

Abbey Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	133280
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	395451
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2012
Lead inspector	John Horwood

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maxine Bithel
Headteacher	Kim Wakefield
Date of previous school inspection	7 April 2008
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	28–29 June 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

John Horwood

Additional Inspector

Simon Griffiths

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors used a number of strategies to observe learning. These included lesson observations ranging from 10 to 30 minutes. Approximately five hours was spent observing teaching which included visiting 13 lessons taught by seven teachers. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documents including the school development plan, minutes of meetings, the school's information on pupils' progress and samples of pupils' work. The responses to questionnaires from 87 parents and carers were examined and analysed.

Information about the school

This is a slightly smaller-than-average-size primary school. All pupils are taught in single age group classes. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the number who speak English as an additional language are much lower than found nationally. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than that found nationally. The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs are similar to those found in most schools. The school meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. Amongst the awards obtained by the school are the Artsmark and the Activemark. A private provider manages on-site part-time provision for children aged 2–4 years, breakfast and after-school clubs and holiday child-care. This provision is subject to a separate inspection.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is inclusive and ensures every pupil learns and develops well. Behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding. Senior leaders have ensured that teaching has improved to enable pupils to reach above average levels of attainment. The school is not outstanding because over a sustained period pupils have made good rather than outstanding progress; most teaching is good with only a small minority being outstanding.
- All groups of pupils make good progress in all subjects. Recently revised strategies to teach letters and sounds (phonics) are having a good impact on raising reading standards for younger pupils. Pupils make good progress throughout the school but the presentation of their work is of varying quality. Pupils benefit from an exceptionally wide range of opportunities during the school day and beyond.
- Teachers motivate pupils by making lessons enjoyable and challenging. They mostly adapt activities well to meet the needs of all pupils although this does not always apply to all parts of the lesson. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and consistently set targets for pupils. Teachers make written comments to help pupils improve their work but these are not always sufficiently detailed.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and are taught how to keep secure and healthy. They have a good understanding of potential dangers and how to keep safe. They are active in supporting the safety of others.
- Leaders have a clear vision and drive school improvement effectively. They know how to improve teaching further. For example, they monitor school performance closely and provide professional development for staff to ensure that the quality of teaching continues to improve. The curriculum provides exceptionally good support for all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress and raise standards by increasing the amount of good and outstanding teaching:
 - by ensuring that activities are closely matched to pupils' abilities in all parts of the lesson
 - ensuring that marking and presentation of work consistently matches the high standard seen in some year groups.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

All pupils make good progress from their individual starting points and attainment has risen steadily throughout the school since 2010.

Attainment on entry to Reception is below age-expected levels especially in reading, writing and calculation skills. Children make good progress and reach expected levels in all areas of learning at the end of the year. In Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils continue to make good progress. At the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is broadly average. At the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is broadly average but is on a rising trend. Currently, in mathematics and English, including reading, attainment levels are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. There are no significant variations in the achievement of any group including those known to be eligible for free school meals. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are integrated into activities and are well supported by teaching assistants. At specific times they are taught separately in small groups to help accelerate their progress. The most able pupils are given more challenging activities to enable them to also make good progress. Pupils' good progress is confirmed by the work seen in their books and reflected in the responses of the overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires.

Lessons are well-planned and designed to motivate pupils, with good resources and challenging activities. Lessons are linked to topics and during the inspection all lessons were linked to the Olympic theme. This made lessons particularly enjoyable as the Olympic torch passed through the town during the inspection and all pupils were taken to see it. In a Year 2 English lesson a replica torch brought in by a pupil was used by the teacher to stimulate the discussion on how to write a letter to apply to carry a torch at sports day. In a Year 5 English lesson, linked to the Olympics through a topic on Japan, an excellent mix of role play and lively discussion stimulated outstanding enjoyment and progress. Children in Reception enjoyed their lessons, which were well-planned and gave them stimulating opportunities both indoors and outdoors with strong links to sport and the Olympics.

Quality of teaching

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The Early Years Foundation Stage provides extensive facilities. The curriculum is well-planned with a strong focus on free-choice activities with integrated periods of direct teaching. The curriculum planning links both indoor and outdoor learning effectively and ensures full coverage of all areas of learning. All adults work well as a team and ensure a safe and productive environment. Within overall good teaching, the periods of direct group teaching seen were an outstanding feature.

All parents and carers who returned the questionnaires correctly identify teaching as good. This view was also shared by pupils. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils and have high expectations of their academic ability and behaviour. Activities are well-matched to pupils' abilities during the independent work part of the lesson but sometimes less effectively in other parts of the lesson. The teaching of phonics, recently revised, is thoroughly enjoyed by pupils. A strong feature is the grouping of abilities across the Reception and Key Stage 1 classes which enabled teachers and teaching assistants to focus on the level of understanding pupils have.

The support required for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is identified early and reviewed regularly. Where staff need to have specific skills to support individuals training is always provided. All teachers have good subject knowledge and good classroom management skills. Learning objectives are always shared with pupils who talk confidently about the targets teachers set and know what levels they are working at. In a Year 6 English lesson the teacher clearly explained levels of punctuation associated with each National Curriculum level criteria and involved pupils in assessing their own work. Pupils' work is regularly marked but written comments do not always tell pupils exactly how to reach the next level in their learning. Teachers do not always insist on high quality presentation of pupils' work. Where teaching was outstanding the lesson was made exciting with many opportunities for pupils to be actively involved and this resulted in outstanding enjoyment and progress. Teachers are good role models and ensure that teaching makes a significant contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This includes ensuring that links between subjects make work exciting and relevant to pupils whilst providing excellent opportunities to extend their knowledge through external visits and partnerships with other schools, locally, nationally and in other countries.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour and attitudes to learning seen during the inspection were outstanding. Parents and carers, as well as pupils and staff, confirm that this is the normal situation in the school. The questionnaire responses about behaviour and bullying are overwhelmingly positive. A few parents and carers identified individual concerns but these are associated with the behaviour of a very few pupils with behavioural difficulties which was seen to be well-managed. This was supported by conversations with pupils who have an excellent understanding about pupils who have difficulty always controlling their behaviour. Pupils say that they feel extremely safe in school, a view shared by staff, parents and carers. Exclusions are rare but have been used as part of a well-managed behaviour policy and the frequency is reducing. Incidents

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of bullying are very rare and when they do occur are effectively dealt with. Pupils are aware of the dangers of internet use and say that they have not experienced cyber-bullying within school. The school council is pro-active about bullying and has produced a leaflet for new starters about anti-bullying. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage play and learn together well, and have positive attitudes and very good behaviour. Pupils throughout the school are aware of the school's high expectations of behaviour and respect this. They take on responsibilities enthusiastically such as being playground buddies, supporting younger children in Reception and being members of the school council. The recently appointed pupil health and safety officers are enthusiastic and diligent in their duties and this is an excellent example of pupils taking responsibility for the safety of others. The school is a very harmonious community with excellent relationships throughout.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is well-supported by her deputy. Her determined vision to provide pupils with an outstanding education is shared by all leaders and is the basis for the school improvement plan. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly satisfied with the school. A typical comment was 'An excellent school where my daughter has developed at a tremendous rate.' Good progress has been made on the area for development identified in the previous inspection with attendance now being above average. The school has a good capacity for sustained improvement demonstrated by the rise in Year 6 attainment in the past two years. The governing body is diligent and provides good support and challenge to the school. Governors are actively involved in monitoring progress and are determined to support school improvement. The school self-evaluation is accurate and leaders at all levels are involved in monitoring school improvement.

The management of teaching and learning is good. A range of professional support for teachers is provided based on a thorough and rigorous monitoring process of both teaching and evaluating pupils' progress. The effectiveness of actions taken to support groups of pupils is also monitored. The excellent relationships throughout the school mean that every pupil is well known by adults and their individual needs are addressed to ensure they all have equal opportunities to succeed. The progress of all pupils is similar and there is no evidence of discrimination of any kind. Safeguarding requirements are suitably met.

The curriculum has a strong focus on improving academic standards and personal skills. The breadth and balance are extended through links between subjects and whole school themes. There is a strong focus on the arts and on sport extending opportunities beyond the core curriculum. This is recognised by the school being awarded the Artsmark and the Activemark. Information and communication technology is used throughout the curriculum to promote learning and increase pupils' enjoyment. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the wide range of clubs and activities at lunch time and after school. External visits are exceptionally good and include residential and day visits to a wide range of places to support the curriculum and pupils' personal development. The curriculum is adapted well to support disabled

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pupils and those with special educational needs, as well as providing opportunities for the specific gifts and talents of pupils.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Abbey Primary School, Mansfield, NG18 3AF

Thank you for making inspectors so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you, reading the questionnaires some of you completed, and looking at the work you do. It was good to see you enjoying your lessons and your playtime. We are sure you will remember your opportunity to see the Olympic Torch passing through Mansfield. Your school provides you with a good education.

There are many things we admired about your school and these are a few of them.

- Relationships within the school are excellent.
- Your behaviour and how you keep yourself safe are outstanding.
- You enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average.
- Teaching is good in your school and lessons are made enjoyable.
- You make good progress in lessons.
- The school is well led and managed.
- The questionnaires that some of you and some of your parents and carers completed show how pleased you are with all aspects of the school.

For the school to become better we have asked your headteacher and governors to:

- ensure that marking and presentation of your work always matches the high standard seen in some year groups
- ensure that activities in lessons are closely matched to your abilities in all parts of the lesson.

All of you can help the school to move forward by continuing to work hard. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

John Horwood
Lead inspector

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