

Inspection of Upminster Infant School

St Mary's Lane, Upminster, Essex RM14 3BS

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 2023

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

The head of school of this school is Helen Lendon. This school is part of the Hornchurch Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, (CEO), Chris Hobson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gillian Thumpston.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Upminster Infant School as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe at this welcoming and nurturing school. They are polite and friendly to adults and to each other. Staff know pupils well and are caring towards them. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. As a result, pupils grow in confidence. Many take on leadership responsibilities, including as play leaders, school librarians and members of the school council.

Pupils behave well in lessons, move around the school sensibly, and play nicely during breaktimes. Occasionally, some pupils, while being quiet and sensible in a lesson, become disengaged from their learning. Staff soon refocus them. Instances of bullying are rare, and adults deal with them quickly and effectively. Pupils know the school's values, including respect, kindness and effort. They demonstrate these values as they learn and play together. These character qualities will help them to flourish in school and in life.

The school is mainly successful in its ambition for every pupil to achieve highly. Pupils have many additional opportunities to develop their talents and interests. There are many clubs for them to join after school, including a notably wide range of sporting and cultural activities. A well-considered range of educational visits throughout the year enriches pupils' learning.

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

The school has been on a journey to improve in recent years. Leaders have worked to develop a new curriculum, bringing in expertise beyond the school where necessary. The new curriculum demonstrates the school's ambition for all pupils. It sets out important learning in a careful sequence. For example, in mathematics, children in Reception learn about sharing things out fairly, using real objects. This prepares them well for learning about division when they are older. Older pupils use a wider range of physical resources to help them see underlying mathematical structures. This helps them to spot patterns, for example when they subtract 10 from 2-digit numbers.

In the early years, the school has prioritised children's physical development and their language and communication. Children can choose to take part in a wide range of activities to develop their physical skills. Staff teach children skills such as using scissors to cut wrapping paper or threading little beads onto sticks of spaghetti. However, children who do not choose these activities miss out on this important learning. Some children are asked to write words, without having the physical skills yet to hold a pencil correctly and comfortably. As a result, they can pick up unhelpful habits which may be difficult to unlearn. Many older pupils in the school struggle with correct pencil and pen grips which slows down their writing speed.

Staff listen carefully to children and have extended conversations with them. They teach children new vocabulary through stories and while taking part in activities.

This effective work on building children's vocabulary prepares them well for their later reading comprehension.

Pupils love to read, and they relish story time at the end of every day. The school has recently adopted a new scheme to teach phonics. Staff have been thoroughly trained and deliver the scheme well. Parents and carers attend workshops and access online resources so that they know how to support their children's reading at home. Many parents also come in to read with children in the Reception Year. The school is developing its library to improve the range of high-quality books that pupils can take home and enjoy. Teachers quickly identify any pupils who are falling behind in the reading programme and give them extra support. However, on occasion, some of these pupils are given books that are too difficult for them to practise their reading. The books do not closely match the sounds they know. On these occasions, instead of practising what they know and getting better at reading, pupils begin to struggle.

The school has clear procedures to identify pupils with additional needs. Staff skilfully adapt their teaching to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can overcome any barriers to learning the curriculum. Some pupils with more complex SEND receive extra support outside the classroom to develop their attention and communication. This additional support is carefully planned so that it helps pupils to learn when they are back in the classroom. For example, pupils use the communication skills they have learned to take part in discussions in class, with support.

Staff benefit from professional development which helps them to improve teaching for pupils. Leaders carefully check that these improvements do not create unnecessary additional work for staff. Staff appreciate this consideration for their well-being.

Leaders have rigorous systems which ensure that pupils attend school regularly and on time. The school has clear expectations for how pupils should behave in class and during playtimes. Pupils understand what they are expected to do and behave well.

The school has thought carefully about pupils' personal development. Pupils can take part in more than 30 after-school and lunchtime clubs. For example, they can join clubs to learn how to draw cartoons, play a range of sports, and speak Spanish or French. The school organises a wide range of educational visits to help pupils learn the curriculum and broaden their experiences. For example, pupils' learning about mapping London and the river Thames is deepened by a trip on the London Eye.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum does not put sufficient emphasis on building up pupils' fine motor skills. This means that some pupils develop poor pencil grips which slow down their writing. The school should ensure that, from the Reception Year onwards, pupils develop their fine motor skills so they can learn to hold pencils and pens comfortably and correctly and write with increasing fluency.
- In a few instances, some pupils do not have sufficient practice in reading and re-reading books that closely match the sounds that they know. As a result, gaps in their knowledge are not addressed as quickly and effectively as they could be. The school should ensure that every pupil consistently has the teaching that they need to become a confident and fluent reader.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	138943
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	10242282
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	264
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gillian Thumpston
Headteacher	Helen Lendon
Website	www.uis.havering.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Upminster Infant School converted to become an academy school in November 2012. When its predecessor school, Upminster Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school joined Hornchurch Academy Trust in 2018.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, inspectors met with the head of school, the CEO of the trust and other school leaders. Inspectors also met with members of the board of trustees, including the chair.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. Other subjects were considered as part of this inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the school gate and considered the views of parents who responded to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also considered the views of staff who responded to the online survey.

Inspection team

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