

Abercrombie Primary School

Higher Albert Street, Chesterfield, S41 7QE

Inspection dates 3–4 July 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| 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 overall progress during their time in the school, and achieve well.
- Standards are usually above national averages in English and mathematics when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good. Staff work closely as a team and provide good support for pupils of all abilities and from all backgrounds.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good in and around the school. They know how to keep themselves and others safe.
- School leaders have successfully focused on improving teaching and learning, following a dip in Year 6 results in English in 2012.
- Governors are developing their role effectively and now hold the school to account for the progress pupils make.
- The school is a bright and very stimulating place to learn, where pupils' work is well displayed and widely celebrated.
- The school has maintained its longstanding strengths in looking after the pupils well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always adjust the work set in lessons to fully challenge all pupils.
- Occasionally, staff do not give pupils enough opportunities to be involved in activities or discuss their ideas with others.
- The marking of work and the use of targets to identify what pupils need to improve are inconsistent.
- The checks leaders make on the work of the school, and the organisation and use of information on pupils' progress, are not precise enough. This means that areas for improvement cannot always be identified quickly.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 16 lessons in the eight classes in the school. Several of these observations were carried out with the headteacher. Inspectors also listened to individual pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and the leaders responsible for literacy and numeracy, special educational needs and the Early Years Foundation Stage. Discussions also took place with groups of pupils, and representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 43 parents and carers from the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke to several parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also reviewed the 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including recent data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring information, and records of meetings of the governing body. They also considered in detail records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sue Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Roary Pownall

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This primary school is broadly average in size.
- Around 10% of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups. While the proportion is growing, it is well below the national average. Most of these pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is close to the national average. In this school, this additional funding currently applies only to pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs identified at school action is a little below the national average. The percentage supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is almost half the national average.
- Since the previous inspection the school has moved into new purpose-built accommodation, with a new headteacher and deputy headteacher. Very recently another new headteacher has been appointed, to start in September 2013.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching consistently effective, and more outstanding, by checking that:
 - activities are challenging for all groups of pupils, particularly the most able
 - all pupils are involved throughout each lesson and have opportunities to discuss their ideas with others
 - pupils know their targets for improvement, and the marking of their work also identifies what else they need to develop.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - assessment information is used consistently well to speedily identify and address areas of underperformance for all group of pupils, not just those with the greatest need
 - senior leaders check precisely and rigorously the quality of what is provided for the pupils and the progress made, in order to identify exactly what else needs to be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the Nursery with wide-ranging skills and early experiences. School records indicate that a growing number have skills below those expected for their age. By the time pupils leave the school, standards are typically above the average for their age. Overall, their progress is good and boys and girls of all abilities achieve well.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good overall progress and in the Reception class, this is often excellent. This is because staff respond very well to the children's interests and experiences. This was seen when the Reception children extended their knowledge of numbers using a set of skittles and large plastic numbers. They made excellent progress as they put the numbers back in order and checked them carefully when the wind blew them about.
- Over several years pupils had achieved well and their standards on leaving had been typically above average. In 2012, a dip in the Year 6 national test results spurred the school into taking action. This year it has succeeded in improving the quality of teaching, and so the progress that pupils make. The school's own data and the work seen in lessons and pupils' books show that all groups are again making good progress, and standards in reading, writing and mathematics are once again above average in Year 6.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics because of a good focus on problem-solving activities. Pupils develop their speaking skills effectively. While many initially have quite limited skills and confidence in speaking, most become much more assured speakers in a range of activities.
- The school has developed the way in which it teaches letters and the sounds they make (phonics) and the younger pupils have done very well in recent tests of these skills. Many pupils read confidently. The school has spent a lot of money in improving its resources to try and ensure older pupils are more interested in reading and are able to achieve the higher levels.
- Pupils make good progress in writing, and often write neatly and with accurate spelling and grammar. For example, Year 1 pupils made excellent progress when using adjectives to describe various animals following a zoo visit. The more-able pupils were then challenged to produce a minimum number of sentences using more 'exciting' words.
- Data indicate that last year disabled pupils and those who had special educational needs, and pupils supported by pupil premium funding, did not do well compared to similar pupils nationally. For example, Year 6 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals were on average four terms behind their classmates in English and over three terms behind in mathematics. The school recognised this issue and addressed it with determination by introducing a well-planned and regular programme of support for individuals and small groups of pupils.
- The progress made by these groups is now carefully checked and specific help provided to overcome any underperformance. This year's school data show that this has been a successful strategy and these pupils are now making good progress. The gap in attainment compared to other pupils is narrowing rapidly.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who are bilingual also make good progress. If they need extra support, this is recognised and help is provided.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is typically good, and ranges from sometimes outstanding to rarely requiring improvement. Teaching is most effective in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, where it is consistently at least good and sometimes outstanding. This means that pupils now achieve even better than before as they move through the school.
- Teaching of the younger pupils is firmly based on using their experiences as a starting point for many activities. In the Reception class, for example, imaginative tasks were provided to recreate activities from a recent farm visit, including 'milking' a plastic glove and 'shearing' a balloon covered in cotton wool balls. This led to animated discussions, and staff used questions very well to encourage the quieter children to join in.
- The leader responsible for supporting disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs works well with other staff to identify where help is most needed. Additional training has been provided for teaching assistants, who are often skilled in providing well-targeted support for pupils. This is especially helpful for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils supported by pupil premium funding, and has made a positive impact on their progress this year.
- Where teaching is less successful, this is usually because assessment information is not used effectively to provide tasks that are matched closely to pupils' different abilities. This was seen in the work completed earlier in the year by older pupils, and in some current activities for pupils in the middle of Key Stage 2.
- Most lessons are well planned, so pupils quickly move onto their work and have opportunities to find things out for themselves. In a few lessons, the work set is not so challenging and some pupils sit passively for too long, listening to others. This affects their concentration.
- Many pupils know their targets for what they need to improve and these are displayed in the front of their books. However, these are often undated and rarely appear to be changed or referred to in the marking of their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school cares for its pupils well. They nearly always behave well in lessons, when moving around school and outdoors. Pupils are very fortunate to have plenty of space to play outside and enjoy lots of active play, where they share ideas and equipment very well.
- Most pupils say they like school. Many enjoy singing together and do this well in whole-school assemblies. They recognise that staff expect them to behave well and are keen to live up to these expectations.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves and others safe. They know what bullying is and can explain the different types, such as cyber-bullying, that could occur. They know that all forms of bullying are unacceptable and that there are plenty of adults they can speak to if they have any concerns.
- Attendance is above average. The school has improving procedures for checking that the very

small number of pupils who arrive a little late do not miss the start of lessons on a regular basis.

- While most pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, this is not consistently the case. For example, some pupils choose not to take an active part in discussions and are passive in their approach to activities. Pupils' books occasionally indicate a lack of pride in their work.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has ensured that the school has maintained its longstanding strengths in caring for the pupils well. The staff work enthusiastically as a united team, and share a commitment to continuing to improve their skills.
 - The deputy headteacher plays an effective role in several key areas, and as numeracy leader works closely with the literacy leader to focus on improving teaching. They have led staff training activities that ensure there is a good focus on raising standards.
 - The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a good overview of how well children are catered for, and leads this area well by providing a role model of effective teaching.
 - Senior leaders recognised from data about pupils' achievement that improvements needed to be made. They responded by focusing sharply on improving the quality of teaching, and as a result all inadequate teaching and most that requires improvement has been eradicated. For example, work has been done to ensure teachers' questions are used well to encourage greater depth in pupils' thinking.
 - Staff attend training activities in this and other schools, and courses that focus on specific areas including the management of special needs. Senior staff use data about pupils' progress and lesson observations appropriately to decide whether teachers should be paid more.
 - While the school now collects a better range of information about pupils' performance, this is not always well managed. For example, information about the progress of particular groups is not readily available and is therefore not used to track progress precisely.
 - Pupil premium funding has been used well this year to provide specific and well-chosen support. This has made a clear impact on the progress eligible pupils are making. Similarly, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are now supported well and are making good progress.
 - Parents and carers think positively of the school and appreciate how well their children are looked after. The school has maintained a particular focus on art and music, evident from many awards. There are strong spiritual and cultural elements to activities, including assemblies.
 - The learning environment around the school and in classrooms is of a high standard and well maintained. This ensures pupils know their work is valued. Parents believe that this indicates how much staff appreciate the work of the children, which raises their self-esteem.
 - The local authority provides 'light touch' support for the school, as it is deemed to be successful. Even so, its support has been effective in ensuring a better focus on the quality of teaching.
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- The impact of training activities has been mixed because senior staff do not check regularly or rigorously enough the impact of training or initiatives on the progress made by pupils. Senior staff sometimes have an overgenerous view of the school's effectiveness. Subject leaders have not had enough opportunities to check work across the school to iron out remaining inconsistencies in planning, teaching and learning.

 - Procedures to safeguard pupils meet current national requirements. Staff ensure that all pupils have equal access to activities. The school actively fosters good relationships and tackles discrimination. Overall, the changes and improvements made show that it has the capacity to continue to improve.

 - **The governance of the school:**
 - While many governors are relatively new to their roles, they have quickly developed a good understanding of their responsibilities and now provide good governance. They have undertaken training in several key areas, including knowing more about the quality of teaching and understanding data about pupils' progress. They are now increasingly able to use this to question senior staff about teaching quality and pupils' performance. Governors support the headteacher in managing teachers' pay, rewarding good teachers and challenging underperformance. They support the school very well and have clear aspirations that it will continue to improve. They are keen to develop a more effective programme of focused visits to ensure they become less dependent on staff for information. Governors are also considering the pattern of governing body meetings and the recording of information, to ensure that everyone is fully aware about key aspects of the school's performance.
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What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 112670 |
| Local authority | Derbyshire |
| Inspection number | 411908 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 242 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Ian Maddison |
| Headteacher | Neil Jones |
| Date of previous school inspection | 27–28 November 2008 |
| Telephone number | 01246 232 425 |
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