

Inspection of Upper Arley CofE Primary School

Upper Arley, Bewdley, Worcestershire DY12 1XA

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher is Louise Low. This school is part of the Black Pear Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Emma Pritchard, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Shoemith.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very proud to attend Upper Arley CofE Primary School. There is a real community feeling. The school's vision, 'One community, learning and growing together, sharing God's love', is threaded through the entire curriculum.

The school has high expectations for the achievement of all pupils. Pupils have a real love of learning. They benefit from a well-thought-out curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well alongside their peers.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. They model the school's values in all that they do, for example by showing compassion to one another. They show high levels of respect and care for each other and staff.

Pupils benefit from a vast array of experiences, such as visits to an outdoor activity centre and a wide choice of clubs. They thrive through many opportunities to develop their leadership skills. For example, pupils flourish in their roles as sports ambassadors, who are trained to lead games at break and lunchtimes. Pupils who act as reading ambassadors take their roles seriously by recommending books for others to read. Pupils make a tangible contribution to the life of the school. They have been instrumental in designing the 'Learning Superheroes' to promote key learning characteristics.

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

The planned curriculum in all subjects is ambitious. Subject leaders have sequenced the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that they want pupils to know and when. The school ensures that there is ongoing work to review and evaluate curriculum areas. Teachers regularly check on pupils' learning. In most subjects, pupils can recall lots of their prior learning. However, in a few subjects pupils struggle to remember the content they are learning.

Pupils build their knowledge cumulatively over time. For example, in mathematics, younger pupils practise repeated addition as a step to progress to multiplication tables. Later on, pupils use their knowledge of addition and subtraction to add and subtract decimals. Similarly, in history, pupils were asked to look at artefacts from the English Civil War and pose their own questions to interpret the information presented. This enables pupils to learn to think critically and ask questions in the search of the truth.

Reading is given the highest priority. Staff are trained well to deliver the school's phonics programme. From early years, children get off to a secure start. They learn to read and write the sounds they have been taught. Staff take quick and effective action if anyone falls behind. Pupils read books that match the sounds they know. This increases their confidence and fluency.

Staff ensure that children become very familiar with well-chosen books and rhymes. There is lots of repetition. Pupils are excited by, and engaged in, a range of well-chosen stories. There is a sharp focus on reading for older pupils. Every day, pupils spend time on their reading skills. They complete activities using challenging texts. These build their analytical and inference skills well. Initiatives such as class reading challenges and 'drop everything and read' promote a love of reading.

Staff know all pupils extremely well. They identify pupils' additional needs quickly and accurately, starting in the early years. Staff are skilled at providing pupils, including those with SEND, with the support they need to get the most from their learning. Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND benefit from following the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. As a result, they make good progress from their starting points.

Pupils behave exceptionally well in their lessons and around the school. This is because the school's values and expectations are understood by pupils and applied consistently by staff. This creates a calm and purposeful atmosphere where pupils enjoy learning. Leaders are proactive in managing attendance. Consequently, pupils typically attend school regularly and on time.

Pupils' personal development is exceptional. There is great emphasis on developing pupils' learning beyond the academic curriculum. The curriculum is designed to help them learn about being resilient, keeping healthy and developing safe and respectful relationships. Pupils start to learn about possible future careers through visits from banks, the school nurse, people from the farming community and authors. All pupils, including those with SEND, have the opportunity to represent the school in sporting events. This is achieved through a well-considered programme of inclusivity in sport.

Staff are happy and feel well supported. Leaders are considerate of workload. Trustees and governors use their collective experience and expertise well to support leaders. They have a secure knowledge of the school's strengths and have identified the right priorities moving forward.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- In a few curriculum areas, pupils' recall of knowledge is not as good as in other curriculum subjects and they do not achieve as much as they might. The school should continue to make sure that the planned curriculum is implemented as intended and that all curriculum areas focus on developing pupils' retrieval and recall of knowledge so that they make strong progress across the curriculum over time.

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	147761
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10294691
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Shoesmith
Headteacher	Louise Low
Website	www.upperarleycofeschool.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Black Pear Trust.
- No pupils attend alternative provision.
- The school is a Church of England school. Its most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in October 2016.

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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, the chief executive officer, other leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. They also met with groups of staff and pupils.
- To evaluate the school’s curriculum, deep dives were conducted in early reading, mathematics and history. Inspectors spoke to curriculum leaders and teachers, visited a sample of lessons and reviewed pupils’ work with them.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders about pupils’ behaviour, attendance, and policies and procedures. Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour in lessons and around school. An inspector discussed the school’s analysis of attendance with leaders.
- Inspectors reviewed information about other areas of learning and the wider curriculum.
- The lead inspector spoke with the school improvement lead from the multi-academy trust.
- The inspection team scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders’ evaluation of the school and priorities for improvement.
- The lead inspector met with those responsible for governance, including the chair of the local governing body and the vice-chairs of the trust.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The views of pupils, parents and carers, and staff were considered through discussions and looking at information collected from Ofsted’s online surveys.

Inspection team

Lynda Townsend, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Nadeem Bhatti	Ofsted Inspector

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