

Inspection of Upland Primary School

Church Road, Bexleyheath, Kent DA7 4DG

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 January 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Charlotte Smiles. This school is part of Cygnus Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Danielle Lewis-Egonu, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ryan Clifford.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school encourages pupils to develop their independence, confidence and creativity. Leaders have high expectations of all pupils in the school, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has set out an ambitious academic curriculum for all. These high expectations extend down to the early years, where the school ensures that children are exceptionally well prepared for future learning in Year 1 and beyond.

Pupils are kind, considerate and keen to learn. One pupil, typical of many, said: 'Upland is a community where everyone supports each other.' They are kept safe and they are comfortable speaking to a responsible adult if they have a problem that they wish to share. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning and proud ambassadors for the school. They are excited to learn new knowledge and they regularly try their best.

The school organises a range of extracurricular opportunities for pupils. Sports clubs are particularly popular and many pupils take part in sports competitions. Pupils also regularly attend educational outings beyond the school gates. For example, children in Reception visit a library, in Year 4 pupils carry out fieldwork on a river to expand their geographical knowledge and pupils in Year 5 go to the British Museum to aid their history studies.

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

The school has designed a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils. Subject leaders have thought carefully about what pupils should learn across all subjects in the curriculum. For example, in physical education, children learn to throw a ball in the early years. By Year 2, pupils have learned to throw and catch balls in teams. In Year 5, pupils practise ball shooting, improve their footwork and participate in team sports. Leaders communicate well with staff and consult staff on any changes that may affect their workload. Staff appreciate this and also feel that leaders take their well-being into account. Those responsible for governance check that the school is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities and help leaders to manage the school effectively.

Leaders have also made links between and within subjects to support pupils' learning. For example, in Year 6 pupils study evolution in science while reading a book in English based on the scientist Charles Darwin. In the early years, leaders' curriculum thinking is extremely well thought through. Here, teachers provide all children with frequent opportunities to expand their vocabulary and improve their knowledge of the wider world.

In the majority of subjects, the curriculum is effectively delivered. For example, in mathematics and early reading, teachers regularly check that pupils understand all that they have been taught so that pupils can steadily build their understanding over time. In class, teaching provides pupils with frequent opportunities to practise what

they have learned so that their understanding is fully consolidated before moving on. In the early years, staff encourage all children to interact positively with each other, take turns and develop their speaking skills.

In a small number of subjects, teaching does not check that pupils understand some important knowledge that they are learning, or review what pupils have remembered. This means that, occasionally, some pupils do not fully understand what has been taught and cannot build strong foundations for future learning.

Leaders have refined the teaching of early reading over many years. The early reading curriculum steadily expands pupils' vocabulary and reading fluency over time. This is reflected in the school's excellent published academic outcomes for phonics. Pupils who require help to improve their fluency receive all of the support that they need, through extra daily reading sessions.

Pupils are highly focused in class. All pupils participate in lessons eagerly and no one disrupts learning. During class discussions, pupils listen readily to each other's opinions and respect different points of view. In the playground, pupils interact kindly. 'Play leaders' in Year 6 assist younger pupils by supervising and refereeing team games. In the early years, children have been taught to follow teachers' instructions and classroom routines exceedingly closely. The school has also effectively supported pupils to attend school regularly. Consequently, attendance rates are high and rising.

Staff know the needs of pupils with SEND well. Teaching is appropriately adapted so that pupils with SEND build their knowledge and skills. They collaborate as needed with external agencies whenever necessary to support pupils with SEND. The school ensures that pupils with SEND follow the same ambitious curriculum as their peers and staff provide personalised support for pupils where necessary.

The personal development programme is broad. The school organises many opportunities for pupils to take leadership roles. These include community and anti-bullying ambassadors, librarians, and sports and reading leaders. As part of personal development classes, pupils are taught what healthy relationships look like. For example, in the early years, children learn about positive relationships in the classroom. In Year 2, pupils learn what to do if they are feeling lonely. In Year 3, they learn about being part of a community, and in Year 5 pupils discuss the challenges of peer pressure.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the school does not routinely check that pupils know and understand some key knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not build their knowledge in these subjects as securely as they should. The school should ensure that teaching checks that pupils know, understand and remember key knowledge securely across all subjects.

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	143432
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10240865
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	476
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ryan Clifford
Headteacher	Charlotte Smiles
Website	www.upland.bexley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses no alternative providers.
- The school is part of the Cygnus Academies Trust.

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.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors met with leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, personal, social and health education, behaviour and attendance, early reading, pupils' wider development, and early years.

- Inspectors met with representatives from the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, physical education, mathematics and science.
- 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.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 considered the respective responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Guy Forbat, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sophie Powell	Ofsted Inspector
Christian Hicks	His Majesty's Inspector

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