

Abbotswood Primary School

Kelston Close, Yate, South Gloucestershire, BS37 8SZ

Inspection dates 21–22 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From well below expected starting points, most pupils make good progress, because their differing needs are well met.
- Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. Pupils enjoy learning. Most lessons are fast paced, lively and teachers expect a lot from their pupils.
- Pupils are well behaved, eager to learn and get on with their work. They say that they feel safe at school and that teachers give them great confidence.
- Pupils get on well with each other and in many lessons, work eagerly in groups to share ideas and learn from each other.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good and at times exceptional progress. This is because of the good quality support they receive.
- The school works well with a wide range of professionals outside the school to guide and support pupils whose circumstances might put them at risk.
- The headteacher has a clear view of how successful the school can be and expects the best from pupils and staff. Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have given the school a strong sense of purpose and have been a vigorous driving force in improving teaching and making sure that all groups of pupils succeed.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment is not better than average because too few pupils reach the higher levels in English and mathematics.
- Sometimes, more-able pupils are not given work that challenges them to do their best.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to practice their higher level writing or mathematics skills or to find out things for themselves.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- Inspectors observed 19 lessons or parts of lessons, amounting to 15 hours in total. All 11 classroom teachers present at the time of the inspection were observed teaching.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and observed an assembly. They paid short visits to all classrooms with senior staff when numeracy and literacy were being taught and to look at how well disabled pupils and those with special educational needs were learning.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, an officer from the local authority and different groups of pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school's self-evaluation and planning documents, external evaluations of the school's work, policy documents, pupils' work and questionnaires returned by 33 members of staff.
- Inspectors took note of the 29 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and spoke to groups of parents and carers at the beginning and end of the school day.

Inspection team

Michael Merchant, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Jennifer Cutler	Additional inspector
Judith Tinsley	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Reception classes.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average, as is the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Just under a fifth of all pupils, which is lower than that typically found nationally, are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, additional money from the government for pupils in local authority care or known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not have or make use of any alternative provision.
- Very high numbers of pupils join the school mid-way through the school year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment so that a greater proportion of pupils reach the higher levels in English and mathematics by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length across a wide range of topics
 - developing pupils' higher level problem solving skills in mathematics.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in all year groups by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to be more active and inquisitive in lessons
 - ensuring that in all lessons, tasks are provided that stretch the higher ability pupils to work at a vigorous pace.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most children start school with skills and abilities that are well below the levels typically expected for their age. Children do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and inspiring and stimulating teaching ensures they make good progress.
- All groups of pupils make good progress across the rest of the school to reach standards of attainment by Year 6 that are getting better and are broadly average in English and mathematics. Not enough pupils do better than this because there are too few opportunities for them to write lengthy pieces of work on a variety of themes in English or in other subjects. Some pupils find it hard to solve number problems expressed in words and this hinders the progress they can make.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs make good progress and some do better. This is the result of very high-quality care and attention, good teaching and well-directed additional support.
- The progress of pupils supported by the pupil premium is at least similar and in some cases faster than that of other pupils in the school. Leaders have bought in extra help for these pupils and check thoroughly to make sure that this extra support is working. For instance, in the national tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2012, the attainment of pupils entitled to the pupil premium was slightly higher than that of other pupils in school.
- In recent years, high numbers of pupils join Key Stage 2 mid-way through the school year with reading, writing and number skills at below the expected levels. They quickly make up lost ground and soon make progress similar to their classmates because the school provides support that is just right for them.
- The school has made big improvement to the way it teaches reading. These have been successful and have resulted in improvements in pupils' ability to learn how to link letters and sounds. Standards in reading are improving year on year. By the end of Year 2, and by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, their reading abilities are in line with those expected for their age and, for some, better. This was demonstrated by the pupils who read to the inspectors.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is now consistently good throughout the school and some teaching is outstanding because school leaders give strong attention to improving teaching and learning through well-planned training for staff.
- In the best lessons, teachers and teaching assistants plan lessons very well together to ensure that pupils are given work that will get the best out of them. Consequently, pupils try hard and learn very quickly because they are given work which captures their interests and matches their ability.
- Learning is fastest when pupils are actively involved in lessons. They relish working in groups and readily cooperate and share ideas and so learn well from each other.
- An example of this was seen in a Year 3/4 English lesson, when pupils were issued with sticky notes with various terms written on them. They then energetically worked together to place themselves into 'groups' based on these terms which led to the idea of organising their work into paragraphs. The teacher's high expectations, lively explanations, sharp, probing questions and encouragement of pupils' curiosity enabled all groups to make exceptional progress in their writing work.
- Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and their helpful and constructively written comments ensure that pupils know precisely what they need to do to improve.

- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are given well-targeted support both in class and through precise support from staff and from outside the school. This ensures that these pupils make the same good progress as all other pupils.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding because some teachers are still not providing sufficient work that really stretches the high-ability pupils. Occasionally, teachers talk too much in lessons and give too much direction to pupils. This gives fewer opportunities for pupils to 'find out' and to learn for themselves.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in classes and around the school and are polite and friendly towards staff and visitors. Pupils care for each other well and readily help each other, for instance when working in groups or on projects. As one parent or carer put it, the school is 'a happy place'.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and this is reflected in responses from parents and carers. Pupils know how to measure risks and why they should behave well.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare, but they would be able to talk to any adult if they thought that this was happening to them or someone else. Records of incidents show that there have been very few examples of poor behaviour since the new policies and procedures were introduced by the headteacher.
- There are, however, still a few instances of silly behaviour in lessons, especially when the teaching is less than inspiring, which just occasionally spoils the learning of others.
- Children settle very well when they join the Reception classes. This is as a result of very effective arrangements between school and home for managing the change from one to the other. Children quickly develop an understanding of how to play and learn well together. They demonstrate their understanding of right from wrong and show respect for each other and the adults around them. Groups of pupils in Key Stage 2 enjoy the responsibility of supporting the younger children.
- Pupils whose circumstances may put them at risk are well cared for by the range of support from the school and work of professionals outside the school. All pupils enjoy being a part of their school community. Attendance is average and rising and has improved since the previous inspection because of the introduction of imaginative ways of encouraging regular attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, with strong support from his deputy, knows what needs to be done to make the school more successful and also how to do it. Together with the senior leadership team, he has provided training for teachers to help them to develop their skills. Support has been sought from a range of sources outside the school and the excellent practice of the school's most effective teachers has been shared. This has led to improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and in pupils' achievements.
- The headteacher has taken effective steps to ensure that teachers are accountable for their performance and does not allow staff to be rewarded financially unless they are successful in helping pupils to make at least good progress. The quality of teaching and the progress of pupils are regularly and accurately checked so that measures can be put in place rapidly to address any concerns.
- The progress for all groups of pupils, given their different starting points, is broadly similar. This indicates that the school's commitment to equal opportunities is borne out by its practice. The school fosters good relations with parents, carers and other agencies. Pupils say that this is a fair school and all are treated equally and inspectors found no evidence of any kind of discrimination.

- The local authority has provided very effective support for the school in recent years. The good progress the school has made is reflected in the reduced level of support the local authority now deems it necessary to provide and shows the school has a secure capacity to improve further.
 - Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are ambitious for the school and are supportive of the headteacher in his determination to make the school successful. They attend training regularly to develop their skills and have good information about how well the school is performing against other schools nationally. They use this to confidently question and challenge senior and subject leaders and 'keep them on their toes'. The Chair of the Governing Body and other members visit the school regularly and know which groups of pupils need additional support. They have a good understanding of the strengths of teaching and also where teaching needs to be better. The governing body is well informed about the arrangements to manage teachers' performance. It has made sure that money is spent appropriately to support particular groups of pupils and their families and that the impact is clearly seen through the progress of all groups of pupils. This has led to the pupil premium funding being spent on one-to-one and small-group work to ensure that it has the best impact on raising pupils' achievement.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	132199
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	402547

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	307
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Arnott
Headteacher	Andrew Mead
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 May 2011
Telephone number	01454 867777
Fax number	01454867778
Email address	AbbotswoodPrimary.School@southglos.gov.uk

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