

Inspection of Uplands Manor Primary School

Addenbrooke Road, Smethwick, West Midlands B67 6HT

Inspection dates: 8–9 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

This is an exciting time to be at Uplands Manor Primary School. Things are improving quickly. Pupils are welcomed and valued. Pupils told inspectors that, 'If someone was different, we'd welcome them.' They feel safe and happy knowing the staff care about them, saying that 'teachers are really kind'.

Pupils behave well and work hard in lessons. On those few occasions when behaviour is not good, staff act quickly to make sure that behaviour does not affect the learning of other pupils.

One pupil told us that, 'The school is special because of us!' We agree. Teachers and pupils work together to improve their community. Pupils experience a broad range of experiences to prepare them for the world around them.

Too many pupils still do not achieve enough though. They have not always been taught the right things to be ready for the next steps at school. The school's motto of 'Working together to achieve success' is now driving improvement. Leaders have now started to make sure that pupils are learning what they need to.

Pupils clearly understand what bullying is. They say it rarely happens but if it did teachers would deal with it. Leaders investigate any reported incidents and act when needed.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and governors want the very best for all pupils. They know that, at the moment, too many pupils are not well prepared for their future education. The recently formed leadership team is driving improvements. This is starting to help pupils to make better progress. However, a long-term legacy of underachievement means that pupils have lots of catching up to do.

Pupils study a lot of different subjects. However, learning in these subjects does not always provide the pupils with the knowledge and skills that they need. Inconsistencies in past lessons mean pupils have gaps in their learning, which sometimes makes new learning more difficult.

Leaders have ensured that the teaching of early reading has improved in the last year. All members of staff have completed the right training to teach phonics effectively. As a result, more pupils are achieving the expected standard by the end of year 1. Teachers read to the pupils daily. This is really developing the pupils' love of reading. Their fluency and understanding have also improved. When pupils fall behind, teachers act to make sure they get the right support to catch up.

The quality of pupils' writing is improving. Teachers are committed to making sure

that all children have the basic skills needed to communicate through writing. However, the right challenge for most-able pupils is not always provided. This means they are not learning how to be more creative and expressive writers.

Learning in mathematics is getting better. Teachers now know what pupils need to learn by the end of each year. Opportunities for pupils to apply their learning to real-life problems are more frequent than in previous years. As a result, pupils are beginning to develop strong problem-solving and reasoning skills. However, teachers do not always ensure that lower-ability pupils have a secure understanding before they move on to the next lesson.

Music is a strength. Learning musical instruments, such as ukuleles and kazoos, inspires the pupils. Recent positive improvements in subjects such as history and science have not yet had a similar impact. In these subjects there are too many gaps in some pupils' prior knowledge. They have not learned and remembered enough to be successful with new learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their additional needs met well. Leaders have ensured that teachers work together with different services, such as speech and language therapists, to make sure these pupils get the right support. However, the match of the work to the ability of the pupils is not always accurate. This means lessons can often be too hard or too easy for them.

Children have started to make better progress in the early years than they have done in the recent past. New leaders acted quickly to make improvements so that children get off to the best start in education. Children are happy and safe because staff care for them. They develop strong early communication, reading and personal skills. Areas such as outdoor spaces could be used better to develop even better physical and social skills.

Staff across the school care for the pupils and want them to become happy and healthy citizens. Support from the effective pastoral team means pupils get the right support with social and emotional needs. Pupils are learning quickly how to keep themselves safe and how to value each other. One pupil told us: 'We have different kinds of people and different religions – that makes us special!'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure that staff have had the training they need to keep pupils safe. When staff are worried about a pupil's welfare, they act quickly to raise concerns. Leaders investigate these concerns swiftly to make sure the pupil is safe. When needed, leaders will work with services such as the local authority to make sure pupils get the support they need.

From the early years, pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Older pupils are learning about the risks of gangs, criminal exploitation and online abuse.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- While the curriculum is broad, it is not sequenced in all subjects to ensure that pupils learn and remember more over time. Challenge for the more able to make greater progress is not always evident and some lower-ability pupils find the work too hard. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is closely matched to the individual abilities of pupils so that they can be appropriately challenged to greater levels of progress.
- While teachers' subject knowledge is improving, teachers' understanding of how pupils learn is not yet as good as it needs to be. Pupils often find it difficult to remember what they have learned in the past, particularly in the foundation subjects. This means that progress can be slow for some pupils because the teacher will need to spend time filling gaps in knowledge before teaching new concepts. Teachers and leaders need to ensure that teaching is planned and delivered in a way that fills these gaps systematically, as well as introducing new learning.
- Recent changes in the provision for pupils with SEND have not yet started to have an impact on their progress. While there are clear plans to meet the individual needs of each child, the match of work to their ability is not effective. This means they are not yet making the progress they need to be ready for the next stages of learning. Leaders need to make sure that all pupils with SEND have access to sequences of lessons that build on what they know, and that they are ambitious for what these pupils should learn in the future.
- Teachers in the early years have yet to make sure that meaningful and ambitious learning across the curriculum happens in all areas of the environment. For example, the large outdoor spaces and forest school are not currently used. This means that opportunities to develop physical and social development are underdeveloped. Leaders need to ensure staff create an environment that supports the implementation of the ambitious early years curriculum.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you

can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	131184
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10122457
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	893
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mohammed Naveed
Headteacher	Andrew Dickinson
Website	www.uplandsmanor.sandwell.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 September 2017

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher was appointed and took up post in April 2018.
- Since the last inspection, a new chair of governors was appointed and took up post in September 2018.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During the inspection, we focused on the following subjects: reading, mathematics, writing, music, history and science. In these subjects, we visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, examined teachers' plans and talked with pupils and staff about the way these subjects were taught. We also looked at other subjects in less detail to check how they were organised and taught.
- We examined external performance data about the school and looked at school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the school curriculum and improvement planning. The school's website was also checked.
- We asked pupils, staff, leaders and trustees about safeguarding arrangements.

We examined the record of employment checks on school staff and looked at other school records. We also found out about safety procedures and routines.

- We observed informal times of the day, to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- During the inspection, we had formal meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject teachers, governors, teachers and pupils. We also talked informally with parents, pupils and staff to gather general information about school life. One inspector spoke to a representative from the Local Authority.

Inspection team

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