

Serco Inspections  
Cedar House  
21 William Street  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham  
B15 1LH

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Serco**  
**Direct T 0121 683 3888**



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Mrs H Franklin  
Headteacher  
Abbots Green Community Primary School  
Airfield Road  
Bury St Edmunds  
IP32 7PJ

Dear Mrs Franklin

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Abbots Green Community Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 22 February 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please also pass on my thanks to the pupils and members of the governing body for their help during the inspection.

The number on roll is higher than at the time of the last inspection and continues to rise. Two additional class spaces have been built and four more classrooms are currently under construction to accommodate the increase in pupil numbers. The headteacher returned from maternity leave in February 2011 and there have been several changes in teaching staff. A member of staff has been appointed to lead and manage the Early Years Foundation Stage. All but one child joined the Reception classes in September 2011; previously children had started school in the term in which they had their fifth birthday.

As a result of the inspection on 10 June 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

Pupils' achievement continues to be satisfactory, although learning and progress for children in Reception and Key Stage 1 are better now than at the time of the last inspection. The Early Years Foundation Stage profile outcomes for 2011 were higher than in 2010, with greater proportions of children reaching the expected level of development. Children's personal, social and literacy skills were weaker aspects of the overall profile. Attainment in Year 2 improved well last year. Outcomes in

January 2012



reading, writing and mathematics were average, and so higher than in previous years. Pupils made good progress from their starting points in Reception. Attainment at the end of Year 4 in 2011 was broadly average, with a majority of pupils reaching age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils made better progress from the end of Year 2 in mathematics than they did in reading and writing. The attainment targets set for these pupils were exceeded in mathematics but missed in reading and writing. Evidence from lesson observations and from pupils' work show that children in the Reception classes and pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress. The learning and progress of pupils in Years 3 and 4 are satisfactory.

Positive action has been taken to bring about improvements in reading, writing and mathematics. The systematic teaching of early reading skills (phonics) in Reception and Year 1 is laying the foundation for improvements in reading. Pupils are encouraged to read more regularly and widely, at school and at home. Individual reading time and guided reading groups are helping to strengthen pupils' reading skills. However, the school's analysis of teacher assessments indicates that comprehension remains a weaker aspect of pupils' reading. There are more opportunities now for pupils to develop their writing skills across the curriculum in project work, and weekly writing time is part of each class timetable. Pupils' writing has improved, particularly in Key Stage 1, but older pupils' writing and presentation skills still require improvement. Evidence in pupils' books and in lessons shows an increase in emphasis on pupils' understanding of calculation, shape and measure. A daily mathematics lesson is now taught in all classes and lessons include an emphasis on pupils learning number facts.

### **The quality of teaching**

Teaching has improved since the last inspection. There has been an increase in the proportion of good teaching, although it has yet to reach the target set by the school. The strongest teaching is in Reception and in Years 1 and 2. Leaders acknowledge that improvements are required in other year groups where the majority of the teaching is satisfactory. Where the teaching is good, learning objectives are clear and teachers point out the learning outcomes they are looking for from pupils. Teachers' questioning is used well to test pupils' understanding and pupils are encouraged to explain their thinking. Resources such as handheld whiteboards and interactive whiteboards are used effectively to support learning. Children in the Reception classes are provided with a good range of learning activities, both indoors and outside. Teaching assistants are deployed well and make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. Lessons have a positive working atmosphere, with good relationships between pupils and staff. When teaching is less effective, tasks are not matched precisely enough for individual pupils, insufficient challenge is provided for higher ability pupils, and errors and misconceptions are not picked up through teachers' assessment and monitoring. A consistent approach to teachers' planning has been introduced since the last inspection. Detailed lesson



plans indicate what pupils will be learning and how it will be assessed. Teachers are encouraged to review and revise plans to match the pace of learning. There is a more systematic approach for assessing pupil performance. Targets have been introduced to help pupils aim for improvements in mathematics and writing. Pupils are able to explain how the 'target feet' system works, although some targets are less precisely matched to the next steps for individual pupils. Evidence from pupils' books shows that work is marked regularly and teachers write comments to suggest how improvements can be made. However, older pupils are not expected to respond to the guidance, and this is sometimes difficult for them to read.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour in lessons and around the school continues to be good. Pupils are polite and eager to talk about their enjoyment of learning. There are good systems to record and follow up on any inappropriate behaviour or incidents of bullying. Two fixed-term exclusions have occurred in this school year. Attendance is average, although absence is higher than it was at the time of the last inspection. A detailed plan has been drawn up of actions to be taken to improve attendance.

### **The quality of leadership and management of the school**

The strength of the senior leadership team gives the school a secure capacity to bring about further improvements. The headteacher provides a clear vision for staff and the momentum of improvement has picked up during the last year. Staff work well together and the changes introduced have had a positive impact on enhancing provision and boosting achievement, particularly in the Reception and Key Stage 1 classes. Effective leadership and management are also being provided by other key leaders, for example in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in mathematics. There are suitable plans to strengthen leadership further by involving all subject leaders in reviewing subject policies and drawing up action plans for improvement. Two members of staff are successfully leading improvements in promoting pupils' social and cultural understanding by developing the school's approach to community cohesion. They have completed an audit of provision and drawn up an action plan with priorities for improving national and international partnership links. Links with the local community are good and these are shown in an excellent display of pupils' engagement during each month of the year. Governance has also strengthened since the last inspection. Through the work of the curriculum committee, the governing body has sharpened its approach to monitoring pupils' achievement. Regular visits are made to see the school in action and there are good plans to extend monitoring with the collection of pupils' views and meetings with curriculum leaders. Together, these put the governing body in a better position to provide more challenge and have an increased influence on improving outcomes for pupils.

The local authority has provided the school with useful support. This has included advice on improving provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, undertaking a

review of progress since the last inspection, and joint observations with senior leaders to judge the quality of teaching. Staff have also worked successfully with an advanced skills teacher in mathematics and a local authority higher level teaching assistant.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rob McKeown  
**Additional Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2010**

- Raise standards and achievement across the school in writing, reading and mathematics, particularly in Years 1 and 2 by:
  - developing pupils' skills in producing extended writing in subjects other than English subjects and presenting their work neatly
  - providing wider opportunities for reading in different situations so pupils gain confidence and better understanding of what they are reading
  - ensuring that mathematical concepts in calculation, shape and measure are securely embedded, so that pupils can transfer the skills learnt to other areas
  - developing governing body accountability in monitoring and evaluation of academic standards and achievement.
  
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - fully embedding new assessment procedures and practice to provide a clear overview of learning to accelerate individual pupils' progress
  - using assessment information to provide challenging work for pupils capable of attaining higher levels
  - introducing learning targets for pupils and ensuring that marking consistently helps pupils to know how well they are doing and what they need to do next.
  
- Develop community cohesion by establishing national and international aspects of learning to broaden pupils' understanding of societies, faiths and cultures beyond their immediate knowledge and locality.