

Inspection of an outstanding school: Upton Snodsbury CofE First School

School Lane, Upton Snodsbury, Worcester, Worcestershire WR7 4NH

Inspection dates:

22 March 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Upton Snodsbury CofE First School is a very happy place to be. Pupils love coming to school. They are enthusiastic and confident learners. Leaders and teachers have high expectations and pupils rise to this challenge. All contribute to a school 'where a love of learning grows'. The school is calm and orderly because pupils behave very well. Staff do not tolerate bullying or unkindness. If bullying does happen, staff sort it out quickly. Pupils are safe and well cared for.

The school's Christian values permeate all aspects of school life. Pupils receive rewards for showing respect and taking responsibility. They lead worship and represent their class on the school council or the eco team. Leaders listen to pupils and act on their ideas. On the playground, for example, there are flowerpots at the request of the eco team. The play equipment has been refurbished at the request of the school council. One pupil summarised the school by saying, 'We are like a school family.' Parents and carers say the school is at the heart of the community.

Many of the leaders are new to their roles. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a detrimental impact on support for new leaders.

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

Pupils achieve well here because leaders have carefully sequenced the knowledge and skills pupils need to know and remember. Teachers have clear expectations and consistent routines that help pupils learn. They make regular checks to make sure that pupils can recall important knowledge. For example, pupils are able to explain the geography of the British Isles, including the names of major cities. In mathematics, pupils confidently use their knowledge of weights and measures to plan a recipe.

From a young age, pupils learn letters and sounds in a well-structured way. They practise writing and spelling from the start. Parents attend workshops to help them support their child's learning effectively. Pupils read often to an adult, at school or at home. They love reading. As a result, many pupils are confident and sophisticated readers and writers. A very small number of pupils struggle to read fluently. Leaders plan to introduce a new phonics scheme, that will provide more targeted support for pupils who need extra help.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Teachers know all pupils well. They quickly spot where more help is needed and adapt their plans accordingly. The SEND coordinator (SENCo) is relatively new to her post. She has not yet completed the required SENCo qualification.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, progress against the school's development plans slowed. The number of staff absences at the school presented challenges for leaders. Each teacher has responsibility for several subjects. Leaders have struggled to create time for subject leaders to check that the curriculum is being delivered well in each subject. Teachers have not yet had the benefit of the necessary leadership support they need when taking on additional responsibilities. Despite this, teachers say that leaders are considerate of their workload.

Staff have received training to support pupils' mental health and well-being. The school's behaviour policy focuses on rewarding positive behaviour. If any pupil needs reminding of how to behave well, they reflect on their behaviour and how to make better choices next time. Consequently, pupils behave very well. This is a strength of the school.

Pupils enjoy a range of rich activities beyond the classroom that support their personal development. These opportunities include outdoor learning, whole school hikes and exciting trips. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 enjoy a three-day residential visit to the Malvern Hills. To further promote a love of reading, leaders devote a whole week to celebrating World Book Day. Staff and pupils dress up as characters from a book that the whole school enjoys reading together. Parents say that being involved in these special events helps to place the school at the heart of the community.

Governors know the school well. They acknowledge the challenges the school has faced during the pandemic. They appreciate that, since her appointment, the headteacher has not had the opportunity to embed her ambitious plans for the school. Support for the headteacher as a new school leader has been constrained by COVID-19 restrictions. Governors who are new to their roles are undertaking relevant training. Leaders and staff are united in focusing on providing the best possible educational experiences for every pupil.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The headteacher has ensured that safeguarding has a high priority in the school. Pupils' safety and well-being underpins the school's policies, including the behaviour policy.

Staff are well trained to spot signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They log any concerns about pupils and take the necessary action to keep pupils safe. Leaders ensure that pupils and families receive the help they need promptly, working with external agencies to find the right support at the right time.

Leaders ensure that pre-employment checks on staff are carried out rigorously. Governors support leaders to ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are carried out effectively.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have struggled to create time for subject leaders to monitor the implementation and impact of the curriculum in their subjects. Teachers have not had the benefit of the necessary leadership support and training for them to carry out their roles effectively. Senior leaders, including those with responsibility for governance, should ensure that all teachers benefit from subject leadership development to help them monitor and evaluate the curriculum effectively.
- Governors have not ensured that the headteacher and the SENCo have received the necessary support and development to carry out their roles. Consequently, despite best efforts, these leaders are still developing their expertise. Governors should ensure that leaders benefit from high-quality support that is appropriate to the needs of the school.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding on 19–20 January 2016.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	116854
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10199503
Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	49
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Matthew Croft
Headteacher	Rachel Mayo
Website	www.uptonsnodsburypfirstschool.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	19 – 20 January 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is currently subject to a consultation on the reorganisation of primary education in Worcestershire. Plans are in place to increase the age range of the school to incorporate pupils into Years 5 and 6. At the time of this inspection, these plans were at the early stages of discussion.
- Upton Snodsbury CofE First School is a Church of England faith school under the Diocese of Worcester. The school's last section 48 inspection took place on 24 May 2016 when the school was judged to be outstanding. The next section 48 inspection will take place within eight years of the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- This inspection took place over one day with two inspectors.
- Before the inspection, the lead inspector considered published information about the school, as well as documents on the school's website.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject

leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, about safeguarding policies and practice. The lead inspector checked the single central record of pre-employment checks on staff.
- The lead inspector met with the SEND coordinator to discuss provision for pupils with SEND.
- A meeting took place with the school improvement adviser from Worcestershire local authority.
- The lead inspector spoke to the vice-chair of the governing body on the telephone.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils and staff at break and lunchtime about safeguarding, behaviour and bullying.
- Inspectors visited assembly and the breakfast club.
- An inspector spoke to parents as they dropped off their children at the start of the school day.
- Survey responses from staff, pupils and parents were considered.

Inspection team

Jane Spilsbury, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sara Arkle

Ofsted Inspector

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