

Upton Snodsbury Church of England First School

School Lane, Upton Snodsbury, Worcester WR7 4NH

Inspection dates	19–20 January 2016
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Since the previous inspection, this school has gone from strength to strength.
- The school's worthy values shine out clearly, both through colourful displays and in the way staff and pupils behave towards one another.
- The school provides a nurturing environment where individuality is valued and celebrated.
- Academic standards are high and pupils' attitudes to learning are superb. Their conduct is excellent.
- Outstanding leadership provided by the headteacher and governors has created a successful school where pupils excel.
- Pupils in all year groups make excellent progress because of strong teaching. Teaching is always enthusiastic, often inspirational and never dull. In all classes, there is a real love of learning.
- Early years provision is highly effective.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently above average. The school's work to promote reading, in particular, is remarkably successful.
- By the time they reach the end of Year 4, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for learning at middle school.
- Pupils are confident and happy. They are respectful, polite and helpful. In all situations pupils display good manners.
- Pupils and parents express high levels of confidence in the school's procedures to keep children safe. Bullying does not happen and conflict of any kind is rare.
- For a small school, there is a lot going on. In class, lessons are lively and interesting. Beyond the classroom, the outdoor learning opportunities are fantastic. After the school day, many pupils take part in clubs that help to extend their learning or widen their experience.
- Pupils of all ages show an impressive ability to explain how things are done at school. They have a say in making the rules. Many take on jobs to help out around the school. They are proud of these roles and carry them out well.
- Teamwork between all staff is a considerable strength. New staff have been helped to settle in quickly and all understand the high expectations that operate at this school.
- The headteacher demonstrates an excellent understanding of how to get the best from staff and pupils. She leads by example and exercises wise judgement. Newly appointed subject leaders are receiving the support and guidance they need to help them develop in their roles.
- Governors have a well-informed understanding of their role. They are supportive without compromising their ambition for every child to do as well as possible.
- Pupils of all abilities experience success and enjoy their education at Upton Snodsbury First School.
- Parents hold the school in high regard. They are supportive of its work and their confidence is well founded. This is an excellent school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to build on the existing helpful support for newly appointed subject leaders in order to make them even more effective in contributing to school improvement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The superb leadership provided by the headteacher is a key factor in the school's success. She sets high standards and promotes decent values. Since the previous inspection, she has driven the school onwards and upwards. She makes sure that staff and pupils get the support, encouragement and challenge they need in order to do their best. The results are clear to see. Academic standards are high; behaviour is excellent; and parents and pupils express high levels of confidence in the school.
- The headteacher keeps a close eye on teaching in all classes. She is quick to praise successes and to point out where practice could be refined. She regularly 'drops in' to classrooms to see what is happening and also keeps formal records so that there is no doubt that all understand her high expectations.
- It is testimony to the strong leadership and the quality of teamwork in the school that recent changes in teaching staff have been managed so smoothly. It is clear that the positive legacy left by previous staff is being built on by new staff and that standards, which have been high for some time, show no signs of slipping.
- Recent staff changes mean that some subject leaders are new in post. Already, these newly appointed leaders are developing their roles and have a well-informed awareness of the school's current performance. Even so, they have not yet had the chance to play a full part in checking on teaching and learning, or in sharing the most effective practice in this school or elsewhere.
- This small school has a lot to offer pupils. Learning in different subjects is often enriched by visits or by special events in school. Outdoor learning is a regular feature of the school's work, with outdoor activities often inspired by classroom work. Regardless of the weather, pupils and staff don outdoor gear and plunge into creative activity in the school's grounds. Activities are thoughtfully planned and well supervised, and help pupils to grow in confidence and learn how to manage risks in a sensible way.
- The school's leadership is upfront about the values the school promotes and lives by. Values, such as trust or respect, are highlighted in the school entrance hall with prompts that cause pupils to stop and think about what these mean in action. Messages in assembly, special events such as 'friendship' or 'good deed' week, and everyday conversations between staff and pupils, all serve to reinforce the school's worthy values. Staff help to equip pupils with an outlook on life that leads them to become productive, thoughtful and caring in their attitudes and actions, both now and in their future lives.
- The vast majority of parents voice strong support for the school. The many comments received by the inspector during this inspection were full of praise for the school's work and the approachability of staff. Parents also have access to plenty of information about what happens in school. In recent times, parents have been invited into school to watch lessons, up-to-date information is posted on the website or sent by text message, and information leaflets and events are provided at regular intervals.
- Specific funds, such as the pupil premium and the primary sports fund, are put to excellent use. The pupil premium funding has helped to provide extra tuition when needed or to help pay for extra activities. The sports fund pays for specialist teachers, and this has had a marked impact on the range of sports on offer and the number of pupils taking part. Also, the school has been able to increase the number of after-school clubs available. Over the past year, the number of pupils who have attended at least one sports club has more than doubled, and pupils' participation and achievement in competitive sports have risen.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is strong. Governors present as well informed, articulate and capable. They have an excellent understanding of their role and have highly effective routines in place to check that their strategic decisions are operating to best effect. They know how well the school is doing and are ambitious for it to build further on its existing strengths. They value academic success but are equally concerned with pupils' well-being and safety. They gather information from a range of sources, including meeting with staff, consulting with pupils and seeking feedback from parents. Governors routinely analyse performance data and keep careful records of their meetings and visits to school. They make sure that all statutory duties are fulfilled.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All the required checks on staff and visitors are carried out in line with statutory requirements and proper records are kept. School policies and practice reflect current guidance and regulations. Staff and governors understand their responsibilities and have access to all the information and training that they need. The school site is kept secure and supervision arrangements during school time and before- and after-school club activities give no cause for concern.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is outstanding**

- Pupils succeed at school because teaching is highly effective.
- In September 2015, two new teachers started at this three-class school and one part-time teacher moved to a new post: significant changes in a school of this size. It is clear, however, that this change has been managed with expert attention so that the strengths of previous years have been maintained and built on. All staff have high expectations of themselves and for the pupils they teach.
- The quality of teamwork across the school is superb. Teaching assistants, teachers and other support staff all work together very well in order to make sure that pupils are safe and successful at school. In all classes, teaching is good natured, well informed and purposeful. The school's stated aim to ensure that 'a love of learning grows' shines out in the enthusiasm of staff and pupils.
- Excellent communication between staff and between school and home means that pupils' individual needs and capabilities are known in detail. Teachers have a thorough understanding of what pupils already know and use this information to pitch work at just the right level. They create lessons that inspire, motivate and make all ambitious to do their best. It is also worth noting that pupils' conscientious attitudes and outstanding behaviour help them to succeed in the classroom.
- Teaching fuels pupils' curiosity, often with simple yet highly effective techniques to grab and focus their attention and make them use the skills they have learned. In one lesson, for example, pupils had to search for the opening paragraphs from stories that were scattered around the classroom and then evaluate features of the writing. In another lesson, pupils had to consider the daily arithmetic that was required to make the best use of a ration allowance in the Second World War. In both these examples, pupils needed to draw on previous learning, think hard and explain their reasoning and decisions. They had fun, too. Work in pupils' books and on display around the school confirms that the very well-organised teaching and learning seen during the inspection is typical.
- Work is marked regularly and teachers' comments are very helpful. Homework is a regular routine in all classes. It can range from reading or learning spellings at home to projects based on school work, such as the splendid volcano models seen on display in the school library.
- The school is well ahead with the recent national changes to the way pupils' learning is assessed and tracked. Since the removal of National Curriculum levels, school leaders and staff have not lost any time in making sure that there is a reliable new system in place. Consequently, teachers' understanding of where pupils are in their learning is spot on and day-to-day lessons make the most of this. Pupils of all abilities get work that is just right for them. This enables the brightest pupils to forge ahead and ensures that those who need extra help or to go over work again get the attention that they need.
- A distinctive feature of teaching and learning in this school is the efficient use of time. From the moment pupils arrive in the morning, they are engaged in productive activity such as practising spellings or attending to work that needs correcting or refinement. Similarly, pupils return to work swiftly after break times and even the very youngest children are quick to settle to activities in class or outdoors.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is outstanding**

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. This is a school where individual needs are known, talents are nurtured and each pupil's voice is heard.
- Pupils are remarkably confident at school and their ability to talk at length about their learning and school life is striking. Pupils of all ages can explain how they have a say in deciding what happens at school. From helping to risk assess school trips to managing the school's compost bin, pupils understand that their actions help the school to run smoothly, safely and efficiently.
- Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. Bullying of any sort does not happen here and pupils say that if it did, then it would be stopped. They do recognise that upsets and boisterous play can occur, but they also say that, in many cases, they manage to sort out these sort of problems by themselves without making a fuss. In addition, they know that the adults in school or a pupil 'playground friend' will always help them, if needs be.

- In all classes there is a strong and highly visible emphasis on the attitudes and skills needed to be a successful learner. The Upton Snodsbury 'Learning Owl' is displayed in each class and reminds pupils about the value of qualities such as perseverance. In addition, incentives such as the 'Star of the Week' award or an invitation to a 'Best Effort Tea Party' with the headteacher serve to motivate pupils and reward hard work and helpful behaviour.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils look smart, arrive on time and are keen to learn. Attendance rates are above average and it is rare for any pupil to miss school without good reason. In their comments to the inspector, many parents described their children as being eager to attend and very happy at school.
- In lessons, pupils are attentive to their teachers and show keen interest in their work. On the playground, older pupils willingly help the younger ones and all get on well together.
- Pupils' conduct around the school site, at the before- and after-school childcare and when taking part in learning outside the classroom, is excellent. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They are quick to offer a cheery greeting to visitors and need no prompting to remember to say please or thank you.
- All pupils understand the school rules and follow them. Indeed, pupils have a say in making and shaping the rules to make sure that these are fair and reasonable.
- Pupils display high levels of independence and an impressive ability to take on responsibilities that help with school life.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Pupils make excellent progress at this school.
- Since the previous inspection, academic standards have soared. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils reach well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. These high standards have been seen year after year since 2012.
- Achievement in reading is especially strong. Indeed, around the school, books and pupils' own writing are given a high profile, with displays and inviting library areas that stimulate interest. Pupils of all ages are able to talk in some detail about stories and the books they have read. In class, pupils are given many meaningful opportunities to read, both for enjoyment and as part of their learning in different subjects. Effective phonics teaching for younger pupils and imaginative events, such as the recent 'bedtime story evening', when parents and pupils returned to school for an after-dark reading session, all help to develop pupils' skills and enthusiasm for reading.
- By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, they have made remarkable progress, both academically and socially. Pupils leaving Upton Snodsbury First School are exceptionally well equipped for learning and life at their next school.
- Most-able pupils excel because, at every step of the way, they are challenged to think hard and do their very best. They race ahead in their learning at Upton Snodsbury. Similarly, pupils with special educational needs and those who find aspects of learning or school life difficult, receive highly effective, tailor-made support. All get the chance to feel the excitement of success and the challenge and guidance they need to push them on further.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils at the school is very small so a comparison between their attainment and that of others in the school, or nationally, would not be appropriate or particularly meaningful. Suffice to say that, over time and currently, these pupils also make excellent progress and reach high standards.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Children's starting points when they first enter school can vary significantly within each cohort. Over time, however, there is evidence to indicate that the majority start school with levels of knowledge and skill that are typical for their age.

- Early years staff have established clear lines of communication with many of the local pre-school providers and this greatly assists children's start at school. In addition, the school's very close partnership with parents means that staff have all the information they need to ensure that all children make the most of their first year at school. Consequently, children make rapid progress in many different areas of learning and are extremely well prepared for Year 1. In 2015, for example, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of early years was above the national figure.
- The Reception-age children are taught together with the Year 1 pupils. This is managed exceptionally well by staff. The classroom is organised so as to encourage the development of independence and there are many opportunities for children to explore, experiment and enjoy creative activities within a safe and nurturing environment. When, at the end of their first year, children progress into Year 1, the move is a seamless transition. No time is lost in making sure that their future learning builds firmly on the strong foundations established in the early years.
- Teaching, teamwork and leadership in the early years are all excellent. Staff speak kindly to children, are attentive to their needs, and keep a very careful watch on their progress and safety. While all staff are always alert to children's achievements, one adult in the team is assigned the job of observer each day and takes the lead in recording evidence of what children know and can do. This information is often captured using hand-held tablet technology and is used to carefully plan the next steps in learning and to keep parents fully informed.
- The attention given to children's social skills and productive learning behaviours is second to none and has a marked impact. Children in the Reception Year show an impressive ability to concentrate on tasks, take turns, listen and cooperate with others. Their behaviour, like that of pupils in the rest of the school, is outstanding. There is no doubt that the successful outcomes seen throughout the rest of the school all take root here.

School details

Unique reference number	116854
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10011168

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	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	68
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jane Harding
Headteacher	Mrs Lorraine Barber
Telephone number	01905 381288
Website	www.uptonsnodsburyfirstschool.org.uk
Email address	office@upsnodfirst.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 March 2011

Information about this school

- Upton Snodsbury Church of England First School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils at the school is also below the national average. The term 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to describe those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority. These pupils receive additional support from pupil premium funding.
- There are three classes at the school. Reception-age children are taught in a mixed-age class with Year 1 pupils. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are also taught together in a mixed-age class. Year 2 pupils are taught as a single-year group class.
- In September 2015, two long-serving teachers retired, two new teachers started at the school and one part-time teacher moved to a new post. Some of the subject leader roles at the school changed at the same time.
- The school provides before- and after-school childcare and a range of clubs.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classrooms and outdoors. Most of these observations were carried out alongside the headteacher. The inspector also attended a school assembly, examined pupils' work in books and on display, and considered school assessment information.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour, and the school's procedures, at the beginning and end of the school day, at lunch and break times, when pupils were moving about the school site, working outside and at a school club. The inspector also checked the school's before-school childcare.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, school leaders, subject leaders, governors and a local authority adviser.
- By the end of the inspection, there were 27 recent responses and 21 written comments on the online questionnaire (Parent View). The inspector looked at these, talked to some parents at school and checked the school's routines for gathering parents' views.
- The school's website and a number of school documents were examined. These documents included information about pupils' progress, the school's own evaluations of its work, school improvement plans, and information about the work of the governing body. Records relating to staff performance management, behaviour, attendance, safety and safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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