

Inspection of a good school: Upton Meadows Primary School

The Square, Upton, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN5 4EZ

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 September 2022

Outcome

Upton Meadows Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school embraces the fact that it serves a diverse community. Pupils celebrate their differences, whether they be religious or cultural. Parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) particularly value the support given to their children. Pupils, staff and parents alike value the inclusive ethos of the school. Pupils feel safe and happy as a result.

Teachers are caring and know the pupils they teach very well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They support pupils to realise these expectations. Pupils say that teachers are kind. Pupils know that teachers will help them with their problems. They are confident that teachers at this school do not tolerate bullying.

Leaders enrich the curriculum so that pupils have a chance to develop their cultural capital. This includes trips such as those to Wales and Norfolk. Every year, there is a whole-school focus on one of Shakespeare's plays. Pupils also benefit from taking part in the 'big Sing' and local Strictly Come Dancing competition.

A common view of many parents is summed up by one parent: 'We couldn't wish for a better school for our children. The teachers always go above and beyond.'

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

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum for all pupils. They have rooted many parts of the curriculum to the school's locality. For example, when pupils study history, they learn about Walter Tull, and when they study geography, they learn about the River Nene. This helps bring the curriculum to life for pupils.

Leaders have identified the most important knowledge in each subject. Subject leaders have ordered the curriculum so that pupils can build on what they already know. For example, in mathematics, pupils learn about place value before they learn to multiply and

divide. Most pupils build a depth of knowledge in most subjects. However, in a few foundation subjects, some pupils do not develop the depth of knowledge they should.

Leaders have trained teachers to use methods that help pupils remember important knowledge. Teachers make key vocabulary explicit to pupils. Teachers check that pupils understand this through questions they ask at the start of lessons. The activities that teachers choose match closely to what they want pupils to learn. This helps most pupils know and remember more in most subjects.

Teachers know how to support pupils with SEND so they can take part in the same learning as other pupils. Well-trained teachers and staff support some pupils with cognitive and emotional needs in the 'rainbow room' and the 'hive'. Both these provisions allow pupils to access the full curriculum.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. They know this unlocks the potential to future learning for pupils. Children start to learn the sounds that letters make as soon as they start the Reception year. Teachers regularly assess pupils' knowledge of phonics. If a pupil falls behind, teachers provide extra support to help them catch up and keep up. Pupils benefit from a well-resourced library. The 'reading shed' is a place in which pupils can read for pleasure at break and lunchtimes. Many pupils develop a love for reading.

Children in the early years get off to a good start. The routines and structures develop children's self-regulation. Adults play with children and carefully model language. This helps children develop their communication. Children develop physically through activities such as playing bowling and knocking down skittles. Adults take opportunities like this to develop children's knowledge of number by encouraging the children to count the skittles they have toppled.

Pupils understand the clear expectations of their behaviour. Pupils know that if they misbehave they will receive a warning, a final warning and then a senior teacher will speak to them. Pupils agree that it is rare for a pupil to go beyond a final warning. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and have good relationships with their teachers. Pupils behave well in lessons.

Pupils' wider development permeates through the curriculum. For example, in geography, pupils can debate about the moral issues that surround deforestation. Many pupils benefit from after-school clubs. The active school council delivers food to local food banks. Pupils are being developed for life in modern Britain.

Staff comment on how well leaders engage with them and consider their workload. As one member of staff summed up: 'No matter if you are a teacher or support staff, we work as a team and all our voices are heard.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have allocated dedicated time in the curriculum for pupils to learn about staying safe. This includes online safety. Pupils know at least five people they can talk to if they have a worry or a concern.

Teachers follow well-known recording and reporting procedures if they have a concern about a pupil. They know that no concern is too small. All adults know that leaders will act on any concerns to protect pupils.

Safeguarding leaders demonstrate strong working partnerships with external agencies. This helps ensure that the most vulnerable pupils receive the help that they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of foundation subjects, some pupils do not develop the depth of knowledge that is set out in ambitious curriculum plans. Leaders must continue to refine the curriculum in these subjects so that all pupils develop the necessary depth of knowledge to meet leaders' expectations.

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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Upton Meadows Primary School, to be good in October 2014.

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.

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	145634
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10240176
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	385
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jeremy Stockdale
Headteacher	Clare Searing
Website	www.uptonmeadowsprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined Northampton Primary Academy Trust in June 2018. When its predecessor school, Upton Meadows Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.

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 school leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector met with other subject leaders and reviewed the curriculum plans for other foundation subjects.

- The inspector scrutinised the school’s safeguarding documentation, including the single central record of pre-employment checks. The inspector considered how well safeguarding leaders act on concerns about pupils’ welfare and safety. The inspector talked to pupils, staff and governors about safe working practices.
- The inspector met with representatives of the trust, including the chief executive officer.
- The inspector met with a trustee and governors.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including curriculum plans, the school improvement plan and minutes of full governing body meetings.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator and other leaders.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted’s online survey, including free-text responses, and responses to the staff survey and pupil survey.
- The inspector telephoned the alternative provision the school uses.

Inspection team

Rakesh Patel, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

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