

Upperby Primary School

Uldale Road, Upperby, Carlisle, Cumbria CA2 4JT

Inspection dates

3–4 November and 24 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics has declined since the previous inspection and was low in 2016. Disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most able, made less progress than other pupils nationally in English and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.
- The proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development in the early years has risen but remains below the national average, particularly for disadvantaged children.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is too generous because it does not focus sufficiently on the impact of their actions to support pupils' learning.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has varied over time and this has led to some pupils having gaps in their knowledge. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can learn are sometimes not high enough, particularly of most-able pupils.
- The school's processes for measuring pupils' attainment and progress in subjects other than English and mathematics are not fully developed.
- The information on pupils' achievement that leaders provide for the governing body has not been full enough. Governors have not been able to focus enough on the groups of pupils who might need most help.
- Attendance has dipped since 2014 and is below the national average for primary schools.

The school has the following strengths

- Improvements in the teaching of phonics have led to more pupils achieving the expected standard.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving quickly and pupils' progress is accelerating as their understanding grows.
- Pupils are taught to respect others' beliefs and to understand moral values.
- Pupils are well cared for and are kept safe. Most pupils behave well, enjoy school and relish extra-curricular activities.
- Governors challenge school leaders. The governing body has used its understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses to commission helpful external evaluations.
- Parents, overall, are strongly supportive of the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing the rigour and accuracy of the school's self-evaluation, including the impact of leaders' actions to improve pupils' learning, particularly for the most able pupils and those who are disadvantaged.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly the most able and those who are disadvantaged, so that more pupils make good progress from their starting points
 - ensuring that teachers use accurate assessments in all subjects to plan appropriately challenging work for the most able pupils, including those who are also disadvantaged.
- Further improve pupils' attendance, particularly among those who are disadvantaged or who have special education needs and/or disabilities.
- Increase the proportion of boys and disadvantaged pupils who reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year by ensuring that they consistently receive the right level of challenge and support.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The school's self-evaluation is too generous. Leaders do not consider sharply enough how much impact their actions to improve teaching and learning have had on the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils.
- Leaders have spent the school's pupil premium funding in wide-ranging ways but they have not evaluated the impact of their spending. Consequently, it is not clear which strategies are helping to secure improvement.
- Middle leadership is improving across the school. Some middle leaders are relatively new to their posts, including a leader to develop reading and writing across the curriculum. These leaders are beginning to implement new initiatives but it is too early to see the impact of their work.
- The headteacher has ensured that staff morale remains high and that pupils' self-esteem is strong. Staff frequently remind pupils, 'you can do it'. This principle applies to their learning and personal development. The school's ethos is evident in displays, often celebrating wider opportunities made available to pupils, and in the relationships between adults and pupils. Despite this, teachers' expectations of what children can actually achieve, especially in writing, are too low.
- Leaders have recognised the need to improve attendance. Consequently, from September 2016, the acting deputy headteacher has been responsible for overseeing this work, supported by a pastoral worker. The reorganisation has provided leaders with additional capacity to work on whole-school improvement.
- Leaders identified that the way in which they allocated pupils to classes was not necessarily effective. They have taken action to readjust classes and teachers have welcomed this change.
- The curriculum is broad and covers all national curriculum subjects. Examples of art work are displayed prominently around the school and older pupils talk animatedly about enjoying their Spanish lessons. Pupils' books include evidence of their work in subjects such as science, geography and history but the way in which this work is organised makes it difficult for subject leaders to assess how pupils' knowledge and understanding are developing.
- The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities that are popular with pupils. Residential visits and other trips inspire pupils and give them confidence to try new activities, as shown in the pupils' writing that enthusiastically celebrates their time at outdoor pursuits centres.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium is used effectively to encourage pupils' participation in different activities. Pupils in Year 3 showed great perseverance as they practised their skipping and balancing skills, led by a coach who also supports teachers' professional development.
- Senior leaders encourage teachers to work together and to share practice with other schools in the locality. Newly appointed teachers speak very highly of the support they receive from colleagues and the opportunities they have to contribute to the school.

Teachers are reflective and keen to develop their skills. The science leader has secured funding for research and development and, together with other middle leaders, is enthusiastic about developing his subject.

- Senior leaders visit classrooms regularly and have a good understanding of teachers' skills. A wide-ranging programme of development activities is in place to help teachers improve their practice.
- Leaders hold challenging meetings with teachers about the progress being made by pupils in their classes and to identify how best to move their learning on. However, these discussions do not always focus on the success of actions taken to diminish the differences in progress between groups of pupils.
- Leaders' commitment to improve teaching and learning in mathematics has resulted in better outcomes for pupils. The school works in an effective partnership with a local teaching school, which provides additional teaching for the school's most able mathematicians in the upper part of key stage 2.
- Pupils learn about British values through assemblies and 'messy days' which are devoted to personal, social and health education. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on values, for instance through their reading of 'Goodnight Mister Tom', which linked with their exploration of how the second world war affected families. Pupils are elected to posts of responsibility in school, through which they learn about democratic principles.
- Parents receive informative reports from the school that outline their children's attainment and progress. Responses on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and parents who spoke to inspectors were predominantly positive about the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors are highly committed to the school and are frequent visitors. They have a good range of skills, including experience of business and financial management.
- Governors challenge the school's leaders regarding pupils' outcomes, behaviour and attendance. The governing body recognised that pupils' achievement was declining and commissioned the support of consultants to provide governors with advice. This has supported aspects of the school's development.
- Some of the information provided by leaders to the governing body does not include sufficient focus on the performance of groups of pupils.
- Governors have a good understanding of how teachers' performance is managed.
- The governing body has developed action plans to enable it, with the support of the local authority, to ensure the stability of leadership during a period of transition.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The safeguarding policy is up to date and meets current requirements, including those related to radicalisation and the potential for peer-on-peer abuse.
- Staff work well with parents and outside agencies to ensure that pupils are well cared for. Safeguarding procedures are robustly implemented and staff and governors are

well trained to identify signs of abuse. As a result, pupils feel safe in the school. They understand how to keep themselves safe on the internet and social media. Risk assessments for the external areas of school are in place.

- Attendance dipped in 2015/16 and was below the national average for primary schools. The school has provided a clear explanation as to why this was the case. All absences are swiftly followed up. There has been improvement this term in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and of those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching has varied throughout the school for some time and this has led to pupils not making consistently good progress. Last year there was some discontinuity of provision for pupils in upper key stage 2 and this resulted in gaps in their knowledge not being plugged. A stable teaching team is now in place and this means older pupils have a more consistent learning experience.
- Teachers do not always plan effectively to meet pupils' needs. Teachers' expectations, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and the most able, are sometimes too low. Where this is the case, teaching limits pupils' opportunities to think for themselves. This is particularly the case in writing. Pupils are given plenty of prompts and support to organise their ideas but this can cap their creativity, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Teaching assistants give valuable support across the school but, sometimes, they do too much for pupils and this limits their development of self-reliance and resilience.
- In some classes, particularly in key stage 1, pupils lose focus on their learning when they are expected to spend too long on their tasks.
- The effectiveness of teachers' feedback to pupils varies. It is generally strongest in key stage 2 where pupils are increasingly reflective on their teachers' advice as to how they should improve their work. Some pupils' work contains errors that are repeated, indicating that they have not necessarily learned from their mistakes. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that teachers gave them good advice about their work and how they should improve it.
- The teaching of phonics has been strengthened, leading to a larger proportion of pupils reaching the national standard in Year 1. Leaders recognise that not all groups of pupils respond equally well to the current phonics programme and have introduced a catch-up programme for pupils who have fallen behind.
- Good relationships with staff contribute to pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Where teaching is most effective, teachers' subject knowledge is strong and questioning effectively probes and deepens pupils' learning. Some teachers plan effectively to meet pupils' varying needs and challenge them to make the best possible progress. In some mathematics lessons, for example, pupils were challenged to master new learning and books showed a good range of number work, reasoning and problem solving. In key stage 2, pupils focused on detailed language analysis in English and their books showed evidence of well-presented extended writing.

- The school recognised that teachers required support to make accurate assessments of pupils' progress. The use of standardised tests and arrangements for sharing views on the quality of pupils' writing have enabled teachers to make more accurate assessments and to determine next steps for pupils' learning.
- Classrooms are vibrant and welcoming. Teachers prepare stimulating displays of key concepts and of pupils' work to which pupils make reference to help their learning. Newspaper reports of Sir Edmund Hillary's conquest of Everest show pupils' geographical knowledge and their journalistic ability.
- Teachers are particularly keen to develop pupils' vocabulary, such as through the discussion about 'cardinal compass points' with pupils in Year 2, or when talking about seasonal changes with pupils in Year 1.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Most pupils work hard, enjoy school and want to succeed.
- Pupils' personal development, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is promoted strongly through a programme in assemblies, in lessons and in special themed days that focus on British values. The school teaches pupils about democracy and responsibility well. Many pupils either sit on the school council or undertake jobs as a monitor or a buddy reader to younger pupils. Through these activities, they make a positive difference to the school.
- The school teaches the values of equal opportunity, diversity and tolerance. Most pupils show respect for their peers and adults and work well together. They listen and respond sensitively to the views of others. A few pupils spoke about incidents of poor behaviour and bullying but had confidence that these issues were dealt with effectively.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities and sports, including football, cross-country running and a book club. The school operates a breakfast club and an after-school club that are valued by pupils and their families.
- Pupils feel safe in school because they are well cared for and are confident that members of staff will help them if they have problems. They know how to keep safe, including while online, because they receive good guidance about safety on the internet and social media.
- Pupils' emotional well-being is promoted through good relationships with staff. Staff work well with parents and outside agencies to ensure pupils are well cared for. The most vulnerable pupils, including young carers, receive sensitive support.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The majority of pupils behave well around school and in the play areas. They wear their uniforms smartly and are friendly and polite to each other and to visitors.

- Many pupils behave well in class, have positive attitudes to learning and follow instructions well.
- The school provides well-targeted support for those pupils who have particular behavioural difficulties, including through the use of other agencies.
- There have been no exclusions since September 2016. An untypically high number of exclusions in the previous academic year was due to specific circumstances to which the school responded effectively.
- Attendance was around the national average for primary schools in 2014/15. In 2015/16, overall attendance dipped and was low for disadvantaged pupils and for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Since September 2016, the attendance of these groups of pupils has improved.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016 the proportion of Year 6 pupils that reached the expected standard in English and mathematics was well below the national average. The most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils made weaker progress from their starting points than pupils did nationally. The school has analysed the reasons for the untypically weak performance of this year group, which included a very high proportion of pupils with significant barriers to their learning.
- The most able pupils, including those who are also disadvantaged, made poor progress in English and mathematics in key stage 1 in 2016. Pupils in the current Year 2 are doing better than this. Most are working at the standards expected for their age. Those pupils in Year 3 who did not achieve well at the end of key stage 1 are catching up with their peers as a result of additional support and more challenging teaching. This includes the high number of pupils in the class who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils' attainment in science was below the national average at the end of both key stages. The subject leader for science is taking determined action to improve pupils' scientific knowledge. Not enough has been done to develop their written hypotheses and explanations in science.
- The profile of achievement for pupils currently in the school is much stronger than the picture in 2015/16. The school's data, confirmed by inspection evidence, shows that the majority of pupils are making secure progress. Progress in mathematics is much stronger now as a result of improved teaching and effective support.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive additional support that is helping them to achieve higher standards. Teachers and assistants plan together effectively to break down barriers to these pupils' learning.
- Pupils are developing reading skills systematically. The most able pupils know how to work out possible meanings of unfamiliar words they encounter. Less-able pupils use their phonic skills to break down words into sounds. Where they stumble over words, they are gaining confidence in correcting themselves. Staff recognise that some pupils are not enthusiastic about reading for pleasure and so they have refreshed the school's stock of books and introduced a programme to encourage wider, purposeful and

enjoyable reading.

- The proportion of pupils to reach the national standard in phonics rose in 2016. Phonics teaching has improved and leaders predict that more than three quarters of pupils will achieve the standard in Year 1 in 2017.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children enter the early years with knowledge and skills that are below those typical for their age. While many make good progress, too few have attained the good level of development that will equip them for Year 1 by the time they leave the Reception Year. Boys and disadvantaged children, in particular, achieve well below other children, particularly in their literacy and mathematical skills.
- Teaching in the Nursery is well structured. Teaching assistants provide seamless support for teachers. As a result, children engage well and make good progress in well-planned activities.
- In the Reception Year, staff provide a range of activities to support the children's learning. Teaching is not always matched well to meet the needs of the children, however, particularly the most able.
- Assessment of children's learning in the early years is backed by a range of online and paper evidence. The school's leaders recognise that leadership, including the interpretation of data, is an area for improvement in the early years. They have commissioned the support of a consultant to help early years staff make effective use of assessment evidence and to develop the learning environment.
- Children enjoy coming to school in the early years. Most children enjoy the activities provided for them. In the Nursery most children sit, listen and respond to questions. The children are well behaved, attentive and keen, and they concentrate well on their activities.
- Leaders ensure that the standards relating to the welfare and safety of children are met, so that children feel and are safe. Systems to manage the induction of new children entering the Nursery and Reception classes are secure.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and the weaknesses in the early years classes. As a result, all staff are rightly working hard to improve the teaching of mathematics.
- Parents spoken with are happy with the provision for children in the early years. They appreciate the positive relationships with staff and they engage well with the school staff to ensure their children are well cared for.

School details

Unique reference number	112243
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10025638

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	410
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	William Atkinson
Headteacher	Jane Hodgson
Telephone number	01228 815460
Website	www.upperbyschool.co.uk
Email address	schooloffice@upperbycdc.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 February 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- In 2015, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- This is a larger-than-average primary school.
- The school roll is increasing and there are currently more boys than girls.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion who have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs is average.

- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- Fewer pupils leave or arrive at the school part way through their education than in other schools nationally.
- The previous deputy headteacher left the school in July 2016. The acting deputy headteacher has been in post since September 2016 and the key stage 1 coordinator and the leaders for mathematics and English are new to their posts.
- The school has on-site provision for adult education and community care which offers a range of services to pre-school children, young people and their families, provided by Barnardo's. This is separate from the school, has its own entrance and was not included in this inspection.
- The school belongs to a cluster group of local schools, which work together to share good practice and check the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a wide range of classes in the school, including the Nursery and the Reception classes. Two observations were undertaken jointly with school leaders. Inspectors also listened to pupils read and observed pupils at break, lunchtime and around school.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in a separate meeting and informally at break, lunchtime and around the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised and evaluated pupils' work across a range of subjects, especially English, mathematics and topic work, which included some science, history and geography.
- A wide range of documents was considered, including school policies, the school's self-evaluation, the single central register for safeguarding and minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors also considered information about pupils' attainment and progress.
- Inspectors met with school leaders and other staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took into account 14 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke with parents who were bringing their children to school at the start of the day.
- Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Ofsted Inspector made a further visit to the school on 24 November 2016 to gather additional evidence about pupils' outcomes, and the quality of leadership and management.

Inspection team

Gena Merrett, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Joan Williamson	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Rigby	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Dimeck	Ofsted Inspector
Shirley Gornall	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jean Olsson-Law	Her Majesty's Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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