

Abbey Park First and Nursery School

Abbey Road, Pershore, WR10 1DF

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Pupils make good progress across the school and standards are improving. The current Year 4 pupils are above the standard expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The headteacher has a clear and creative vision for the school. He is the driving force behind the school's continuing improvements.
- Systems for monitoring the effectiveness of teaching are good and enable teachers to improve their practice.
- Teaching is good with some that is outstanding. Lessons are often practical, exciting and active. As a result, pupils are motivated and want to learn.
- Teaching in the Reception class is imaginative and inspiring and the adults are exceptionally skilled in making sure that all children are well supported and challenged. As a result, children make outstanding progress.
- Pupils are extremely polite and behave very well around school and in lessons. Pupils feel safe and act with consideration towards others.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are very positive and are a strong feature of the school.
- Pupils who are at risk of falling behind in their learning are identified quickly. An exceptionally effective teacher provides a range of extra support for these pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all groups of pupils in all classes are consistently making good or better progress.
- When marking books, teachers do not give pupils' enough guidance on how to improve. The presentation of pupils' work in their books is often untidy and not well organised.
- There are insufficient opportunities for teachers who are good to learn from those who are outstanding.
- Key subject leaders are not yet fully involved in regularly checking how well pupils are doing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 13 lessons, many of them observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Observations of six teachers and some teaching assistants took place.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and checked their progress in learning the sounds that letters make (phonics). They also examined the quality of work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors talked to groups of pupils about their work to gauge their views on their progress in school. They also talked to pupils about how safe they feel in school and in the wider world.
- An inspector attended an assembly and checked how pupils behaved during playtime and lunchtime.
- Meetings took place with members of the governing body and school leaders, key members of staff and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors also talked to some parents and carers before school and took account of the views of 30 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The inspectors also received and considered 23 staff questionnaires.
- An inspector scrutinised the arrangements and records kept to safeguard pupils as well as the school's child protection procedures.
- The school's action plan and self-evaluation were examined, and inspectors checked the records that leaders and teachers use to assess pupils' learning and progress.

Inspection team

Rachel Howie, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Cook

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than average.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is above average when compared with most schools. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are in the care of the local authority.)
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average, while the percentage of those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a morning Nursery with extended provision for lunchtime, and one Reception class.
- Pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 so the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress, do not apply.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress and improve the attainment of specific groups so that:
 - disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in all classes make consistently good or better progress
 - the attainment of those pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding continues to rise so that they achieve consistently as well as other pupils.
- Ensure that marking is used more effectively by:
 - giving pupils clear advice about how to improve their work
 - planning regular opportunities for pupils to act on the advice teachers give them
 - encouraging higher standards of presentation and handwriting.
- Develop the roles of key members of staff so that:
 - the role of subject leaders includes a range of activities that enable them to check how well pupils and teachers are performing
 - the role of the special educational needs co-ordinator is extended to include the responsibility for the attainment of those pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding, so that they achieve consistently as well as other pupils.
 - the teachers with outstanding practice in the Reception class and Year 4, and the teacher who provides intervention group work, share their practice more widely.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children enter Nursery their stage of development is below that typically expected for their age. The progress children make in Nursery is improving and from their starting points, they make the progress that is expected. Skilful and highly effective teaching in the reception class means that children make outstanding progress.
- At the end of Key Stage 1 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average. By the end of Year 4, pupils' attainment in all three subjects is above the expected level, with the highest attainment being in reading.
- Although pupils are achieving well in writing across the school, work in books is often untidy. Pupils do not always take sufficient pride in their work or take time to form their letters correctly or join them carefully.
- In the national phonics check in 2012, pupils' achievement was well below the national average and fewer boys than girls met the required standard. As a result of effective action by the senior leaders, results from the phonics check this year show a significant improvement and are now above average, with boys and girls achieving equally well.
- Pupils from across the school say that they enjoy reading. They use their phonics skills to tackle unfamiliar and increasingly difficult words successfully. Senior leaders have introduced a reward scheme to encourage pupils to practise reading more often. This has been very effective and most pupils are reading more regularly at home.
- Senior leaders and teachers carefully track the progress that each pupil makes and they meet regularly to discuss this. Pupils at risk of falling behind are identified and a range of actions are taken to support them. This systematic approach to checking pupils' progress is leading to an increasing proportion of pupils making better progress than is usually expected.
- Most disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making good progress. However, this is not consistent over time particularly in reading and writing. A large proportion of the pupil premium funding is used to fund an additional teacher to work with individual and small groups of pupils. As a result of her highly effective work, pupils eligible for this funding are making improved progress. These pupils are now a term behind their peers in reading, writing and mathematics and the gaps in attainment between them and the pupils not eligible are closing rapidly.
- Pupils' work shows that they make good progress across a range of subjects and are well prepared to move on to Middle School. Pupils develop their skills through 'topic learning'. For instance, during 'music week' pupils learned about a range of cultures by making and playing instruments, listening to music, dancing and singing songs from the countries they were studying.

The quality of teaching is good

- Senior leaders have successfully secured improvements in the quality of teaching. This has been achieved by ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants have the opportunity to undertake professional development both within the school and externally. This is helping them to develop their skills and subject knowledge.

- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding because teachers usually plan activities that match the interests and abilities of the pupils. Occasionally, in a minority of lessons when teaching requires improvement, lower ability pupils do not move forward in their learning quickly enough because activities are not sufficiently challenging to encourage them to think for themselves. As a result, they do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers make learning enjoyable for pupils by planning practical and interesting activities that have a real purpose. They seamlessly link together the learning from several different subject areas and this helps children to apply many different skills. For example in Year 4, pupils were enthusiastically working out the area and perimeter of different rooms in a castle in mathematics. Pupils described the rooms in great detail in their writing and then used this information to create a quiz on the computer for their parents.
- Resources, including computers, are used well to help pupils to learn independently. Classroom displays include a wide range of prompts to help pupils to improve their work. Teachers often include a 'world record' challenge in the activities they plan and this encourages pupils to have a go at 'things we didn't think we'd be able to do'.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 4 have targets in writing and mathematics and this is helping them to know what they need to be able to do to improve. In some year groups, these targets are not updated often enough and some pupils, particularly the more able, find this frustrating.
- Marking across the school is inconsistent. There are too few examples of teachers providing pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work. In cases where detailed advice is provided, pupils are rarely given the opportunity to respond by improving their work.
- In the most effective lessons, teachers ask pupils carefully chosen questions that both check their understanding and challenge their thinking by encouraging them to explain their answers. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson about visiting different planets with a limited amount of rocket fuel, pupils were not only asked to explain how they had worked out the answer but also why they had chosen the method they had used.
- Teaching in the extra support sessions for pupils is very effective. In an outstanding phonics lesson, reception pupils were using a wide range of exciting resources to learn new sounds and were working at a level much higher than is expected for their age. Sometimes pupils attending these sessions return to class having missed the introduction to the lesson and they find it hard to re-join the learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have exceptionally good manners and behave very well around school and in lessons. Almost all parents who gave their views agree that the school effectively makes sure children behave well.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning in lessons are good and are outstanding when teaching inspires them. For instance in the Reception Class, a video message from the teacher, who was dressed as a witch, completely captured the children's imagination. Occasionally when teaching requires improvement, pupils become distracted because they are not actively involved in the learning. As a result, they are not as focussed as they should be.
- Parents feel that their children are safe at school and pupils wholeheartedly agree. Pupils have a

good understanding of what bullying is and are emphatic that it hardly ever happens at their school. They are confident that the adults in school act quickly to sort out any name-calling or teasing that occurs.

- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations including when they are crossing the road or using the Internet.
- Older pupils act as role models for the younger pupils by taking on responsibilities like 'break time buddies' and by looking after the range of equipment available for pupils at playtime and lunchtime. Pupils play well together and are caring and supportive of one another.
- Overall attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now in line with the national average for primary schools. Regular attendance and punctuality is a high priority for the school and pupils take pride in being in the class with the highest attendance each week. However, there remain a number of pupils whose attendance is not yet good enough and senior leaders and governors are working hard to address this.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is well led and managed by the headteacher. He has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The deputy headteacher has recently returned to work after a short period of absence and continues to provide the headteacher with good support.
- Teachers have individual targets that clearly focus on improving the progress of pupils. Good levels of support for teachers and well-planned training have underpinned improvements to the quality of teaching. Consequently, an increasing proportion of teaching is outstanding.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Leader is an outstanding role model in her own teaching. She has worked very effectively to ensure that teaching and learning has improved across the Early Years. Key subject leaders work well to support other staff to improve their teaching and subject knowledge. However, they are not yet fully involved in checking the quality of work in their areas of responsibility.
- The school has successfully developed a curriculum that has captured the imagination and enthusiasm of pupils, as one pupil commented, 'our learning is really exciting because we learn in fun ways'. This topic approach to learning promotes good moral, social and cultural development. Opportunities for spiritual development are less evident.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the school. They have confidence that the school is well led and that their children are happy, safe and taught well, with one commenting 'my child is inspired by her teacher'.
- Senior leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding policies and procedures are rigorous and meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority considers the school to be well led and managed and has, since the last inspection offered light-touch support. It has been effective in validating the leaders' accuracy in making judgements about teaching, where the school is good and what its priorities for improvement should be.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- School governors have a broad range of skills and expertise and support the school very well. They are knowledgeable about what the senior leaders are doing to improve the school and they make visits to check for themselves how the school is progressing. Governors manage pupil premium funding carefully and this has enabled them to provide valuable support to eligible pupils. Governors have a good understanding about the quality of teaching and about how senior leaders manage teachers' performance. Governors make sure they keep up to date with training to help them to be more effective. They do not always fully understand the information they receive about pupils' progress but are aware of this and ask the headteacher for further help when they need to. They offer sufficient challenge in all other areas of the schools performance and check closely whether arrangements for keeping pupils safe are met.

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	116716
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	412647

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	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adam Thorne
Headteacher	David Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	24 February 2010
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