

Inspection of a good school: Upton Heath CofE Primary School

Upton Lane, Upton Heath, Upton-by-Chester, Chester, Cheshire CH2 1ED

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 March 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good 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?

Pupils enjoy their time at Upton Heath Church of England Primary School. They work hard in lessons and love spending breaktimes with their friends. They behave well, look after each other and are polite and respectful to the adults who teach them.

Pupils are safe and happy at school. They benefit from the attention that staff pay to their emotional well-being. They know that staff will make time to speak to them if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils said that staff will always act quickly to resolve any problems with bullying.

Staff are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They want all pupils to behave and achieve well and to develop resilience and positive attitudes to learning. However, in some subjects, leaders have not made it clear what they want pupils to learn. Nor have they specified how teachers should use assessment strategies to check pupils' learning and progress. This means that many pupils do not develop their knowledge across all subjects as well as they could.

Pupils enjoy the wide range of after-school clubs that staff provide and the opportunities they are given to take part in inter-school sporting competitions. Teams from the school have enjoyed success both regionally and nationally.

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

Leaders ensure that reading is central to the school's curriculum. The teaching of phonics starts from children's very first day in the Reception class. Staff are well trained and use the reading curriculum effectively to build children's knowledge and confidence. They ensure that all children, including those with SEND, read books that are well matched to their phonics knowledge. Children who struggle with early reading receive well-structured

support that helps them to keep up with their peers. Leaders ensure that the focus on reading remains as pupils move through school. Older pupils who met with the inspector were confident and fluent readers. They read regularly in school and at home. Pupils have a broad knowledge of different authors and genres.

Pupils behave well, and learning is rarely disrupted. Staff provide effective support for the small number of pupils who sometimes find it difficult to manage their own behaviour.

Leaders are at an early stage of designing the curriculum in some subjects. As a result, teachers are not clear about the key knowledge that pupils need to acquire. This hinders pupils' learning and prevents them from progressing through these curriculums as well as they should. Their achievement across different subjects is variable.

Leaders, including governors, have an accurate understanding of how well mathematics and English are being taught. However, this is not the case with other subjects. They are not aware of the weaknesses that exist in the different curriculums. As a result, they are not well placed to identify the actions that are needed to improve the quality of education across the school.

Leaders provide a wide range of learning opportunities to encourage pupils' broader development. All pupils, including those with SEND, benefit from regular educational trips and visits. All pupils, from Year 2 to Year 6, have had the opportunity to take part in a residential visit during this school year. Pupils in Year 6 recently took part in a Shakespeare project that culminated in a live performance to adults and pupils from other schools. All pupils are given the opportunity to learn how to play a musical instrument. Older pupils enjoy the additional responsibilities that they are given, which include house captains and road safety officers.

Teachers use assessment strategies well in some subjects. They make regular checks to ensure that pupils' understanding is secure before moving on to new learning. For example, in the Reception class, staff keep a close check on how well children are developing their understanding of number. Teachers also track pupils' progress in reading closely so that they can support any pupils who begin to struggle. However, in many other subjects, leaders have not provided clear guidance to teachers about how they should assess pupils' work to make sure that they are acquiring essential knowledge. This prevents teachers from being able to plan work that builds securely on what pupils already know.

Leaders have put effective systems in place to ensure that pupils with SEND are identified early. Leaders make sure that these pupils benefit from appropriate support so that they can access the full curriculum alongside their peers. However, the weaknesses that exist within certain subjects also impact pupils with SEND and limit their progress.

The majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school. However, some parents feel that leaders do not listen to their views. They believe that leaders have not dealt effectively with the concerns that they have raised.

Since his appointment in January 2020, the headteacher has secured a number of improvements at the school. Members of staff who responded to the Ofsted survey said that they feel well supported. They also said that leaders are considerate of workload and well-being issues.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that history and religious education may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all pupils are protected and kept safe. Members of staff receive regular safeguarding training and know what to do if they have any concerns about the safety or welfare of a pupil. Where necessary, leaders work with outside agencies to support vulnerable pupils and their families.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about road safety and the dangers associated with the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not identified the key knowledge that pupils need to acquire and the order in which this knowledge should be taught. This prevents pupils, including those with SEND, from building their learning on what they already know. Leaders should make sure that the content of teaching within each curriculum area is carefully selected and well sequenced.
- Leaders, including governors, do not have a well-informed view on how well the curriculum in each subject is being delivered. As a result, they do not know how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum. Leaders should sharpen their focus on how well pupils are learning the curriculum so that they understand the school's strengths and the areas that need further improvement.
- Teachers do not routinely check that pupils are learning and remembering the curriculum in some subjects. This means that they do not have a clear picture of how well pupils are acquiring the key knowledge that they need. Leaders should ensure that teachers understand how to assess pupils' learning in all curriculum areas.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 predecessor school, Upton Heath CofE Primary School, to be good in June 2013.

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	145074
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10226064
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	417
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ian Wilson
Headteacher	Conrad North
Website	www.uptonheath.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- The headteacher took up his post in January 2020.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in June 2016.
- Upton Heath CofE Primary School converted to become an academy school in March 2018. When its predecessor school, Upton Heath CofE Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall. The school is part of the Samara Trust.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other members of the leadership team.
- The inspector met with the chair of the local academy committee, the trust's chief executive officer and two trustees, one of whom was the deputy director of education for the Diocese of Chester.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. As part of this process, he met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum. He also listened to pupils reading, visited lessons, talked to pupils and staff and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- The inspector examined the school's safeguarding records. He also spoke with staff about safeguarding.
- The inspector spoke to pupils about their experience of school. He observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during breaktimes.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's improvement plans and minutes of governing body meetings.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. He also looked at the responses to the Ofsted staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Paul Tomkow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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