interests.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are taught how they belong to a global community and take part in, for example, the 'digital choir'. Pupils present assemblies in order to explain about the many different faiths in the school, which are warmly welcomed by parents. Pupils can give reasoned arguments regarding complex moral issues, such as whether everyone should vote if they have the right to do so. Pupils are reflective about their own beliefs, and their imagination is shown clearly in both their creative English and artwork.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of British values. These values are prominently promoted around the school and in the curriculum. Pupils can speak confidently about

the importance of individual liberty, the need for law, and how they must always respect others. They are taught sensitively about current events, such as Brexit, in a balanced way. This helps pupils consider issues that affect all citizens. Pupils are extremely well prepared for life in modern Britain.

- Leaders spend the pupil premium well and produce good reports to the trust to show the impact of the additional funding on teaching and learning. This allows the trust to hold leaders to account and to check that the progress of disadvantaged pupils is strong.
- The primary physical education and sports funding is well spent. Pupils take part in a large number of inter-school competitions, including athletics, swimming, and tag rugby. In line with the school's highly inclusive approach, competitions are open to all groups of pupils.
- The coordinator of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective in her role. She checks that staff provide good support for these pupils and that additional funding is spent effectively. Pupils who arrive with little or no English quickly become confident in speaking and reading.
- Parents' views of the school are very positive. A very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View would recommend it to others. All agreed that the school is well led and managed. These highly favourable views are reflected in both the school's own most recent survey of parental opinion and the views of the parents who inspectors spoke with during the inspection.
- As leaders have, rightly, prioritised ensuring consistently good teaching of reading, writing and mathematics, the leadership of some subjects, such as geography and art, is not yet fully developed. Several subject leaders are relatively new to their posts. Not all of them have a sufficiently detailed overview of the curriculum, or of the quality of teaching and learning across all classes, in the subjects they lead. They cannot be certain whether all teachers assess precisely what pupils know and can do.
- Some leaders have not had enough opportunities to check that all the improvements they have brought about are being sustained across all classes.

Governance of the school

- The multi-academy trust has provided high-quality and effective support to the school and its leadership. After a period of staffing turbulence, they helped the headteacher to quickly secure a stable team of capable teachers. They have given useful guidance to leaders to help them ensure that teachers both plan and deliver teaching that meets the needs of pupils. They hold leaders to account by asking them challenging questions about the education that pupils receive, and they check that the actions leaders are taking are effective.
- The academy advisory board plays a useful role in informing leaders about the views of the local community. This helps to ensure that leaders and the local community have a shared understanding and that they hold each other in mutual respect.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that all members of staff are thoroughly trained in safeguarding, including in areas of recent national concern, such as radicalisation. All members of staff are highly aware of the need to report any concern that a child is being exploited or abused to leaders. Leaders, in turn, work with families and external agencies to help protect vulnerable pupils.
- The school's website gives good detailed information for parents as to how they can keep their child safe from, for example, online grooming.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers' subject knowledge is good. This helps them to deliver new learning confidently to pupils.
- Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to know, do and remember. They plan and prepare lessons with care. They ensure that resources are available so that no learning time is lost. Inspectors saw how, when teaching computing, the teacher had prepared clear instructions for higher-ability pupils. This allowed them to access a new program independently, so she could teach other pupils directly.
- Teachers understand the needs of different groups of pupils and set them work with the right amount of challenge. Pupils confirm that the work they are set challenges them.
- Teachers model how pupils should complete their work. This helps pupils to know if they are successfully reaching the standards their teachers expect. These standards include a clear expectation that pupils are industrious. Pupils produce plenty of work.
- Relationships are consistently positive and respectful. All teachers, including temporary teachers, speak to pupils courteously. In turn, pupils listen to what they are taught, respond politely to adults and each other, and follow instructions quickly. Classrooms are calm but purposeful learning environments where pupils cooperate well. They are keen to answer the challenging questions that their teachers ask them.
- Teachers expect pupils to remember important knowledge and recall it, such as the multiplication tables. These help pupils to complete their work with speed and accuracy. Teachers notice if pupils have misconceptions and correct these quickly.
- Teachers skilfully guide pupils to explain their thinking, regularly asking them to justify their answers. This helps pupils to learn to communicate both orally and in writing their conclusions or judgements. Pupils in Year 6 were told that, if a speleologist had discovered a cave with a rare species of plant or animal inside, it might be closed to visitors. Pupils were asked to use evidence to justify why this might be both a good and a bad idea.
- Teachers are highly effective at teaching pupils new words. They repeat these frequently so that pupils will become familiar with them. Teachers often introduce vocabulary in advance of the main lesson. For instance, inspectors saw pupils in Year 3 taught the word 'exceptionally' so that they could use it when describing the book they were studying the following week. Pupils are then able to use new words when

learning different subjects. Pupils are also given memorable first-hand experiences which help them remember technical vocabulary, for example the names of the different parts of a flower by visiting the botanical gardens.

- Teaching assistants support pupils' progress well. They use the same language as the teachers and have identical expectations to them so that pupils receive a consistent approach.
- The homework pupils are given helps them to remember things they have learned in class. This is completed to the same neat standard seen in books pupils use in school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are taught that, to be a successful learner, they must work hard and learn from their mistakes. They ask good questions and are curious about the world. Pupils say that the school encourages them to be independent and take on responsibilities.
- Teachers encourage pupils to be healthy. Pupils were excited to explain to inspectors how much they enjoy the many opportunities the school provides for them in, for instance, football, badminton, boxing and boccia.
- The school has a range of different activities to promote pupils' emotional health, including 'Mindfulness Monday', 'Wellbeing Wednesday' and 'Thankful Fridays'. Inspectors saw pupils being taught how to focus on their breathing, and how to imagine relaxing scenes and images. Inspectors noted how the calm and positive teaching helped pupils to feel very safe and to immediately focus on their academic learning.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe from a range of risks, including online. Pupils are also taught valuable first-aid lessons.
- The school has received a community anti-bullying award for its work. Pupils told inspectors how bullying was extremely infrequent and, if it ever happened, was always dealt with well by adults. Pupils feel that they can approach teachers if ever they are concerned about anything.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are consistently polite to each other and to adults, including visitors. Pupils come into school calmly, ready for their lessons. In classrooms, they complete their work neatly. They are proud of their work, examples of which form vibrant displays on corridors. They are also proud of their school. They wear their uniform smartly and take care of property.
- On the rare occasions when pupils' attention lapses momentarily in class, or they forget to walk down the corridor sensibly, teachers quickly remind them of the school's high expectations of their behaviour. Pupils respond positively and without delay.

- Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average in the previous academic year and is currently above this, including for disadvantaged pupils. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school is slightly higher than the national average, due to some families taking unauthorised term-time holidays with their children. Leaders are taking robust action to reduce this as quickly as possible.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. A detailed scrutiny of pupils' work confirmed that they are currently making stronger progress in writing and mathematics than in previous years, when it was average. This illustrates the positive impact of improvements in the quality of teaching. The most notable and rapid improvement is in pupils' progress in reading. The steps taken by the headteacher, in response to the data showing that, in the previous two academic years, pupils' progress in reading was well below the national average, have been very successful.
- Exercise books completed by disadvantaged pupils show that they are making good progress. A good proportion of these pupils in the current Year 6 cohort are set to attain the higher standard in reading.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points, and they become increasingly confident across different subjects over time.
- The most able pupils make good gains and attain well. Last year, the proportions who attained the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined was slightly above the national average. School information suggests that, this year, this is set to rise further to around one in five pupils.
- School data indicates that the proportion of pupils who are currently on track to attain the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined by the end of this year will be above the current national average. Pupils leave the school well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils now enjoy reading, and they do so in school every day. Teachers give them many opportunities to read, including the reading champions initiative. This more positive approach is increasing pupils' reading abilities. Many confident readers visit younger peers in the school to support their reading, while students from De Montfort University attend each week to help the most able readers become even more skilled in considering and responding to the books they read.
- Pupils make strong progress in science. They develop a good knowledge of scientific facts and use them to investigate and draw conclusions, such as 'the louder the sound, the bigger the vibrations'. Pupils in Year 6 study how the work of Carl Linnaeus on the taxonomy of living things was developed from the theories of Aristotle.
- Pupils make good progress in physical education. The leader of this subject has carefully adapted the PE curriculum to meet the needs of pupils. It contains extensive and exciting opportunities for sport, and for boys and girls to take part in competitive challenges alongside each other. A bespoke assessment system encourages pupils to assess their own skills.

School details

Unique reference number	142787
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10087325

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	478
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mark Blois
Headteacher	Danny Bullock
Telephone number	0116 253 8407
Website	www.uplands-jun.leicester.sch.uk
Email address	office@uplandsacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened on 1 June 2016 and is part of the L.E.A.D. multi-academy trust. The headteacher is accountable to the trust for all aspects of the school's work, including the quality of education, pupils' outcomes, the safety of pupils and staffing. Academy advisory board members act as representatives of the local community, but do not have delegated decision-making powers.
- This is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority backgrounds is well above average. Around two thirds of the pupils are Asian or are British Asian. Ten other ethnic minority groups make up the remainder of the school role.
- Around nine out of 10 pupils speak English as an additional language, a proportion that is much higher than the national average. Some arrive at the school speaking little or no English.

- The proportion of pupils with SEND is slightly below average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classrooms. Several of these took place with the headteacher. In total, learning was observed in 28 lessons. Inspectors also scrutinised many examples of pupils’ workbooks from different ability groups in all classes and across a wide range of subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the coordinator for pupils with SEND, the curriculum coordinator, and the subject leaders for mathematics, English, religious education, music and physical education. They met with representatives of the L.E.A.D multi-academy trust and with members of the academy advisory board. They analysed the 18 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, looked at the free-text comments submitted, and spoke with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also looked at the views of the parents who had responded to the school’s most recent questionnaire, and scrutinised responses to Ofsted’s questionnaires for pupils and for the staff.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school’s development plan and self-evaluation, policies and records related to safeguarding and pupils with SEND, the school’s information about pupils’ achievement and attendance, and records of meetings of the multi-academy trust.

Inspection team

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