

Abbotsmede Primary School

Kingsley Road, Peterborough, PE1 5JS

Inspection dates 4–5 December 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The attainment of the pupils is not as high as it could be and rates of progress are inconsistent.
- While a majority of the teaching is good, there is too much variability in quality, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Attendance is below the national average because some parents do not make sure that their children attend regularly enough and their progress suffers.

The school has the following strengths

- Leadership and management are good so that teaching and learning are improving. The headteacher provides good leadership and supports staff well. The successful introduction of new ideas is contributing much to this being an improving school.
- Governors are dedicated and involved and eager for the school to improve further. Their links to subjects and visits help them understand the school and the quality of teaching.
- Good leadership of teaching has greatly reduced the proportion that requires improvement. Staff feel that they have the chance to develop their skills. Senior staff support the headteacher well in improving teaching and pupils' achievements.
- Pupils' progress is tracked regularly and the school maintains a close watch on the progress of different groups of pupils.
- Staff are hardworking and keen to do the best for the pupils. They work effectively as a team and provide very good care for the pupils. The school works well with families and makes good use of other professionals to help them.
- Pupils' behaviour and understanding of safety are good.
- This school provides equal opportunities for all its pupils. Staff take a keen interest in the pupils and the backgrounds from which they come.
- Safeguarding arrangements are well organised and secure and policies on these matters guide the staff well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 22 lessons or parts of lessons. Three were observed jointly with either the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors examined the seven responses on Parent View, the government's website for parents' views of schools, and also the school's most recent survey of parents' opinions.
- A discussion was held with a member of the local authority's advisory staff.
- A group discussion was held with selected pupils.
- Inspectors held formal discussions with some staff, including the headteacher, the senior leadership team, assistant headteacher and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader.
- Inspectors examined progress data and other school documentation, including safeguarding information.
- A meeting took place with three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.

Inspection team

Peter Sudworth, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Gillian Scobie	Additional Inspector
Terence Cook	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school with 13 classes including the Nursery, which children attend part-time. The school is growing in numbers and has been increasing in size from the Reception upwards. There are two forms of entry from Reception to Year 3, one class in each of Years 4, 5 and 6 and one Year 4/5 mixed-age class.
- Children join the Nursery at the start of the term in which they have their third birthday and usually join the afternoon session. Older Nursery children attend the morning session. Children transfer to the Reception class in the September before their fifth birthday.
- The school currently supports an above-average proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs at school action, and also an above-average proportion at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs.
- The percentage of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than the usual ones is much higher than usually found.
- About three-quarters of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, well above the national average, and a large proportion of these pupils speak English as an additional language. The school is increasingly receiving pupils who speak very little or no English.
- The school partly meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for the pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils eligible to be supported by the pupil premium, which is extra government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, pupils in the care of the local authority and those from families with a parent in the armed forces, is higher than the national average.
- The school manages its own breakfast club.
- The school was undergoing building works during the inspection to improve the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is expected that these will be ready in January 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and in so doing raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that marking always shows the pupils how they can improve their work
 - improving the quality of handwriting and making sure that pupils write consistently in a joined style in Key Stage 2 in order to speed up their writing
 - making clear to pupils how they can achieve success in their lessons
 - reducing the use of worksheets in some subjects so that pupils can practise their own writing and think for themselves
 - ensuring that work is always challenging enough for different groups of pupils, including pupils who speak English as an additional language and so develop their understanding of English further
 - ensuring that boys' attainment overall is as good as that of the girls.
- Improve the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - attending to organisational difficulties which are currently leading to some overcrowded learning in part of the Reception teaching space
 - giving attention to matters of hygiene at snack times

- improving the quality of teaching by building on the good practice in the Nursery
 - making sure that when children choose their activities they are always interesting and develop the children’s learning further.
- Improve attendance by enforcing the well-considered procedures that the school has put in place to improve attendance and the effective deployment of the attendance officer.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is not consistent in the school. Pupils from Year 3 upwards make better progress than in Key Stage 1. Girls tend to do better than the boys overall, except in mathematics. Results are below average at the end of each key stage and at the end of Reception. Few pupils reach the higher levels. Children attending the school since the start of Nursery or Reception classes make best progress in all key stages.
- Pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 needs improving and there are signs that this is beginning. Very few pupils reach the higher level. Pupils writing skills are limited and few pupils write at length. Mathematics attainment is stronger than in reading and writing in this key stage. Results had been rising for a few years but fell back in 2012. In the 2012 phonics screening (the linking of sounds and letters) for Year 1, pupils' results were well below the national average.
- Attainment is typically well-below expectations for their age when children enter Nursery and Reception classes. They make good progress in improving personal and social skills, and in understanding English. Results at the end of Reception show improving progress in different areas of learning and, although mostly below average, attainment is coming closer to that found nationally.
- Older pupils' progress from the start of Key Stage 2 has been good. Nevertheless, attainment by Year 6 is still below average and fell in 2012 because of a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs. However, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because staff notice difficulties quickly and provide extra help. Pupils who receive pupil premium funding benefit well from it. They make better progress than pupils not entitled to this funding.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups and pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar rates of progress to other pupils.
- The school has recently introduced a new scheme to review progress. In this, staff meet each individual pupil and their parents and discuss all-round progress, including behaviour, and set improvement targets. This idea appears to be having a good effect on progress, although it is still too early to judge the full effect.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Early Years Foundation Stage teaching requires improvement. While it is good in the Nursery, it is too variable in Reception. Work spaces in Reception are sometimes overcrowded and children not always fully occupied. When staff work with children in groups, activity is purposeful but the activities which children choose for themselves are sometimes not challenging enough. Staff do not consistently give enough attention to hygiene at snack times, for example the use of plates. Time during the day is sometimes wasted.
- In the Nursery, high-quality questioning develops the children's understanding of English. Children are fully occupied in a purposeful, well organised environment learning independence and good social skills from imaginative play situations and activities. Children made cakes from dough and were challenged to decorate them by cutting out square shapes on the top.

- Teachers' marking shows interest in what pupils have written but not enough attention is always paid to handwriting quality, to insisting that pupils write in a joined hand and to informing pupils how to improve their work. Overuse of worksheets in some subjects prevents pupils thinking for themselves and practising their writing.
- Teachers work hard to plan work for different abilities but this is not always exact enough and work sometimes lacks challenge, for example, on occasions in mathematics for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Some pupils find work too easy.
- Teaching seen in lessons was mostly good but about one-third requires improvement. Teachers manage pupils well. Respectful relationships support a pleasant atmosphere for learning. Teachers inform pupils what they are to learn but do not yet consistently share with pupils how they can be really successful in their learning tasks. They make good use of modern technology, for example, by showing examples of work on electronic screens which can then be discussed. This supports pupils' interest and helps concentration.
- Preparation of lessons is good and resources are well prepared for activities so that time is not wasted when activities begin. In a good Year 3 mathematics lesson, all pupils worked well on different word problems at their own level of ability and used practical learning resources well which helped accuracy.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to lessons and are used purposefully with small groups, although they sometimes do not question pupils well enough to help their understanding. They remain busy throughout lessons.
- There is a good balance of discussion and activity in lessons and opportunities for pupils to discuss something with a partner keeps all pupils thinking. Teachers keep a close eye on progress during activities. The teaching of reading and phonics in small groups is good and well matched to need.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good in class, at the breakfast club, around school and at play. Pupils show good manners and get along well together. They know the system for dealing with inappropriate behaviour and say these are fair. Pupils recognise that issues sometimes happen but feel that staff manage these quickly and consistently. There are very few racist incidents. Pupils understand different forms of bullying but say little happens in school.
- Staff, parents, carers and pupils are positive about behaviour. Records show that behaviour is typically good. Pupils enjoy school and describe learning as fun. Religious festivals and long holidays to home countries have a significant effect on attendance which is below the national average. However, attendance has improved since the last inspection through the school's good efforts in this respect. Pupils appreciate the awards for good attendance.
- Pupils feel safe in school and are confident to discuss any matters of concern with staff. They have a good understanding of keeping themselves and others safe. They know about road safety, the dangers of electricity and the need to use computers responsibly.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has used advisory support well and combined this with her own good skills to improve the quality of teaching. The effect is being seen in pupils' improving progress. A good range of methods is used to review teaching and learning in the school. In addition to lesson observations, pupils are asked their views about lessons and staff examine pupils' written work. The headteacher has the good support of senior staff. The senior leadership team has a clear focus on improving the school. Subject leaders' plans help to develop their subjects.
- Appraisal arrangements for staff meet requirements. Success towards the targets set for teachers can be measured and there is a clear link to pay. The headteacher has thoughtfully introduced new ideas, such as staff having opportunities to discuss all-round progress with individual pupils and their parents, when pupils provide their own view of progress. Tracking pupils' progress is rigorous with a good focus on different groups. Staff are held accountable for the progress of different pupils.
- The local authority has provided good support in several ways. For example, it supported a teacher to attend a specialist course in mathematics and advised on the teaching of reading and writing. It presently supports Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage. The effect is seen in gradual improvements in attainment and improving progress.
- The school development plan is well written with correct priorities. It recognises the need to improve attendance further. The school has worked tirelessly to improve attendance. It has worked closely with both the local authority's attendance officer and the family worker and taken tough action against parents who fail to send their children to school regularly. Improvements have resulted, but absence for religious observance remains an obstacle.
- Safeguarding arrangements are secure because staff are regularly trained in child protection matters and procedures for the pupils' safety and well-being are well considered.
- The curriculum is well planned so that pupils receive different experiences but also with a good attention to reading, writing and mathematics. However, the experiences for children in the Reception part of the Early Years Foundation Stage are not always arranged well enough.
- Special weeks given to individual subjects enable pupils to undertake more practical work such as design and technology. The pupils have a wide range of clubs to choose from including sport and musical activities. A good range of visits and visitors helps widen pupils' experiences. An Indian musician visits weekly to teach children Indian drumming and music, which contributes to their spiritual and cultural development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Chair is enthusiastic, helps in school and so knows about the school at first hand. Other governors, too, visit regularly and observe lessons, which give them a good idea of teaching quality. Although the governing body is small due to difficulties getting and keeping members, the membership of former headteachers helps the understanding of data. Governors have regular opportunities for training to keep up to date. They know how pupil premium funding is spent and can point to the improvements. Their committee structure is appropriate for the size of the governing body. Finance is well managed. They are familiar with the teacher appraisal system. They ask questions and challenge the school in a supportive way.

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	110779
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	401153

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	388
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lindsey Welldon
Headteacher	Kate Trethewy
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2009
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