

Inspection of Upton Junior School

St Martin's Road, Upton, Poole, Dorset BH16 5NQ

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 February 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this welcoming school. They benefit from the strong pastoral support system. The school values of 'aspiration, resilience and curiosity' help pupils to be supportive and caring of each other. Most parents support this view. One parent commented, 'the school is friendly, welcoming and approachable, with pupils' well-being at the forefront'.

Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They have designed a curriculum that engages and interests pupils. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They talk enthusiastically about the range of subjects available to them. Pupils understand that it is alright to make mistakes and take risks with their learning.

Pupils are polite and confident. They behave well in lessons and around the school site. Low-level disruption is rare. When it does happen, staff act quickly so learning is not interrupted. Pupils understand what bullying is. They say it can happen, but adults deal with it when it does.

Leaders give careful consideration to supporting pupils' wider development. They treat pupils as individuals. Staff provide pupils with opportunities to develop their understanding of different cultures and religions. Pupils enjoy the range of enrichment activities they can take part in, including sports clubs and learning to play a musical instrument.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They place the needs of learners at the heart of what they do. A culture of teamwork exists. Staff, including those new to the profession, feel supported and respected. They appreciate the vision and direction the headteacher provides. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Leaders place a sharp focus on reading. Most pupils enjoy reading. They understand why it is important to be able to read. One pupil stated that 'reading enables us to access our curriculum'. They enjoy the rewards and incentives for regular reading. Pupils have access to a range of high-quality texts. Leaders have ensured a consistent phonics programme is in place to support those pupils who struggle to read. Staff receive effective guidance and training. As a result, pupils who need to catch up quickly.

Leaders have carefully sequenced the mathematics curriculum to build pupils' knowledge over time. Pupils enjoy mathematics. Staff use a range of strategies to help pupils understand new mathematical concepts. They adapt the learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. However, pupils do not apply new knowledge to problem-solving sufficiently to strengthen their mathematical understanding.

In some subjects across the wider curriculum, leaders have worked systematically on what knowledge is taught and when. In history, pupils use what they already know when they learn something new. For example, pupils use their knowledge of the Victorian era when studying the industrial revolution. However, in some subjects, the content that teachers want pupils to know and remember is not clear enough. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their wider curriculum knowledge.

Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND are fully involved in school life. Staff understand and know pupils' needs well. Strong links with external agencies ensure that planning and provision for these pupils are effective. As a result, pupils with SEND progress well through the curriculum.

Pupils and staff develop positive relationships. During social times, pupils interact and play well together. Lessons typically flow without interruption. Effective plans are in place to support those pupils who struggle to manage their behaviour.

Pupils appreciate the range of experiences beyond the curriculum. Leaders ensure pupils have opportunities to take responsibility, such as being members of the school council and house captains. Pupils understand the importance of respecting differences, including cultural and religious beliefs. They understand the importance of healthy relationships, including how to stay mentally healthy.

Governors and trust leads share the same ambitions as school leaders. They are clear on the school's effectiveness and priorities. Staff appreciate the training and support the trust provides. Leaders at all levels support staff workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors, take safeguarding seriously. They ensure a strong culture of safeguarding is in place. Staff receive frequent and up-to-date training. Systems for reporting and recording concerns are effective. Staff know leaders take their concerns seriously. Leaders ensure that all employment checks on staff are thorough.

Pupils feel safe. They know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including online and road safety. Pupils know who they can go to if they have a concern or worry. Leaders have ensured that the taught curriculum supports pupils' understanding of risk.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In mathematics, pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to problem solve and reason. As a result, not all pupils are deepening their knowledge and understanding of important mathematical concepts. Leaders need to ensure that the mathematics curriculum provides frequent opportunities for all pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge.
- In some subjects in the wider curriculum, the specific knowledge that teachers want pupils to know is not precise enough. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their subject-specific knowledge. Leaders need to ensure that the important content pupils need to learn is explicitly identified and sequenced so that all pupils build their knowledge well.

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	146490
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10256585
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	346
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alice Wrighton
Headteacher	Tony Collins
Website	www.uptonjun.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Upton Junior School converted to become an academy school in November 2018. When its predecessor school, Upton Junior School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement.
- The current headteacher took up his post in September 2021.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, the designated safeguarding leads, groups of staff, representatives from the multi-academy trust and members of the local governing board.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, art and design technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited samples of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 read to an adult.
- Inspectors considered the documentation around safeguarding, including the safeguarding checks made on staff. They discussed with staff, pupils and governors how the school protects pupils and keeps them safe.
- Inspectors considered the 107 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 45 free-text comments, 22 responses to the staff survey and 65 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Heather Barraclough, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Bradley Murray	Ofsted Inspector
Lakmini Harkus	His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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