

Abbots Ann Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	116266
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	395373
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2012
Lead inspector	Judith Rundle HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Wiggs
Headteacher	Ann Turnbull
Date of previous school inspection	4–5 October 2007
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Judith Rundle

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed five teachers teaching eight lessons, of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher, and paid short visits to a further 12 lessons and group work. In addition, the inspector made visits to a class assembly. The inspector took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. She observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, monitoring and evaluation records and development plan, safeguarding policies and a sample of teachers' assessments and planning. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, representatives of the governing body and school staff, including senior and middle managers and the inspector heard pupils read. The inspector conducted an analysis of 55 paper-based questionnaires returned by parents and carers and others completed by students and staff.

Information about the school

Abbots Ann is much smaller than the average-sized primary school serving a rural community. It has four mixed-age classes and is oversubscribed in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It has slightly more boys than girls on roll. The proportions of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and from minority ethnic backgrounds are well-below average, as is the percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. In 2011, the school did not meet the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. In that cohort half of the pupils were identified with special educational needs. A new school building was opened in the summer term 2010.

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 not yet outstanding as standards by the end of Year 6 declined in 2011, pupils' use of mathematics skills is not embedded across the curriculum and inconsistencies exist in the quality of teachers' feedback to help pupils improve even further. Nevertheless, it has outstanding features. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and children make a very good start to their education. Leaders have taken robust actions to improve standards leading to rapid improvements in all age groups. Most parents and carers and almost all pupils and staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school and its work.
- Children make rapid progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and attain standards that are above average. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 has been significantly above average for the last four years. Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 has been varied although broadly significantly above average. In 2011 attainment and progress dipped and were significantly below average by the end of Year 6. Actions have reversed this position quickly.
- The quality of teaching is good overall with a minority being outstanding. Teachers know pupils and their needs well so work is matched thoroughly to meet the needs of different abilities and mixed-age classes. In the best lessons and through written feedback, pupils know specifically their next steps in learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding at all times and they show high levels of respect for each other and adults. Pupils enjoy school, they want to be there and display highly positive attitudes towards their learning. They say they feel very safe in school and all of their parents and carers agree.
- Secure procedures are in place for all teachers to initiate, lead and monitor the quality of teaching and the school's work. As a result, leaders at all levels and the governing body have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Exploit all opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills across the curriculum to ensure that achievement and enjoyment in mathematics are of the same high quality as in English.
- Ensure consistency in verbal and written feedback so pupils know specifically their next steps in learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The school has very small cohorts of pupils. This results in some variation in attainment from year to year. Generally, pupils' attainment is significantly above national averages by the end of both Years 2 and 6. Exceptionally, attainment dipped at Key Stage 2 in 2011, although leaders predicted this dip. Leaders have taken decisive actions to improve standards further, including embedding the creative curriculum and greater opportunities to share effective teaching practice. The school's own tracking of attainment shows that the school is being effective in raising standards to those usually demonstrated. The above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics were confirmed by lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and by hearing pupils read. Results attained in the end of Key Stage 1 standard assessment tests in 2012 have risen sharply. The school is on track to exceed the floor standard in 2012. All groups of pupils make rapid progress, especially those of higher ability. Girls and boys attain equally well.

Pupils show extremely high levels of independence, they want to learn and most persevere to succeed. The school's focus on increasing opportunities to write for a purpose and for different audiences is leading to more interest, enjoyment and swifter progress. However, the opportunities for pupils to use and apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum are less well embedded, which is reflected in the slightly lower attainment and rates of progress in mathematics than in English. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about the 'Big Write' and work seen in pupils' books indicates emotive writing on others' beliefs and views and interesting presentations of their learning about rivers.

Pupils' reading is significantly above expected levels in all age groups and is a strength of the school's work. Pupils read with confidence and expression in front of their peers, with adults and to the inspector. Pupils whose performance dips below that expected receive good one-to-one support and can apply a range of strategies to help them spell out and read new words. Lessons seen in the Reception class and for Key Stage 1 pupils on phonics (learning the sounds that letters make) indicate that most pupils are able to recognise and apply their knowledge accurately and consistently. Pupils' work seen in mathematics lessons and in their books shows they

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are able to employ a broad and imaginative range of strategies to support their calculations and problem solving. They are particularly enthusiastic about mathematics when the outdoor environment is used as stimulus for their work.

Most parents and carers are very positive about the progress their children are making and say that the school helps them support their child's learning. Pupils who join the school at different times make good progress because they are helped to settle into school quickly and their learning starts swiftly. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, and the small number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress from their starting points. Children in the Reception class make rapid progress particularly in developing their communication, language and literacy skills, and knowledge and understanding of the world. They thoroughly enjoyed making shopping lists on healthy foods and were guided very skilfully in how to use their instructions to help the teacher make a healthy and hygienic sandwich for her lunch.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good and almost all pupils, parents and carers recognise this in their responses. There is a minority of outstanding teaching and a small amount that remains satisfactory. Leaders have strengthened opportunities to observe and share good and outstanding practice although this is yet to be embedded firmly in all lessons. In one mathematics lesson, outstanding teaching comprised innovative approaches that inspired pupils to a thirst for learning because they were encouraged to take risks in investigations and in finding their own creative solutions to problems. Pupils were excited by the work which generated momentum, motivation and perseverance. Levels of challenge and expectation were exceptional especially for higher ability pupils.

All staff have secure subject knowledge that is used to observe pupils' work and to intervene with feedback on their learning. Occasionally, intervention is not swift enough and does not give specific enough information to pupils to help them improve further. Teachers know pupils and their needs well so work is planned carefully to personalise learning experiences and effectively extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers and learning support assistants are skilled at using open-ended and extended questions to develop pupils' thinking and ability to communicate, and to foster their independent approaches to learning. Staff have high expectations of pupils' input to lessons, and they respond very positively. A broad range of methods and resources is used to stimulate pupils' interest and engage them actively in learning, particularly modern technologies. Pupils are highly competent at using laptops to support their work. The pace of learning is good, although it slows occasionally when there is too much teacher input or when pupils take too long to settle into their work. The deployment of learning support assistants is good although at times they are too passive during introductions to lessons. In the Reception class teaching is consistently outstanding because work is always matched to children's' needs and a genuine curiosity and hunger for knowledge is inspired.

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The teamwork between the teacher and learning support assistants ensures all children thrive in a safe and secure environment.

Teaching and the planned curriculum enable pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and international cultural awareness extremely well. It is less secure in developing pupils' understanding and preparation for living in multicultural Britain. The school's Christian ethos is reflected in assemblies and opportunities for pupils' personal reflection. For example, during the 'Orisen experience' which resulted in moving pledges by pupils to become better and more thoughtful citizens.

All pupils know their targets for improvement and use them effectively for self- and peer-evaluation of progress. They enjoy using the traffic light system to indicate their understanding and successful learning in tasks. However, teachers' use of pupil targets is inconsistent in both verbal and written feedback to help them understand how to specifically improve further, especially lower-attaining pupils.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school. Pupils say that behaviour is typically always this good and school behavioural records show that incidences of misbehaviour are extremely rare. Pupils display highly positive attitudes and an eagerness for learning. This means they make an exceptional contribution to their own learning. They are polite, courteous and articulate, show extremely high levels of respect for adults and each other and know right from wrong. They are particularly enthusiastic about celebration assemblies that recognise their achievements and efforts. Children in the Reception class are exceptionally good at sharing equipment, taking turns and listening to each other. Pupils develop a secure understanding of democratic processes through selection for posts of responsibility. The pupil voice has increased significantly with the school council making decisions that influence the direction of the school and the opportunities for pupils to give their feedback on provision result in positive changes.

Pupils demonstrate excellent cooperation and care of each other, including between age groups. In one circle time, pupils were guided sensitively in how to include all pupils in play. Older pupils have an excellent understanding of the different types of bullying, including discrimination, and how to prevent it. Pupils recognise that friends may 'fall out' at times and that fall outs are quickly resolved independently or with adult support. They say bullying 'just doesn't happen because we all like and respect each other'. Almost all say they feel very safe in school, and all parents and carers agree. Excellent relationships exist and pupils know adults are always there to help and support them. Attendance has improved further in recent years because of focused work by leaders and is well above the national average. Pupils are punctual to school and lessons.

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Leadership and management

Leaders at all levels, including governors, know the strengths and priorities for improvement thoroughly because of secure procedures to monitor and evaluate the school's work. Procedures to assess and monitor pupils' progress over time have been strengthened and staff are held more robustly to account for the progress pupils make in their class. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and ensures a very positive start to children's education. Leaders at all levels are unafraid to take decisive actions to tackle identified weaknesses. For example, professional development and sharing of good practice have increased since last year's predicted dip in standards and in tackling satisfactory teaching. This is ensuring that pupils have equality of opportunities across all age groups. Teachers are particularly positive about the opportunities for peer observations and they feel empowered to initiate new ideas and approaches to learning. All staff work collaboratively to improve provision and opportunities for pupils.

The revised creative curriculum introduced last year is becoming embedded, with more opportunities to learn through a topic-based approach. There are currently more opportunities exploited for pupils to use their literacy skills in a variety of situations other than numeracy. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Teachers in Key Stage 1 make best use of the early learning goals to plan a broad and interesting range of activities. The move to the new school building has extended opportunities for pupils to learn in an outdoor environment, particularly for children in the Reception class and through 'trailblazing'. Music has a high profile in the school. Many pupils learn to play a musical instrument and they are confident and competent performers including in their singing. Pupils and a small number of parents and carers comment that art and design and technology are not strong aspects in the new curriculum and the inspector agrees.

The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well and is fully involved in setting and monitoring the strategic direction of the school. Governors challenge and support leaders effectively and hold them to account robustly for improvements. For example, they robustly ensured swift actions were taken to reverse the dip in standards in 2012. They are rigorous in ensuring the safeguarding and welfare of pupils and staff including excellent child-protection procedures. A few parents and carers who returned questionnaires expressed some concerns about how they are kept informed. However most are highly satisfied with this and particularly mention parent mail and the workshops on how to support their child's learning. Secure partnerships are in place with external agencies and effectively support individual pupils' development, when applicable.

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.



5 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Abbots Ann School, Andover, SP11 7FE

Thank you for your help and for talking to me during the recent inspection. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and seeing your work. I am writing to tell you about my findings.

Your school provides you with a good education. You experience good, and at times outstanding, teaching. Consequently, you make good progress and achieve good standards in all aspects of your learning. You are very positive about the school and its work, and are particularly enthusiastic about the new topic-based approach to learning. You show high levels of respect for each other and adults and I found your behaviour to be outstanding at all times. You told me that you feel safe and well cared for, and I agree that you are. All the staff know you and your needs well, and so work is planned to help you achieve your best. Collectively, they are improving the school even further.

I have asked the school to ensure you achieve as well in mathematics as you do in English and that teachers help you understand specifically what you have to do to achieve even more.

All of you can help by responding to teachers' comments and using the feedback that they give to improve your own learning and attainment. Thank you once again for showing me your school.

Yours sincerely

Judith Rundle
Her Majesty's Inspector

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