

Inspection of Upton Heath Church of England Primary School

Upton Lane, Upton Heath, Upton-by-Chester, Cheshire CH2 1ED

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 February 2024

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	Good

The principal of this school is Stuart Roberts. This school is part of The Samara 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), George Bulman, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Graeme White.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils value the strong relationships that they have with staff and each other at this large and welcoming school. They said that having good friends makes them happy at school.

Pupils are attentive during lessons and, typically, play together cooperatively at breaktimes. They value the support that they receive for their mental health and well-being, including spending time with the school dog, Buddy, and being able to attend the lunch club. Pupils trust adults to keep them safe. They know that they can talk to adults if they are ever worried.

The school has high expectations of pupils' achievement. These aspirations include pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most pupils achieve well across a range of subjects and they enjoy learning. They love to share their learning with others, including parents and carers, through the regular exhibitions of their work.

Pupils are enthused by the new approach to the delivery of the curriculum. Pupils appreciate the range of clubs on offer, including those for bench ball, musical rock group and self-defence. These ensure that pupils can develop their talents and interests, either before or after school.

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

The school has a secure overview of its strengths and the refinements that it needs to make to develop the quality of education further. The school has revitalised the design and delivery of the curriculum in recent times. The curriculum has been thoughtfully devised to meet the needs of children in early years through to pupils in Year 6. The school has carefully identified the specific knowledge that it wants pupils to learn and the order in which this information should be taught. The design of the curriculum helps pupils to make links between what they are learning now and what they have learned in the past

Teachers are well supported to deliver the curriculum effectively. Staff present new information clearly and provide suitable opportunities for pupils to revisit learning. This helps pupils to remember what they have been taught. As a result, pupils build a secure body of knowledge over time.

The strong emphasis on language and communication benefits pupils, including children in early years, greatly. The key vocabulary that pupils should know is clearly identified and taught effectively by staff. As a result, pupils use a range of different words, including subject-specific vocabulary, confidently in their discussions and play.

Teachers check on pupils' recent learning to identify any gaps in their knowledge. Teachers then adapt their teaching to help pupils overcome these deficits in their

learning. This helps pupils to keep pace with the curriculum content. However, in a few subjects, teachers' strategies to check pupils' earlier learning are not as effective. This means that teachers do not spot when pupils have not remembered concepts that have been taught in the past. This hinders some pupils from achieving as well as they should in these subjects.

The school prioritises reading. It aims for all pupils to read fluently. To secure this ambition, it ensures that staff receive regular and relevant training. Teachers are clear about the sounds and words that children in early years and pupils in key stage 1 should be able to read by the end of each term. Those pupils who struggle to keep up receive effective support so that they can keep pace with the phonics programme. This extends to pupils who arrive at school at different points during the academic year. Most pupils become confident and fluent readers by the end of Year 2.

The school has improved its systems to ensure that it effectively identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Staff have received the training that they need to make sure that pupils can learn well. The school works with other agencies, schools, parents and carers to ensure that it meets the needs of pupils effectively.

Pupils behave well and they trust staff to provide support when it is needed. Pupils work well together. In early years, children play together cooperatively, and there is a sense of partnership in how they learn alongside their classmates and with their teachers.

Pupils attend school regularly. The school takes swift and effective action to tackle absence. It works productively with parents to make sure that pupils do not miss out on learning.

The school provides a broad range of opportunities to support pupils' wider development. For example, pupils take on leadership roles such as those of junior safety officers, playground monitors and school parliament representatives. They are proud that they make a difference. Pupils also learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Pupils learn about the wider world and they gain an understanding of the differences between people. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

The trust and the local governing body support the school well. They have made a valuable contribution to recent improvements to ensure that pupils receive a good quality of education. Those responsible for governance support the school in taking account of staff's workload when change is introduced.

The school has experienced a period of change since the previous inspection. Parents and pupils are appreciative of the improvements that have been made. Parents value being involved in their children's learning.

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's checks on pupils' retention of key knowledge over time are not as effective as they are elsewhere. This means that teachers are not clear about the gaps that some pupils have in their knowledge. This hinders pupils' progress through the curriculum. The school should ensure that teachers are equipped with suitable assessment strategies in these subjects so that they can identify and address gaps in pupils' learning.

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	145074
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10255946
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	385
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Graeme White
CEO of trust	George Bulman
Principal	Stuart Roberts
Website	www.uptonheath.cheshire.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 March 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Samara Trust.
- A new principal has taken up post since the previous inspection.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in June 2016. The school is awaiting confirmation from the Diocese of Chester about its next section 48 inspection.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.

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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, as well as other senior and subject leaders in school. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the diocese.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO, trustees and members of the local academy committee.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography, physical education and science. For each deep dive, this involved holding discussions about the curriculum, visiting a sample of lessons, speaking to pupils about their learning and looking at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector observed some pupils from Year 1 to Year 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects. They spoke with leaders, looked at the work completed by pupils and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at recreational times. Inspectors also spoke with pupils about their experiences of school.
- An inspector spoke to parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- There were no findings from Ofsted's online pupil and staff surveys to consider.
- Inspectors also considered a range of documentation, including minutes from trustee and governance meetings, attendance records, behaviour logs and information on pupils' destinations for those who left mid-year.

Inspection team

Kathy Nichol, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Shackleton	Ofsted Inspector
Valmai Roberts	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024