

Upton Noble C of E VC Primary School

Upton Noble Shepton Mallet Somerset BA4 6AU

Inspection dates

21 to 22 May 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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The strong collaborative leadership of the interim executive headteacher and the head of school has brought significant improvement this year. Together, with good support from knowledgeable, skilled governors, they have built on the positive work of the previous executive headteacher.
- As a team, leaders have responded to specialist support from the local authority to develop consistently good leadership, teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Some middle leaders are new to their responsibilities. They have yet to have a full impact across the school in raising standards.
- Excellent relationships between adults and pupils and between the pupils themselves underpin the pupils' good behaviour and often exemplary attitudes to learning.
- All those associated with the school appreciate the way Christian values and a welcoming community atmosphere promote pupils' learning.
- Safeguarding procedures are meticulously checked and implemented. Consequently, pupils feel safe, enjoy school and almost all attend well.
- The quality of teaching has improved significantly and is more consistent than at the time of the previous inspection. Good teaching ensures that pupils learn well and that standards continue to rise across the school.
- Most pupils, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make strong progress across a wide, stimulating curriculum. However, teaching does not consistently extend the writing and mathematical skills of lower attaining pupils.
- Teachers are working effectively to engender a love of reading in the pupils. This, with sustained strong teaching of phonics and stimulating topics, is promoting pupils' good progress in reading, especially by the most able.
- The early years pre-school and Reception classes are well led and teaching and learning are effective. As a result, children are now much better prepared for learning in Year 1 than previously.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the writing and mathematical skills of lower attaining pupils by teachers more consistently:
 - developing pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammatical skills
 - setting work for pupils that more precisely enables them to make the next steps in learning, including to extend their mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Improve leadership and management further to ensure that:
 - middle leaders are enabled to contribute more effectively to raising standards and developing the curriculum in their areas of subject responsibility across the school
 - staff at all levels have opportunities to develop their teaching by sharing the best practice now evident across the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Governors, with effective support from the local authority, have been both strategic and proactive in successfully managing changes in leadership and teaching. The interim executive headteacher has worked decisively since her appointment this year to build on the improvements made by her predecessor. Her strong collaboration with the head of school has ensured that leaders and governors work effectively as a team to sustain rapid improvement.
- Effective leadership and the strengthened, and more consistently good, teaching, assessment and learning reflect the school's secure capacity to continue improving. Middle leaders are developing. They are using their expertise to improve teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility. However, some middle leaders have not been in post long enough to have a significant impact. Leaders, including governors, have strengthened their procedures for checking the effectiveness of the school. In particular, they now have an accurate view of how teaching has an impact on pupils' learning. As a consequence, their decision-making and planned actions have been correctly focused. This is evident in the way early years provision has developed and is becoming one of the strengths of the school.
- The richness of the curriculum, which includes strong promotion of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is another strong feature of the school. Leaders have ensured that the school's values help pupils become effective learners and model citizens. Christian and British values are woven closely through class topics and assembly themes. For example, pupils' poems read out in assembly showed their strong interest in preserving the environment for future generations. As a result, pupils leave school ready for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils. This is evident in their effective use of additional funds so that pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged are supported well and make good progress. Leaders also make good use of the primary sport premium to develop pupils' stamina and fitness. For example, the use of funds to establish the school's running track now supports the pupils' healthy exercise in all weather.
- Some parents expressed concerns about frequent changes in leadership and staffing, but most welcome the actions taken by leaders to re-establish pupils' good achievement. The views of parents were reflected by one parent who wrote, 'As parents, we feel strongly that Upton Noble provides a happy, safe and nurturing environment for our children.'

Governance of the school

- Governors fulfil their duties effectively. They have responded well to the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. Governors have implemented the actions recommended in the local authority review of governance. Governors have strengthened their procedures and established a clear strategic vision for the further development of the school.

- Governors have provided effective challenge and support for the interim executive headteacher and the head of school. As a team, they continue to target the right areas for improvement. For example, governors have undertaken training to improve their work. They have supported senior staff and have allocated funds to support training for teachers and other staff. This has improved the quality of teaching and assessment and pupils' achievements.
- Strengthened governance is also seen in the effective use of additional funds to secure the good progress of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Governors continue to have the full support of the staff and parents in sustaining the school's values and pupils' education on Christian principles.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have created a strong safeguarding culture that permeates the school. All staff and governors undertake regular training. They understand the various aspects of safeguarding, for example to prevent radicalisation and extremism. Administrative staff assist leaders in ensuring that safeguarding records are of a high quality. They include rigorous checks to keep them up to date and ensure that staff implement the required procedures to keep pupils safe. The precision of these checks is evident in the way the business manager contacts all those supplying references for staff to double check their validity.
- When questioned, staff demonstrated that they know how to identify children at risk and what actions to take to keep them safe. Staff know pupils and their families well. They maintain supportive relationships, not only to keep the pupils safe, but to assist in their well-being and learning. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance effectively and work closely with parents and outside agencies to check that those missing school remain safe. Adaptations to improve the security of the school's facilities, required by the previous inspection, have not been welcomed by some parents. Nevertheless, they have been fully implemented and now more securely keep pupils safe both indoors and outside.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire and those spoken with consider that their children are secure at school. Typically, one parent wrote, 'Our children are happy and safe at this school.' Pupils say that, 'We all get on together and look after each other.' When questioned, pupils talk knowledgeably about how to stay safe, including when online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good and has improved since the previous inspection. All teachers have benefited from well-planned professional development opportunities. In particular, teachers have improved the way they assess pupils' starting points and the impact that teaching has on their developing skills. Consequently, pupils make good progress.
- Teachers work effectively with teaching assistants. Learning in all classrooms is typified by adults' good management of pupils' behaviour and very supportive relationships. Teachers show good knowledge and provide imaginative learning experiences that stimulate pupils' interest and engagement. Consequently, all pupils enjoy school and

want to do well.

- Teachers have raised their expectations of what pupils should achieve. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6, enthused by the teachers' precise guidance and high expectations, maturely and thoughtfully discussed and refined their ideas with each other. The most able pupils are challenged effectively in all classes. As result, a larger proportion of pupils are now working a greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics. Most other groups of pupils are achieving equally well.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and deployed effectively. They support teachers in meeting the needs of pupils with SEND and ensure that they are fully included in all aspects of school life.
- Teachers' expertise has improved, but so too has the challenge of meeting wide variations in pupils' needs and abilities on entry to the school. In recent years, this challenge has also included bridging gaps in prior learning experienced by an increasing number of pupils joining the school other than at the normal time of entry. At times, some lower-attaining pupils, including those who arrived other than at the normal times, are not given enough guidance to address their individual needs. This means that skills such as spelling, punctuation and grammar are not developed quickly enough. Occasionally, teachers are not checking and advancing pupils' understanding. This limits pupils' comprehension of mathematical terms and restricts their ability to reason.
- Leaders and teachers are increasingly learning from one another. However, several are new to their leadership roles and have not yet shared their strong practice widely enough.
- Teaching of phonics is a strength which, with increased focus on developing pupils' love of reading at school and at home, is now securing pupils' good progress in reading.
- Teachers sustain an effective focus on extending pupils' vocabulary and increasing their interest through stimulating texts and topics. For example, in Year 4, the teacher skilfully used the pupils' keen interest in the Vikings to show how they could use relative clauses to improve their writing. In mathematics, teachers' well-planned use of practical, often real-life problem-solving activities enthuses pupils and sustains their good progress. Stimulating classroom displays and pupils' books show that pupils' writing and mathematical skills are used and developed well across a range of subjects.

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 proud of their school and appreciate its warm and confidence-boosting atmosphere.
- Staff set high standards and promote very supportive relationships. Pupils of all ages are happy, confident and assured. Pupils value each other's ideas and help each other to learn well. The high-quality presentation in the majority of pupils' books shows pride in their work. Pupils' concentration and behaviour for learning are generally strong, but slip on occasion when teachers do not match the work to their needs or check their understanding closely enough.

- Pupils are friendly and considerate to others. They show good manners, for example naturally stepping back or holding the doors open for visitors or one another. These positive personal and collaborative qualities, enriched by the school's Christian values, are an important factor behind the pupils' rapidly improved progress.
- The large majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire or spoke with an inspector made appreciative references to these aspects. One parent typically commented, 'I feel the school has done a fantastic job in preparing my children for secondary school and beyond and, more importantly, to be good and kind citizens.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. When questioned, pupils confidently stated that behaviour is never less than good and often better. They say, 'We all get on together and everyone plays nicely.'
- A small number of parents linked previous frequent changes in staff to variations in their support of pupils' behaviour. School records and inspectors' checks now show that consistent adult support is sustaining at least good and increasingly exemplary behaviour in and out of lessons.
- Pupils have a good awareness of how to live healthy, safe lifestyles. For example, Year 6 pupils convincingly described the risks of smoking. Pupils show good understanding of the different forms that bullying might take and report that it rarely happens. They say that at times, but not often, a few pupils 'fall out', and staff intervene quickly 'to end it'. Pupils say that behaviour in the after-school clubs is good. They say that they enjoy the clubs 'because, they help us to get on well together'. This illustrates the school's success in developing mutual tolerance and respect.
- Most pupils attend well and enjoy school. The diligent work of senior leaders has significantly reduced persistent absence. However, the holidays taken in term time by a small number of pupils limit the rate of attendance to a level that only matches the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Work in pupils' books and the school's moderated and accurate assessments show that current pupils are making good progress in English and mathematics. This represents significant improvement since the previous inspection. In particular, it reflects rapid improvement in pupils' progress this academic year across the school.
- An increasing proportion of pupils across the school are now demonstrating the levels of skills in reading, writing and mathematics expected for their age. The increased number of pupils now working at greater depth in these subjects shows the impact of strengthened teaching and raised expectations.
- Across the school, pupils present their work neatly and show good handwriting skills. Pupils show good speaking and listening skills. They demonstrate a good breadth of vocabulary and relish sharing and expanding their ideas through discussion. For example, a Year 6 pupil contrasted the lack of charity for people in the favela shanty towns in South America with the funds offered to restore the Notre Dame cathedral in Paris. Other pupils' similar depth of thinking is helping them to reach good standards in

writing. This is seen in their improving and well-crafted extended pieces of writing. Pupils' explanations of how they tackle problems also demonstrated their good mathematical skills.

- The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been at or above average in recent years. This stems from strong phonics teaching that gives pupils a good start in learning to read and write. Teachers have successfully raised standards in reading by helping pupils to use their phonics skills more effectively when tackling new words. Pupils are also responding well to stimulating texts and additional help at home and are developing a love of books. This supports their good progress in reading.
- The most able pupils are responding better now than in the past to teachers' raised expectations, and are achieving well. For example, pupils in Year 5 showed deepened thinking when explaining the difference between open and closed questions. Other pupils also benefit from a stimulating curriculum that nurtures their keen interest in learning and good achievement that prepares them well for the future.
- Sometimes teaching is not matched tightly enough to the needs of lower-attaining pupils, particularly those arriving from other schools. This leads to these pupils not catching up and is evident in their weaker spelling, punctuation and grammar skills and in their ability to reason and solve problems in mathematics.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in different year groups varies considerably and is often very small, so comparisons with national outcomes are unreliable. However, in response to strong teaching and support, disadvantaged pupils are currently making good progress across the school.
- Pupils with SEND have their needs carefully assessed and met effectively. As a result, they learn well and make good progress in a range of subjects from their individual starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- Following her appointment at the beginning of this academic year, the leader of early years has acted swiftly and decisively to establish a strong partnership with the leader of the pre-school.
- The early years leader has strengthened staff skills and ensured that children in both settings benefit well from a wide range of high-quality learning activities. As a result, children aged from two to five enjoy learning and make good progress from their different starting points. Most children make especially strong progress in their personal development.
- Improvement assessment procedures are leading to increasingly better quality of teaching. All staff now have a clear picture of the children's interests and levels of development. This is enabling them to plan meaningful and effective learning experiences. Staff provide effective teaching and support to secure the children's strong progress. For example, children in the pre-school discussed days of the week and the weather. They learn happily with each other in role-play areas such as 'The Bakery'. Children in the Reception class responded enthusiastically to the staff's high level of challenge. They make significant gains with some adding and subtracting two-digit

numbers accurately.

- Relationships between adults and children are warm and supportive. As a result, children are happy and behave extremely well. They work and play cooperatively and are proud of their own and each other's work. When challenged, children of all abilities, including those with SEND, confidently expressed their ideas and showed their work to others. Parents of children in early years are immensely appreciative of the way staff 'go beyond expectations' to support their children. They appreciate the workshops and meetings organised to support them in helping their children.
- The indoor and outdoor facilities of the Reception class and of the adjacent 'Tree-House' pre-school are well organised and stimulate children's interest in learning. They are well maintained. The staff's high level of care ensures that children are kept safe. All statutory welfare requirements are in place.
- Phonics is taught well because teachers and staff have been well trained. They openly share their expertise and practice across the pre-school and Reception. Over time, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception has broadly matched that found nationally. Currently, an increasing proportion of children are working at levels that match expectations for their age. The proportion of pupils exceeding a good level of development is also increasing, but improved provision has yet to secure this for all children with the potential to do so. Pupils are, however, well prepared for the next stage of their education.

School details

Unique reference number	123782
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10088306

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phillip Butler
Interim Executive Headteacher	Sandra Leggett
Telephone number	01749 850 375
Website	www.uptonnoble.org.uk
Email address	office@uptonnoble.somerset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 to 2 February 2017

Information about this school

- Upton Noble C of E VC Primary School is part of a hard federation with Bruton Primary school. There is one governing body across the two schools.
- The interim executive headteacher, whose responsibility covers both schools, has been in post since January 2019. Her predecessor executive headteacher left in December 2018. Governors have appointed a new executive headteacher to take up the permanent role in September 2019.
- There is a full-time head of school.
- The school is broadly average in size.
- The majority of the pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national level.

- The percentage of pupils with SEND is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is in line with national average, but exceeds this in some year groups.
- The proportion of pupils who join the school other than at the normal time is above that found nationally.
- Children experience early years provision part-time in a pre-school group and full-time in a Reception class.
- The governing body manages an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 23 lessons and learning activities and saw the work of nine teachers.
- The interim executive headteacher and head of school accompanied the inspectors during most of these visits to lessons.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and the school's self-evaluation.
- The inspection team examined the school's systems for evaluating pupils' progress and records of checks on the quality of teaching.
- The inspectors scrutinised samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects and classes.
- The inspectors talked with individual pupils during lessons and breaktimes about the school and their work. The team inspector listened to individual pupils reading and talked with them about the school. The team inspector also attended a school assembly.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and other representatives of the governing body and held separate telephone conversations with two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders. Inspectors also spoke informally with other teachers, teaching assistants and support staff.
- The inspectors examined the views expressed in 45 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, and in 10 parents' additional written comments. The inspectors listened to the views of several parents as they brought their children to the school.
- Inspectors took account of the views of eight members of staff in questionnaires.

Inspection team

Alexander Baxter, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Richard Steward

Ofsted Inspector

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