

Upper Horfield Primary School

Address: Upper Horfield Community School & Early Years, Sheridan Road, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 0PU

Unique reference number (URN): 108970

Inspection report: 20 January 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders are unwavering in their drive to improve attendance for all pupils. They build positive relationships with families to overcome obstacles that may prevent pupils from attending well. Leaders analyse attendance information closely to identify trends and patterns that highlight where extra support is needed. As a result of this work, pupils' attendance has improved overall and is now close to national averages.

Pupils are polite, kind and respectful. They welcome visitors to their school with a smile and are typically keen to learn. Pupils who need additional help to manage their behaviour are supported sensitively by staff, which contributes to a purposeful and productive learning environment. Pupils of all ages play well together. Older pupils enjoy spending time with younger children during social times. In the lunch hall, pupils use their good manners and show appreciation to the staff who help them. This creates a harmonious and enjoyable lunchtime experience for all. Pupils are clear that there is no discrimination in their school. They are confident that trusted staff would help them if needed. This helps pupils feel well supported throughout the school day.

Early years

Expected standard 

Staff in the early years prioritise building secure relationships with children and their parents and carers. They know children and families well. From the outset, staff identify any barriers to children's learning and/or wellbeing. They work closely with families to provide appropriate support to overcome barriers. This helps children to settle quickly, feel safe and secure.

The learning environment supports children to develop independence and curiosity. Developing children's language and communication is a key priority, including for those who speak English as an additional language. Staff use a range of strategies to communicate with children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This helps children to generally progress well across the curriculum from their starting points.

The school prioritises helping children to develop a love of reading from the start. Children in the provision for 2- and 3-year-olds listen to a wide range of stories from different cultures. They quickly learn important phrases and join in with repeated refrains. As children progress into Reception, they continue to broaden their repertoire of stories. For example, children confidently retell the story of 'The Gingerbread Man'. Staff teach early reading effectively. Where required, children receive timely additional help if they need to catch up. Typically, children are well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

The school has an established culture of inclusion. Leaders work closely with parents and carers to understand pupils' needs and prioritise their wellbeing. This nurturing approach is particularly beneficial for pupils who have recently arrived from overseas and for those who speak English as an additional language. Leaders respond promptly to emerging needs and

changing circumstances. They track the progress of vulnerable pupils carefully, ensuring that the support provided reduces barriers to learning so that pupils attend well, engage positively and thrive.

Leaders work effectively with external professionals to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive timely and appropriate support. Staff benefit from regular professional learning that develops their expertise. Thoughtful adaptations to the school environment enable pupils with disabilities to learn alongside their peers and participate fully in school life. Funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to enhance their learning experiences and access to wider opportunities. These actions help to raise pupils' aspirations and ensure that those who may face additional challenges are generally well supported.

Leaders maintain a clear overview of provision for vulnerable pupils. They evaluate the impact of their actions and ensure that support remains aligned with pupils' individual needs. Continued refinement of how leaders assess the long-term effect of additional support would help them sharpen further their understanding of how their actions influence pupils' academic and personal development.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils benefit from the school's wider offer. Important opportunities to develop life skills sit at the heart of the personal development programme. For example, pupils learn about road safety and develop cycling proficiency through the training they receive. Leaders prioritise further opportunities to enrich pupils' learning, including trips to the pantomime, a visiting immersive exploring dome and school performances. These experiences open doors to new learning and deepen pupils' curiosity.

Through the personal, social and health education curriculum, pupils learn about the importance of right and wrong. Older pupils talk passionately about the Windrush generation and the discrimination they faced. They know that any form of racial segregation is wrong and understand that they can influence positive change in society. Pupils recognise that democracy is a fair process and speak confidently about their own experience of this when electing school council representatives. Pupils enjoy the leadership opportunities on offer, including serving as librarians, lunchtime trolley monitors and helping to set up the hall for assembly. These roles help pupils develop confidence and resilience.

Pupils learn about positive relationships and understand the importance of consent and personal space. The curriculum helps them to stay safe online. Pupils know not to share personal information with strangers and understand both the advantages and risks of social media. They learn how to keep themselves mentally and physically healthy, for example using breathing techniques to help them manage their own feelings and stay calm.

Leaders ensure that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, can access the full range of wider opportunities the school provides. They keep a close oversight of pupils' attendance at extra-curricular clubs and take effective steps to encourage participation from all groups. As a result, pupils benefit from a rich and varied range of experiences that enhance their personal development.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Across the school, some pupils have gaps in their letter formation, spelling and handwriting skills. The quality and presentation of pupils' work are often too variable. In addition, inconsistencies in the teaching and historic weaknesses in the curriculum mean that, in some subjects, pupils' knowledge and skills are not secure. At times, some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not consistently make suitable progress from their starting points. As a result, not all pupils are as well prepared for the next phase of their learning as they should be.

Despite this, leaders have begun to improve the school's work to support pupils to achieve well. The school's most recently published outcomes for Year 6 national tests in reading and mathematics, the Year 1 phonics screening check and the multiplication tables check reflect the improvements made. Typically, in these aspects of learning, pupils can recall what they have learned.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Leaders recognise that further work is needed to secure the consistency and effectiveness of the curriculum. Although a new and more ambitious curriculum has been introduced since the last inspection, the legacy of a weaker curriculum, coupled with continued variability in the quality of teaching, means that some pupils have gaps in their basic knowledge and skills. These include letter formation, handwriting, spelling and punctuation. Some teachers do not consistently check pupils' understanding or identify where knowledge is missing, and pupils who need help to catch up do not always receive support that meets their needs. As a result, some pupils struggle to build securely on prior learning or remember important knowledge over time. At times, teachers do not adapt learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or for those who face other barriers. This limits how well these pupils progress through the curriculum.

Most teachers use their secure subject knowledge well to teach confidently, and they draw on practical resources effectively to support pupils' learning, particularly in mathematics. This helps younger pupils develop early fluency in reading and number and enables older pupils to tackle more complex mathematical ideas. However, the strengths in teaching are not yet consistent across the school, which contributes to the uneven progress some pupils make.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

There are important aspects of the school's work that require further development to ensure that all pupils are supported to build secure knowledge and skills across the curriculum. Although leaders have a broad understanding of what needs to improve, some developments are at an early stage and are not yet having the desired impact on securing a high-quality education for all pupils. At times, leaders do not identify the underlying causes

of the weaknesses that exist. As a result, the actions they take do not lead to improvement quickly enough.

Governors ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties, for example in keeping children safe and acting in their best interests. Despite this, governors do not challenge leaders with sufficient rigour to ensure that the quality of education pupils receive improves.

Leaders successfully build positive relationships with parents and carers. Parents particularly value the care and consideration that staff provide. Staff feel valued and are committed to raising standards so that all pupils achieve well. They appreciate the support they receive to manage their workload and leaders' attention to their wellbeing. Staff are proud to be part of the school community.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils enjoy attending this inclusive and welcoming school. Staff build warm, positive relationships with pupils and their families. They work in close partnership to reduce the barriers that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), may face. This supports pupils' attendance and helps them develop a sense of belonging.

Pupils typically achieve well by the end of Year 6, for example in national tests in reading and mathematics. However, too many pupils do not secure the basic knowledge and skills they need. This is because of historic weaknesses in the curriculum and variability in the way staff implement the curriculum. In addition, leaders' and governors' actions do not bring about improvement swiftly enough. Learning is also not always adapted well enough to meet the needs of different groups, including some pupils with SEND.

Pupils show that they are 'responsible, respectful and ready' throughout the day. This begins in the early years, where children follow well-established routines. Bullying and disruption are rare. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes, form caring relationships with adults and are confident to 'have a go'. As a result, pupils feel safe and happy.

Children in Nursery and Reception get off to a positive start. They build secure foundations in their learning and development, including learning to read letters and sounds, writing and understanding numbers.

Pupils value the enrichment opportunities the school provides, including clubs, educational visits and a residential trip. These experiences help pupils develop their interests beyond the classroom. Older pupils take pride in their leadership responsibilities, such as acting as role models for their Reception 'buddies'.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that pupils receive the support they need to improve their handwriting and transcription skills so that they can write fluently and accurately.

- Leaders should ensure that teachers routinely check what pupils know and remember across all subjects and use this to inform future teaching.
 - Leaders should ensure that learning is suitably adapted so that all groups of pupils receive the support they need to access and progress through the curriculum well.
 - Leaders, including governors, should ensure they gather information systematically to evaluate the impact of any planned changes and bring about improvement more swiftly.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Jon Smith.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, assistant headteacher and early years leader. The lead inspector also met with a group of local governors.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school, under the same registration, runs a nursery for 2- and 3-year-olds.

The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Tim Seddon

Lead inspector:

Wendy D'Arcy, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Ken Buxton, Ofsted Inspector

Tonwen Empson, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.



This data is from 20 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

182

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

210

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

30.77%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

1.65%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

12.64%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	61%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	58%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	72%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	54%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	79%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	79%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	84%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	75%	73%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	74%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	63%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	80%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	75%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	79%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	89%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	88%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	64%	73%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	57%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	75%	46%	Above
2022/23 (final)	38%	44%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	79%	62%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	92%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	69%	60%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	82%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	92%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	69%	58%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	75%	60%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	92%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	54%	59%	Close to average

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	57%	68%	-10 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	75%	67%	8 pp
2022/23 (final)	38%	66%	-28 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	79%	80%	-1 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	92%	80%	12 pp
2022/23 (final)	69%	78%	-9 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	82%	78%	4 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	92%	78%	14 pp
2022/23 (final)	69%	77%	-8 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	75%	80%	-5 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	92%	79%	12 pp
2022/23 (final)	54%	79%	-25 pp

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	5.8%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.7%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	7.5%	5.9%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	16.3%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	14.8%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	25.3%	16.2%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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