

Inspection of a good school: Upperwood Academy

Dartree Walk, Darfield, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S73 9NL

Inspection dates: 11–12 February 2020

Outcome

Upperwood Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Upperwood Academy is a popular school with both parents and carers and pupils. The headteacher is passionate that pupils should do well and thrive. Parents value his commitment to the local community, saying, 'Mr Budd is so involved, making us feel part of the school.'

Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils do not feel bullying is a problem at school but understand that it is not tolerated. They say they feel safe in school. In lessons, pupils concentrate and focus when they are being taught. They show real enthusiasm and engagement with their learning. As a result, pupils do well at every stage of their schooling. They leave Upperwood Academy with high standards and go on to their secondary schools as capable and confident pupils.

The school has recently reviewed the curriculum for reading, science and art. This has helped pupils learn and remember more. However, some pupils, particularly in key stage 2, still have gaps in their knowledge in science and art.

The teaching of reading has the highest priority. Right from the start, the youngest children confidently read and write the sounds and letters they have learned. This emphasis on reading has made a real difference to pupils' enjoyment of reading. However, teachers do not always check which books the older pupils are reading. This means that pupils are not always reading a broad range of authors and genres.

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

Leaders know the school well and are always looking for ways to make it even better. The staff work well together to improve the curriculum for the pupils. New subject leaders are contributing to an enthusiastic and motivated staff team. Senior leaders have provided support and training which have largely been effective. Staff appreciate this input. It has been carefully balanced with consideration of their workload.

The school's curriculum in many subjects has been well thought through. 'Knowledge organisers' are helping pupils understand and use the correct terminology in subjects like art and science. Some teachers still need further training and support so that they model the correct technical terms in these subjects. When teachers are confident, they deliver the curriculum well. Lessons build on what pupils have learned before and what they need to learn next. As a result, pupils can talk with authority about their learning. In art, Year 2 pupils explained how they were doing a piece of work influenced by the work of Kandinsky. They had a good understanding of the artist and his background. Pupils confidently talked about the painting techniques they used. They were able to describe the importance of line, shape and form in abstract art.

In science, when pupils have learned something, they carry out scientific investigations to try out their hypotheses. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 had been learning about the sun and the earth. Pupils used this knowledge to make predictions about which material would be the most effective in blocking out light. They explained their findings, using words such as 'opaque', 'translucent' and 'transparent'. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 had been learning about volcanoes. They designed a fair test to investigate the effect of mixing vinegar and bicarbonate of soda to create an eruption. However, they had more difficulty using the correct language to explain their findings.

Reading is the highest priority for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Parents talk about how well their children are supported when they need more help. Teachers make sure that extra teaching for these pupils is carefully planned to help them keep up.

The school's teaching of phonics is effective. Young children quickly pick up basic reading and writing skills. Leaders have been successful in prioritising 'reading for enjoyment'. Throughout the school, pupils have a real love of reading. Teachers choose reading books to help younger readers practise their phonics. Older pupils are encouraged to read a selection of books, including 'the top 20 Starbooks'. Pupils read to a high standard but there is insufficient monitoring of what older pupils are reading. Few choose poetry and some prefer to stick to their favourite authors.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff work well with parents and other agencies. This helps to protect pupils and keep them free from harm. Governors check that they meet their statutory duties for the safer recruitment of staff. Staff are well trained and they understand their responsibilities for safeguarding pupils.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in school, online and in the local community. When they share their worries with staff, they are confident they will be followed up effectively.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have introduced whole-school plans and resources for teaching wider curriculum subjects. For some subjects, including art and science, plans are not yet fully established. As a result, pupils in key stage 2 have some gaps in their knowledge. They are not able to use the correct terminology to explain their artistic knowledge and/or scientific understanding. Leaders should ensure that changes to the curriculum are securely embedded and teachers are implementing them effectively.
- Pupils of all ages enjoy reading and have access to books by a variety of authors. However, teachers do not check older pupils' choices closely enough. As a result, pupils' reading experiences are sometimes limited to their personal preferences. Leaders should ensure that pupils read a broader range of literature to help improve their reading skills, as well as further developing a love of reading.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 12–13 July 2016.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	138615
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10121873
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	312
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Velda Hume-Cocking
Headteacher	Alistair Budd
Website	www.upperwoodacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	12–13 July 2016

Information about this school

- The school has a formal agreement with Tykes Teaching School Alliance as a provider for trainee teachers.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff. I also met with a group of governors, including the vice-chair of the governing body.
- I looked in depth at the following subjects: reading, science and art. In doing so, I visited classes across most year groups and reviewed pupils' work. I spoke to pupils about their learning and listened to them read. I also met with teachers.
- I met with those responsible for safeguarding. I looked at a range of documentation linked to safeguarding, including: child protection policies and procedures; absence data; information about how pupils' behaviour is managed; and information about how vulnerable pupils are supported. I talked to pupils during the inspection and asked them about how safe they feel.
- I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at playtimes and lunchtimes. I gathered pupils' views about the school through formal and informal

discussions. I considered the 80 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and 24 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

- I scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding documents.
- I gathered the views of parents at the start of the day. I considered the 10 responses to Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View, and the four free-text responses.

Inspection team

Karen Heath, lead inspector

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 2020