

Inspection of an outstanding school: Upton Primary School

Iris Avenue, Bexley, Kent DA5 1HH

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 February 2024

Outcome

Upton Primary School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils' comments sum up how much they delight in coming to school. They said that they 'love' the way they are not just told things but have to 'work it out for themselves'. They said, too, that they really enjoy the many trips and visits. For example, pupils studying the Second World War took part in an experience which recreated what it was like to be an evacuee. Pupils said that this, and visits to museums and places of interest, brought their learning to life.

Pupils experience a broad curriculum that is both ambitious and wide-ranging. All the subjects of the national curriculum are covered fully, together with religious education and relationships education. Across subjects, pupils achieve consistently highly. The school provides lots of opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and talents. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities are enjoyed by many pupils.

Pupils behave without fault. This is because everyone upholds the school's high expectations. It means that lessons are not interrupted by silly behaviour. Teachers manage behaviour calmly. They rarely, if ever, have to intervene to remind pupils about behaviour expectations. The same is true about bullying. Pupils were clear that it seldom happens. They know they can always talk to one of their 'five trusted adults'. Without exception, pupils said they felt safe in school. The school does, indeed, keep them safe.

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

There are three features that help to make Upton Primary exceptional – consistency, attention to detail and organisation. From these flows everything else that is excellent about the school, from the way the curriculum is designed and taught, to pupils' first-rate behaviour and the strong published outcomes.

The curriculum is meticulously designed. It is based on a thorough understanding of the subjects and how to put them into practice effectively. The school uses the strong, and often passionate, expertise of curriculum leaders to get underneath the national

curriculum and develop comprehensive programmes of study for each year group. Senior leaders are intimately involved in this work, skilfully steering and facilitating developments. This work has done much to reduce teachers' workload.

Leaders place a high value on providing good-quality professional development. For example, everyone is trained in teaching phonics, whether they teach it or not. This helps to ensure consistency in the school's approach to teaching pupils to read. Decisions about how to teach subjects are deliberate and based on up-to-date research. Leaders and staff use their in-depth understanding of how pupils learn to ensure that what they do in the classroom is effective. This mix of theory, consistency of practice, staff training and perceptive checks on pupils' learning is a powerful combination that promotes excellent learning.

Consistency is also clear in the early years. Phonics is taught right from the start of Reception and continues seamlessly until pupils can read fluently. Teachers and leaders constantly check this fluency, providing, where necessary, highly focused support to help pupils catch up. Not only are gaps in learning identified quickly but so are the strategies to close them.

This same detailed approach is used to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school's methods for supporting the large number of pupils with SEND, including those in the resourced provision, or PAD, are effective. For example, providing time for SEND pupils to settle at the start of the day and ensuring that they experience the same curriculum as others, but with adaptations to meet their needs, promotes learning most successfully.

The wide range of trips, visits to places of interest and extra-curricular activities extends the more formal classroom learning effectively. Many trips and visits are linked to subjects such as history, geography and science. The personal, social and health education programme ensures that pupils are taught about relationships and how to keep themselves safe in and out of school, including online safety.

Leaders and staff ensure that classrooms and the common areas of the school are well organised. This results in an environment that oozes learning, for example through the displays that are everywhere. It also promotes pupils' excellent behaviour and strong attendance. Leaders are not complacent, however, and check carefully that the detailed procedures to promote attendance are having the desired impact. Attendance is improving year on year.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 school to be outstanding in July 2017.

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	101413
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10296700
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	458
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	S Bartlett
Headteacher	Louisa Baines April Robinson (Acting Headteacher)
Website	www.upton.bexley.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 July 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Upton Primary School is larger than the average-sized school, situated in the London Borough of Bexley.
- The school is currently being led by an acting headteacher, who is also the deputy headteacher.
- The school has resourced provision for eight pupils with SEND with a diagnosis of autism.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and, where possible, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- The inspector also looked at the curriculum and visited some other subjects.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, senior leaders, staff and pupils.
- The inspector also met with the chair of the governing body and other governors and spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector considered responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, including 59 free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and staff survey.

Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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