

Abbeywood First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131275
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	360246
Inspection dates	28–29 March 2011
Reporting inspector	David Edwards

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Nash
Headteacher	Di Smith
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 10 lessons taught by seven teachers. Inspectors scrutinised policies, analysed pupils' work, checked data on pupils' progress and talked to them about it. The team also analysed school improvement plans, the minutes of the governing body meetings and met parents, carers and representatives of the governing body. Questionnaire returns were considered from 115 parents and carers. The views of staff and pupils were also taken into consideration.

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

- The team checked the effectiveness of teaching in the mixed-age classes.
- They evaluated the contribution of senior and middle leaders to school development.
- Inspectors looked at the quality of the curriculum in raising standards in writing and accelerating the progress of pupils, particularly the more able.
- They evaluated how well the school is empowering pupils to take control of their own learning.

Information about the school

Abbeywood is a smaller-than-average school. Most pupils are White British in origin and a few pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The largest group of ethnic minority pupils is Polish. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who have a statement of educational needs. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided for children in the Nursery and Reception class. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are taught in mixed-age classes. There has been a significant change in the teaching staff since the last inspection, with only one third of the staff remaining. The school has achieved the national Healthy Schools status, Leading Parent Partnership Award, Artsmark Gold and Activemark.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Abbeywood provides a good quality of education within a safe, welcoming and caring atmosphere, where children love learning and are justifiably proud of their achievements. As one child said, 'I love learning because the teachers make it interesting and fun.' Parents and carers are very pleased with the quality of education that the school provides and the school vigorously pursues the exemplary links it has with them. It helps them to support their children in their learning, so that they feel confident and competent to provide the help their children need.

Children get off to an excellent start in the Nursery and Reception, where they make at least good, but often outstanding, progress in all the areas of learning. The excellent quality of provision and leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage lead to children's outstanding outcomes. Good progress continues in Years 1 to 4 and, by the time pupils move to middle school, their attainment is above average overall. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully accelerated pupils' progress and significantly improved writing at both key stages, so that it is now broadly in line with national expectations. The school has experienced some turbulent staffing difficulties over the last three years. Throughout this time the strong and focused leadership, motivated by the inspirational headteacher, remained completely focused on the drive to improve standards so that attainment and pupils' progress have risen rapidly. Progress in mathematics has accelerated and attainment is now above the national average by Year 2 and pupils are on track to meet their challenging targets in this subject and in English in Year 2 and Year 4. However, opportunities are missed in mathematics to raise standards further because not all teachers are replicating the good procedures that are in place for English, where the use of success criteria in lessons helps pupils to take control of their own learning and to accelerate progress. In addition, pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their skills of reasoning in mathematics. English is above national standards, because of the good reading standards and the significant improvements that have taken place in teaching and learning, particularly in writing. The good practice needs further time to embed to show even greater improvement. The good leadership record, together with its accurate self-evaluation and the rapid rise in attainment, particularly in Key Stage 2, shows the school's good capacity for continued improvement.

Most aspects of pupils' personal development are good or better. They feel very safe in school and do their best to keep healthy. Pupils behave well. They have positive attitudes towards learning and enjoy school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and the outcomes in this area are supported by the outstanding curriculum. Highly effective partnerships, particularly with neighbouring schools, make a very strong contribution to pupils' learning and well-being. Pupils make an excellent contribution to their school and wider community.

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The good teaching enables pupils to make good gains in their learning. Teachers use resources, such as computers, to make work interesting and relevant, such as a data logging exercise. Occasionally, the pace of learning slows during a lesson, typically when teachers interrupt pupils when they are working on independent tasks. In some lessons, there is insufficient challenge to accelerate the progress of more-able pupils. The vibrant and exemplary curriculum supports good learning and progress for all groups of pupils and adds to pupils' enjoyment of school. Staff use their detailed knowledge of each child skillfully to provide a good level of care and personal support.

The staff enthusiastically share the headteacher's clearly articulated drive to improve the school. Middle leadership is good and middle leaders are now taking responsibility for standards in their areas.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement further in mathematics and writing, ensuring that lessons consistently demonstrate good or better teaching by:
 - giving pupils more opportunity to develop their reasoning skills in mathematics and teach pupils the skills that they need to evaluate effectively the quality of their own work and that of others in the subject
 - achieving consistent challenge for the most-able pupils in lessons
 - ensuring that teaching has consistent pace to accelerate learning
 - further embed the good practice in writing.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The learning seen during the inspection was good across the school. For example, pupils in a Key Stage 2 literacy lesson were making good progress in producing a leaflet as part of their persuasive writing. Pupils enjoyed the lesson because they found the work interesting and relevant. They worked hard because all were challenged well by their tasks. They were fascinated by the facts they discovered and used the success criteria that they had set themselves to produce high-quality writing. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enjoy learning and their achievement is good because of the skilled and relevant support they receive. Evidence of lesson observations, work seen during the inspection and assessment data demonstrate the good progress that all pupils are making and that attainment is rising rapidly, particularly at Key Stage 2. More pupils are on track to reach or exceed the age-related expectations for pupils of their age, and attainment by Year 4 is above average. Pupils who do not speak English as their first language also make good progress, because their needs are identified when they join the school and timely intervention strategies enable them to make good progress in learning.

Bullying is almost unheard of and the rare cases are quickly resolved. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe in all aspects of their daily life. They take plenty of exercise and eat a healthy diet, which is confirmed by the school's Healthy Schools status and the Activemark. They are keen to take responsibility, for example, as play leaders or eco warriors, who have devised a plan of action to improve the school grounds; members of the school council draw up plans for school improvement and are involved in

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interviewing new staff. Pupils collect generously for the charities they have chosen and enthusiastically participate in many local activities, such as the community arts project with the local church and engagement with older residents. The work that they are doing with dance and physical education has received national acclaim. Although pupils' attendance is average, their good basic skills and information and communication technology skills and positive attitudes towards learning mean that their preparation for middle school is good overall.

Pupils reflect maturely on their feelings and those of others. They have a good appreciation of art and music. Their strong social and moral beliefs are evident in the way they behave and relate to each other. They celebrate cultural diversity and challenge racism. Pupils work together well in teams and readily help each other. They respect others from backgrounds different from their own, such as the school's Polish population, and have links with a school in Poland. Their understanding of the diversity of British culture and the life and culture of people around the world is good. This has been achieved through the excellent curriculum and links with schools in Britain and Gambia, which enhance their knowledge and understanding of the world they live in.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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?

Pupils' good progress is, in part, the result of teachers and teaching assistants successfully meeting the wide range of needs in the mixed-age classes, though insufficient challenge is

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occasionally given to higher-attaining pupils. In lessons, relationships are very positive. Teachers ask challenging questions and use the answers well to check pupils' understanding before moving on to more difficult work. In a very good dance lesson, pupils were being challenged to improve their performance through accurate and creative movements and high-quality actions. The excellent use of success criteria gave pupils the opportunity to evaluate the quality of their work, leading to high-quality outcomes. Lessons typically proceed at a demanding pace but, sometimes, learning slows when teachers do not achieve a good balance between the time they take to explain things to pupils and the time the pupils have to work independently or cooperatively on their tasks. Marking and other feedback give pupils a clear understanding of how they can improve their work. Targets set for individual pupils are regularly and rigorously assessed. Pupils are taught to evaluate the quality of their own and others' work effectively in English, but the procedures to do this in mathematics are not as well developed. There are good opportunities at both key stages for pupils to practise calculating and solving mathematical problems, but pupils' reasoning skills in the subject are not as consistently developed. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning, especially for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils learning English as an additional language.

The excellent curriculum supports pupils' personal development well, for example, through the many opportunities to reflect on feelings during lively philosophy sessions. It also makes a significant contribution to the good progress that pupils make. They are involved in jointly planning their themed work with staff and the current 'carnival theme' will result in a colourful, school-wide celebration. It also helps pupils in using and applying their skills in different areas of learning. The vibrant displays of art around the school reflect the high quality of teaching in this subject and have led to the Artsmark Gold Award. The school works in close partnership with the middle and high schools. This ensures a smooth transition to the next stage of pupils' education and provides very good opportunities to share and develop good practice. The many educational visits, visitors to school and the wide and varied extra-curricular opportunities enhance pupils' enjoyment of school and help to broaden their horizons.

Pupils confidently approach an adult with any worries, knowing their concerns will be quickly resolved. The school's support for pupils learning English as an additional language is good and ensures that they can effectively be involved in the opportunities that the school offers. The school works well with outside agencies to support the learning and welfare of pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It vigorously pursues the interests of those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The school's procedures to check attendance are good and the initiatives and systems to improve attendance have been effective in ensuring that it is now average; persistent absenteeism has reduced as a result.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders set challenging targets for pupils and for school improvement which all staff share. Self-evaluation is rigorous and honest and identifies the key areas for improvement. The impact on raising writing standards and the significantly improved attainment are testimony to this. The governing body supports the school well and challenges it robustly over its performance. This is helped by their growing understanding of data.

The school places a high priority on safety and safeguarding. Child protection procedures are robust, regularly updated and fully meet current safeguarding requirements. The checks that the school makes on the suitability of adults to work with children and pupils are rigorous. Governors take a leading role in the appointment of good staff. The success of the school's action to tackle discrimination and promote equality is evident in the way it has improved provision, particularly in teaching and learning, to ensure that most pupils make good progress, with some making outstanding progress, so that they can achieve their potential.

The school has evaluated its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context thoroughly, and the contribution it makes to community cohesion is good, as pupils celebrate cultural diversity. The work they are doing with the local community and links with schools in Britain and Poland are helping pupils to appreciate the life and culture of others. The exemplary work it has undertaken in helping families to support all aspects of their child's education at home is having a positive impact in school, which is a happy and harmonious community. The excellent work with parents and carers has resulted in the school gaining the Leading Parent Partnership Award.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to an excellent start which leads to them making good and often exceptional progress in their learning from low starting points. They make outstanding progress in communication, language and literacy and calculation skills in particular. Children join the Nursery with skills and abilities that are well below those expected for their age. By the time they leave the Reception class, their attainment is still below national expectations and in some areas, such as communication and language development, it is well below, but progress is consistently good and often better. Each child's individuality is recognised and nurtured by all staff, who have a secure knowledge of their family and home circumstances, individual needs, interests and abilities. A wealth of stimulating, challenging activities and experiences, combined with robust and consistent reflective practice and evaluation techniques, ensure that all children thrive and make very good progress. Children play a dynamic role in their learning, which is informed by a high level of challenge and expectation. A good example of this was when children were undertaking their forest school work. The high levels of curiosity, teamwork, imagination and spirituality that these sessions create lead to outstanding progress in academic and personal skills and develop children's sense of awe and wonder of the world around them.

The provision for pupils is at least good in all major respects and exemplary in most. The indoor and outdoor learning environment is welcoming and highly stimulating. There is an excellent balance of teacher-led and child-centred activities. The menu of rich, varied and imaginative experiences engage and interest children and fire their imagination. Examples of this are the ice-cream selling role-play, bulb planting and growing and the forest school environmental areas. The rigorous assessments and high-quality observations are used to inform planning and teaching and to set the next steps for pupils.

The exemplary and visionary leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure that all parents, carers and children have the utmost confidence in the

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security of the class. The Early Years leader inspires teachers to work at their best and to bring out the best in children. Her meticulous organisation, eye for detail and the excellent children's progress that results demonstrate the outstanding overall effectiveness.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The parents' and carers' questionnaire produced a higher-than-average response. Their views are extremely positive and there are no areas where they express any significant concern. They feel that the school is well led and managed and they particularly like the fact that their children enjoy school; that they are making good progress; that they are well informed about how well their children are doing; and that the school helps them to support their children's learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Abbeywood First 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 115 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 182 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	83	72	31	27	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	79	69	33	29	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	73	63	40	35	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	68	59	44	38	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	74	64	39	34	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	70	61	43	37	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	70	61	43	37	1	1	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)	63	55	46	40	5	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	68	59	44	38	0	0	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	56	49	53	46	3	3	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	58	50	53	46	2	2	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	67	58	46	40	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	78	68	34	30	0	0	2	2

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.



30 March 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Abbeywood First School, Redditch, B98 9LR

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and having the opportunity to talk to some of you and to see you in lessons and at play. You are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere in which you all get on so well together. Yours is a good school. Here are some of the things we found out.

Your teachers ensure that you get off to an excellent start in Nursery and Reception.

You make good progress in Years 1 to 4. Your behaviour is good and you always try to do your best.

Your relationships with each other in school and the way you support each other and work closely with your local community are excellent.

You take responsibility for your own actions and develop your understanding of the lives and cultures of other people.

The exciting curriculum helps you to learn more effectively. You develop a love of art and literacy.

We have asked the school to do several things to help you do even better in your learning. One is to make sure teachers always give you lots of time to complete your tasks in lessons and do not stop you too often which slows your pace of learning. We want them to ensure that the more able amongst you are given harder work, to accelerate progress. We have asked teachers to help you to develop your reasoning skills in mathematics and to use success criteria in that subject so that you are more involved in checking the quality of your own learning and that of your classmates. We also want you to continue the good work in developing your writing skills. All of you can help the school by continuing to try your best in lessons, behaving well and asking for harder work if you feel it is too easy. I wish you all success in the future.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards

Lead Inspector

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