

Abbey Gates Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	122659
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	380509
Inspection dates	31 January–1 February 2012
Lead inspector	Andrew Stafford

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Ramsay
Headteacher	Kate Cumberpatch
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2006
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	31 January–1 February 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Andrew Stafford

Additional inspector

Linda Rowley

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days notice. The inspection team observed 16 lessons or part lessons, taught by 11 teachers. They held meetings with parents, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff, and heard a sample of pupils read. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the school's tracking of pupils' progress; the minutes of meetings of the governing body; safeguarding documentation; the school's self-evaluation and reports on the work of the school from outside organisations. Inspectors scrutinised 97 parental questionnaires and those completed by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

Abbey Gates is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than average. Only a few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average. The proportion of those with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The government's current floor standards are met. The school has numerous awards including Artsmark Silver and Activemark Gold awards, Eco Schools and Healthy Schools status, the International School and the Investors in Pupils awards. The deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2011. Two teachers are currently on family leave. On site there is a privately run before- and after-school club that runs every day; this is subject to a separate Ofsted inspection and report.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school that has improved significantly since the last inspection. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher and her leadership team has led to considerable improvements in the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.
- One parent wrote, summing up the views of many others: 'I cannot praise Abbey Gates enough! My daughter looks forward to school every single day. Her reading, writing and mathematical skills have developed significantly since starting.'
- Almost all pupils make outstanding progress throughout their time in school as a result of teaching that consistently sets high expectations. All groups of pupils do well and, through highly effective support, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their often lower starting points.
- Teaching is outstanding overall because of its consistently high quality. Teachers ensure every pupil, including those with disabilities and special educational needs, makes at least good and often excellent progress.
- The governing body and leaders at all levels provide very strong leadership which has led to teaching now being excellent overall, making pupils' achievement outstanding.
- The school puts focused support into place when it notices that pupils' progress slows. These interventions have helped to accelerate pupils' progress in reading and writing, but have not been quite as successful in mathematics for a very few pupils.
- Behaviour of pupils is outstanding, as reflected in their excellent attitudes and conduct in lessons and around school. This is the result of pupils being well engaged with an excellent curriculum, and the sharp focus on their exceptional spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils overwhelmingly say they feel safe in school and this is backed up unanimously by parents and carers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all pupils make the best possible progress in mathematics by:

- assessing their progress more regularly
- including targets when support is given so that the school can measure that it is making the expected improvements to pupils' learning and progress.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Nearly all pupils make at least good and often outstanding progress and this has driven up attainment. From broadly average starting points when they first join the school, children make a strong start to learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage where the quality of teaching is very high. By the time they are six, pupils are reading at a level above that expected for their age. Pupils learn the basics of reading through a highly structured and regular programme which is focused on pupils learning letters and sounds. Sessions are brief but regular, and the pace of learning is brisk. At the end Key Stage 1, attainment in recent years has been regularly above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Due to the consistent high quality of teaching, pupils in Key Stage 2 make sustained progress. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, they are working at levels in reading, writing and mathematics that are well above the national averages.

Nearly all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, do well in lessons and in assessments. This is because of the well-tailored provision for their different needs, including very effective additional support. Consequently, the number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is falling, as almost all have successfully narrowed the gap in achievement with the national average by the time they leave school. Interventions to support pupils who are falling behind in mathematics are effective for the vast majority. Very occasionally, the school is not quick enough off the mark in identifying and addressing these dips in progress. In addition, the planned programmes of work to support pupils do not always include clear enough measures to show that their progress is accelerating.

Almost all pupils said they learnt a lot in lessons and that the school helps them do as well as they can. Typically, lessons move at a brisk pace with a wide variety of speaking and listening activities that enable pupils to discuss work in pairs or groups. All parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agreed that their children are making good or excellent progress. The inspection findings reflect the views of parents, carers and pupils.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is always at least good and often outstanding because teachers set high expectations for all pupils. Almost all pupils, and parents and carers who completed the questionnaires, rightly said that teaching in school was good or better. Appropriate challenging tasks are set as part of the excellent planned curriculum for individuals, including those who find learning easy or difficult, and those who have disabilities or special educational needs. This was seen in an outstanding Year 4

lesson where pupils were fully briefed before going out into the extensive school grounds to 'Narnify' what they saw. They took photographs of tree bark that was like 'dragon's scales and decaying skin' and examined exposed roots that looked like 'fingers slithering'. They recorded their descriptions on hand-held recorders; a group of boys said: 'All of these creepy trees are barricading us; we can hear bird songs, different to the ones we hear in our world.' Back in the classroom, they used this descriptive language to create an atmosphere in stories that they word processed on laptop computers, to which they added atmospheric music.

The excellent curriculum provides a wide variety of stimulating, first-hand and memorable experiences for pupils throughout the school. Teachers are very knowledgeable in their subjects and highly skilled through their lesson planning to include opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to a high level. For example, a very enthusiastic response was observed in a Year 2 lesson: 'This is so cool', said one boy as he watched cardboard houses become engulfed in flames in a mock-up of the Great Fire of London. The school has invested in a well-trained teaching and support staff who work closely together in planning and teaching in order to share good practice with each other. Teachers deploy additional support staff effectively to ensure that their time is used well. Teachers nearly always move learning on quickly and vary activities in the stimulating learning environments that they have established.

The Early Years Foundation Stage has a well-organised induction programme that helps children settle very quickly into school routines. The setting provides a bright and stimulating learning environment. The outdoor area offers a good and safe working area for children to learn through experiencing a wide range of practical activities. Enterprising teaching, with a well-organised range of activities that capture children's interest and imagination, helps them make consistently good progress and develop understanding rapidly. The school's assessment data show that the vast majority are on track to exceed the levels expected by the time they move into Year 1.

Teachers use assessment in lessons perceptively through questioning to find out how well pupils are doing and whether work needs to be modified. They consistently share learning objectives with pupils and make sure they are understood. Work is marked regularly and teacher's comments praise pupils for what they have done well. Feedback from teachers informs pupils what they need to do next to improve their learning. They know the individual targets they have been set and when these are achieved more challenging targets follow.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour seen during the inspection was always exceptional in lessons and consistently good around the playgrounds. Pupils confirmed that this was typical, and this is also reflected in the responses from parents and carers. Pupils are highly aware of the different types of bullying and express their confidence in bringing any concerns to the attention of staff, secure in the knowledge that these will be dealt with. Reported incidents of racism and bullying are extremely rare and records confirm the views of parents, carers and pupils that these are dealt with very effectively. Pupils say they feel safe in a secure environment and name one or more

adults they trust to help them. Pupils are acutely aware of unsafe situations, such as the use of new technologies and can explain how they would minimise or eradicate the risks they identify.

Pupils get on well together and one boy said, 'I can't think of any disagreements in our age group.' They demonstrate the values of cooperation, responsibility and care they have acquired through being part of the school's very positive ethos of supporting each other, which makes a significant contribution to pupils' behaviour and well-being. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good. Instances of pupils being distracted during teacher-led activities are rare and most effectively addressed.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and are willing to help out in the classrooms and run the 'Toast Club' at morning break. They contribute suggestions through the school council where they are rightly proud of the improvements to the playground and their designs for the tree-house that they have initiated. All parents and carers who returned a questionnaire said their child was happy and safe in school. Almost all thought that behaviour was at least good in school. Attendance is well above the national average.

Leadership and management

Senior and middle leaders are relentless in holding staff to account for the performance of their pupils. Ambitious leaders at all levels take responsibility for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. They know how well pupils are doing and set challenging targets for further improvements. Leaders know the strengths and relative weaknesses in their areas of responsibility. The consistency of all leaders in the quality of their work and the improvements they have brought about has ensured an excellent capacity to continue to improve further.

The school's excellent curriculum has established strong links between subjects that, for example, give a wealth of opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills. Pupils get the chance to study topics of their choice and 'creative homework' gives them opportunities to study in depth those things that interest them most. Overall, the school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. The school has been recognised as outward looking through its international school award and is seen as being extremely nurturing through its Investors in Pupils award. The governing body is a highly committed and enthusiastic supporter of the school. Governors are fully involved in monitoring the school's work and holding staff to account for the performance of pupils.

Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous and all current government requirements are met. The school successfully promotes equality of opportunity by ensuring that all groups of pupils and individuals have full access to every aspect of school life, and responds well to situations where improvement is needed. All the staff who returned a questionnaire said they were proud to be a member of the school.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Abbey Gates Primary School, Ravenshead, NG15 9BH

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school, and particularly to those of you who took the time to tell us your views or filled in a questionnaire.

I am writing to tell you what we have said about your school. We think you go to an outstanding school that has improved since its last inspection. Your headteacher and other leaders have made sure that all your lessons inspire you to do as well as you can. As a result, you are doing very well in reading and writing and mathematics in all year groups and making outstanding progress during your time in the school.

You have shown us how well you behave in lessons and around school and it is clear that this is typical of how you usually behave as there have been very few reported incidents of misbehaviour. You have told us you feel safe in school and your parents and carers have confirmed this.

Whatever your different needs, your teachers make sure you are set work that is enjoyable but also challenging. When I spoke to some of you after seeing your lessons you told me that learning was fun but hard work as well. You play your part in the life of the school and show that the values you have been taught are reflected in the way you look after each other and show respect and understanding for peoples' differences.

We have asked the school to check your progress in mathematics more regularly, so that if you are starting to fall behind you are given support more quickly. We have asked the school to monitor that extra support you receive helps you to make faster progress. You can help by continuing to check your work carefully and by telling your teacher if you need them to explain some of the work in more detail.

Thank you again for the warm welcome. We wish you and the school well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Stafford
Lead inspector

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