

Abbey Village Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119307
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	358531
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Eirian Malloy
Headteacher	Mr Stephen Knight
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who visited 10 lessons or parts of lessons. The inspectors observed four teachers and held discussions with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, records of meetings of the governing body, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 40 responses to parents' and carers' questionnaires were received and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively the school is working to raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Whether pupils who are more able are challenged sufficiently.
- The extent to which the systems for checking pupils' progress have been improved.
- How well leaders manage the above average number of pupils who join the school other than at the normal time of year.

Information about the school

Abbey Village is much smaller than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils who start or leave school, other than at the normal time of the year, is above average. The school has gained the Activemark and is also an accredited Healthy School. The after-school club is not managed by the governing body and will be inspected separately.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Abbey Village provides a satisfactory standard of education. It is a friendly school with several strengths, particularly its strong emphasis on ensuring pupils' well-being and care. This is much appreciated by parents and carers, some of whom commented on the nurturing and family nature of the school. The headteacher has a clear vision for future improvement and this is shared by staff and the governing body. Overall, self-evaluation is accurate and gives leaders and governors a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Plans to bring about improvement are not always sharp enough to enable the progress towards their achievement to be measured. The procedures for checking pupils' progress have been improved since the last inspection and are now secure. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching identifies areas for improvement but they are not specific enough and teachers' response to them is not checked rigorously. Leaders work successfully to ensure pupils who join school at different times of the year settle quickly into everyday routines. Engagement with parents and carers is good and they are kept thoroughly informed about their child's progress and achievement. The capacity to take the school forward is satisfactory.

Pupils make satisfactory progress and reach broadly average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Leaders have worked successfully to improve pupils' reading skills and their ability to carry out mathematical calculations accurately. Writing is a weaker aspect of pupils' performance in English, particularly their ability to construct increasingly complex sentences to express their ideas. In mathematics, pupils are not adept at applying their calculation skills to solve real-life number problems.

Pupils behave well. Their improving attendance confirms their increasing enjoyment of learning and positive attitudes. Teachers manage classrooms well and there are purposeful settings in which to learn. Teachers do not always use assessment information effectively to challenge groups of different ability, especially pupils who are more able. The curriculum is extended by a wide range of enrichment activities that enliven learning. The nature of the building constrains outdoor learning for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Nevertheless, the outdoor area is not organised or used as effectively as it could be to maximise learning opportunities.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress and raise attainment in writing in all subjects and in mathematics by:

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- improving pupils' ability to construct increasingly complex sentences and their skills in solving mathematical number problems
- ensuring that teachers use assessment information consistently to challenge effectively different groups of pupils, especially the more able
- involving pupils fully in evaluating how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that plans for improvement are tightly focused, so that progress towards achieving them can be measured more accurately
 - rigorously evaluating teaching to identify specific areas for improvement and ensuring that teachers respond to them
 - fully involving all governors in holding the school to account for its performance.
- Develop the organisation and use of the outdoor area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to better meet their needs.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' achievement from their skill levels on entering school, which are broadly typical for their age, is satisfactory. They enjoy their learning and work steadily, being appreciative of the views and ideas of others. Pupils speak clearly and read confidently. They enjoy writing but lack expertise in constructing complex sentences to express their ideas. They carry out mathematical calculations competently but are not as proficient in solving real-life number problems. Pupils show confidence in using information and communication technology to extend their learning across the curriculum. This was evident when pupils in Years 3 and 4 were entering information into computers to create a database about clowns, as part of their work in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same progress as other pupils because of the appropriately-targeted support they receive.

Pupils enhance school life by taking on a variety of responsibilities, including being a buddy looking after younger pupils at lunchtime, and by acting sensibly in and out of class. They also make a useful contribution to the wider community, shown by their involvement in a project to improve the local play park. Pupils know they need to eat a balanced diet and take regular exercise in order to stay healthy. They have a good understanding of what might be an unsafe situation and say they feel safe and secure in school. Pupils' average attendance and the way they are making satisfactory progress in gaining basic skills mean that they are soundly prepared for their future lives.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teachers manage classrooms well, so that little time is lost. They have secure subject knowledge and are able to explain new ideas clearly. Questioning is used successfully to find out what pupils know and can do, and to develop their speaking and listening skills. Planning usually ensures pupils of different ability are given challenging work, but not always and this slows progress at times, especially for more-able pupils. Pupils are not sufficiently involved in evaluating for themselves how well they are doing and what they could do to improve. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support all pupils, in particular those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Extra-curricular activities, which are well attended and include sports, dance and music clubs, enrich the curriculum. A wide range of educational visits, including Yarrow Valley Country Park and opportunities to work with visitors, enhance pupils' skills and widen their experiences. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to refine and extend their writing skills by writing at length across the curriculum. The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' adoption of a healthy lifestyle, as reflected in the Activemark Award and Healthy School accreditation. The programme for personal and social development contributes well to pupils' progress in this aspect of their learning.

The school is a welcoming and safe setting in which to learn. All staff are committed to the well-being of pupils and know what to do if they have concerns about the welfare of a pupil. The links with a variety of outside agencies ensure extra support for individual

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pupils is available as required. The support for pupils who are potentially vulnerable makes an important contribution to their learning and development. Thorough transition arrangements effectively minimise any disruption to the learning of pupils who join during the year and prepare pupils well for their next class. There is a trend of improvement in attendance because of leaders' efforts.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders work well together to enthuse staff and there is a shared vision for school improvement. The governing body is supportive of the school but not all members are fully involved in evaluating its performance and influencing its development. Plans for improvement lack sharpness at times and this makes it difficult for leaders to measure if they are proving successful. The arrangements and policies for safeguarding meet requirements and are systematically reviewed. The promotion of equal opportunity and tackling of discrimination are sound, with the school regularly checking the performance of different groups. This has enabled leaders to rightly identify the need to ensure effective challenge at all times, particularly for more-able pupils.

The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning lacks sufficient rigour. Areas for development are not specific enough and are not effectively followed up in subsequent observations to check if teachers have responded to them. The school works effectively with a variety of agencies to support pupils who are potentially vulnerable because of their circumstances. Leaders promote community cohesion well within the school and local community. The school is working to strengthen this aspect of its work by developing links with a range of groups beyond the immediate community. The school has positive relationships with parents and carers and successfully helps them to support their children's learning in different ways. Good account is taken of their suggestions and concerns.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress, behave well and show enjoyment in their activities. Staff work well as a team to provide practical activities that are often linked to children's own experiences. Children cooperate well in pairs and small groups, taking turns and sharing fairly. This was evident in their role play in the area set up as a pet shop. Staff make ongoing assessments of children's progress but do not always use them effectively to challenge children of different ability, particularly the more able. An interesting range of enrichment activities enhances the curriculum, such as seasonal walks around the local environment and a visit to a Butterfly House.

The leader rightly acknowledges the need to organise and use the outdoor area more effectively to promote children's learning and development. Welfare arrangements are good, with all necessary steps being taken to ensure children's safety and well-being. Induction procedures are comprehensive and enable children to quickly settle into everyday school routines. The engagement with parents and carers is good and they are kept informed of their child's progress and how they can support learning at home.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation	3

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Stage

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers returning completed questionnaires was above average. The very large majority were positive about the school's work and the efforts of all staff. Two comments were typical, 'The school nurtures and develops children and it has a wonderful family feel.' and, 'My child is so happy and enthusiastic about school'. There was no significant trend of negative views. Inspection judgements support the positive views of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Abbey Village Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 40 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 87 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	88	5	13	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	88	5	13	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	27	68	12	30	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	65	12	30	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	60	15	38	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	60	15	38	0	0	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	60	16	40	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	22	55	14	35	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	63	13	33	1	3	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	58	14	35	0	0	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	58	16	40	0	0	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	29	73	10	25	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	75	9	23	1	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



4 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Abbey Village Primary School, Chorley, PR6 8DD

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the many interesting things you do.

The inspectors judge that your school is satisfactory and that:

- by the end of Year 6 you attain average standards in English and mathematics
- your behaviour is good and you cooperate well in pairs and small groups
- staff make sure you are safe in school and on educational visits
- you have a good understanding of how to stay safe and live a healthy lifestyle
- the curriculum is enlivened by a wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits to places such as Yarrow Valley Country Park
- you enjoy school and are helped to get ready to move into your next class, as you indicated in your questionnaires
- the headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to help you do better.

What we have asked your school to do now is to:

- improve your writing skills and ability to solve number problems and make sure all of you make at least good progress, especially those who find work easy
- check more carefully the quality of teaching and make the plans for improvement more clear
- make better use of the outdoor area for children in Reception to support their learning and development.

All of you are a credit to your school and can help it improve further by continuing to try your best in your activities.

Yours sincerely

Melvyn Hemmings

Lead inspector

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