

Abbey Road Primary School

Tewkesbury Close, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 5ND

Inspection dates 20–21 November 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 in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school. Their achievements are good overall.
- Recent achievement in mathematics and reading by Year 6 has been outstanding.
- The acting co-headteachers provide good leadership and have accurately evaluated the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result the school is well placed to improve achievement further.
- The commitment of senior leaders along with the governors has resulted in stability in the school during a period of uncertainty.
- Teaching is good overall with some that is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good, and often outstanding. They are keen to come to school, as reflected in the consistently high attendance figures, and feel safe.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- Governors have a good and detailed understanding of the school's strengths and future development needs and provide firm challenge along with immense support to senior leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most-able pupils do not always have sufficiently challenging work to reach the highest National Curriculum levels they are capable of in writing.
- Pupils do not write enough at length in different subjects.
- Pupils are not routinely given time to reflect and respond to the comments teachers write when they mark their work.
- School improvement planning does not focus sufficiently on pupils' progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 24 lessons, seven of which were observed together with the acting headteachers.
- Inspectors talked to pupils in lessons, looked at their books, listened to them read and talked separately to groups of pupils from Key Stage 2.
- The inspectors had meetings with the acting headteachers, the senior leadership team, subject leaders and five governors. A separate meeting with the Chair of Governors and a telephone conversation with a local authority representative also took place.
- The inspectors looked at the school at work and reviewed a range of documentation, including school development plans, school and external information on pupils' progress, the work in pupils' books and the school's evaluation of its own performance.
- The inspection took account of information on staff performance and records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding and child protection.
- The inspectors took account of five staff questionnaires and responses from parental surveys. They also looked at 140 responses on the online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Sue Vasey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Faheem Chishti

Additional Inspector

Amanda Simpson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Abbey Road is a larger than average primary school and numbers have recently been increasing.
- The previous deputy head has been joined earlier this term by a Local Leader in Education from Wynndale Primary School to act as co-headteachers until the appointment of a permanent headteacher. This follows a period of absence of the previous headteacher.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well-below average. This funding is to support certain groups such as pupils in local authority care and those 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching and so raise achievement, particularly for the most-able pupils and in writing, by:
 - Adapting tasks in some lessons to improve the pace and challenge for the most-able pupils, so they consistently reach the levels of which they are capable
 - giving pupils opportunities and encouragement to write more extensively in lessons and in subjects other than English
 - making sure that pupils have sufficient time to reflect on and respond to teachers' marking.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on the quality of teaching and learning by sharpening school improvement planning and linking the steps to success, detailed within it, to measureable improvements in pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children's skills and knowledge when they join the Early Years Foundation Stage are generally in line with those typical for their age. Children make good progress in all areas and achieve well by the time they enter Year 1, particularly in the development of writing skills.
- The results of the 2013 check on phonics (the sounds that letters make) indicate a further increase in the proportion of Year 1 pupils who have achieved or surpassed the expected national levels compared to the 2012 results, which were above these expectations. The present reading achievement of pupils in Year 1 is good.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 in 2013 was average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. This reduction since 2012 was mainly due to a significant number of pupils joining the year group later than the usual starting point. The school's tracking shows that whilst at the school they made good progress. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher National Curriculum levels in writing and mathematics were below average.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2013 was above average in writing and well above in reading and mathematics. These pupils have made at least good progress, some outstanding, from their starting points in the school, showing good overall achievement. Achievement in mathematics is outstanding and higher than English because a larger proportion of pupils exceed expected progress.
- Evidence from lessons, pupils' books and school tracking data show similar trends for the current Year 6 pupils. The school is aware that for achievement to be outstanding it needs to further increase the proportion of pupils who make more than expected progress in writing in order to reach the higher National Curriculum levels.
- The daily teaching of phonics and guided reading has successfully raised standards in reading throughout the school. Pupils do not yet have enough opportunities to improve their writing skills to match their achievement in reading.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are achieving well and make similar progress to their classmates. Small-group work is very successful in improving their skills, and this practice also enables pupils who speak English as an additional language and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium to make similar good progress. There were too few pupils, at the end of Year 6, who were eligible for the pupil premium to comment on their relative attainment without identifying individual pupils.
- The recent additional government funding for sports provision has been used for outdoor equipment and to develop inter-school competitions.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most of the teaching observed during the inspection was of good quality and some was outstanding. A scrutiny of the work in pupils' books and the school's records of the checks made on teaching indicate that teaching is typically good and improving.

- The vast majority of parents and carers confirm this view and consider their children to be taught well.
- Reading is taught well, with a good emphasis on the teaching of phonics combined with a range of reading techniques. This was seen, for example, in a Year 1 session when pupils enthusiastically applied their knowledge of phonics to successfully read new words and write short sentences.
- As part of their strategies to explain new learning and to use good questioning techniques, teachers often make references to previous learning and this has a very successful impact on pupils' comprehension and motivation.
- Teachers generally have high expectations and check that every task builds on what pupils already know and is pitched at the right level of ability. As a result, the work set helps pupils to learn well, whatever their ability. However, there is a need for more consistency in the way teachers adapt tasks in lessons to increase the levels of challenge for the most able.
- Relationships throughout the school are excellent. In an outstanding Year 6 literacy lesson, the teacher used role play to motivate and encourage pupils to use their imagination. The teacher skilfully developed pupils' literacy skills as they were required to use excellent descriptive language. Consequently, pupils made rapid gains in learning.
- Pupils talk of their enjoyment of the exciting lessons planned by their teachers, especially the range of topics that cover more than one subject. There is an inconsistency of expectation in how teachers use these opportunities in other subjects to improve the literacy skills of pupils, especially through extended writing.
- Pupils' learning is securely based on what teachers learn from marking. There are some very good examples of marking that are both supportive and tell pupils exactly how to improve in mathematics and writing. However, pupils are not always given sufficient time to reflect on their learning and on teachers' marking in order to be able to respond to the advice they are given.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well by skilled teaching assistants who work effectively with teachers to ensure that pupils' needs are generally met well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy school and this is seen in their above average attendance. Pupils talk very positively about how safe they feel. One pupil summarised this by saying 'everyone is friendly and the teachers really care for you and help you.' This is reflected in the Parent View responses and confirmed when inspectors spoke with parents and carers as they brought their children into school.
- Behaviour in class is consistently at least good and often outstanding and school records show this is typical for all classes. Pupils listen to teachers' instructions and to their classmates' opinions exceptionally well.

- Relationships in the school are strong and there is mutual respect between adults and pupils. As a result, pupils feel valued and play a responsible and interested role in the way they approach their work. Pupils apply themselves to tasks very well and work enthusiastically and collaboratively in pairs and groups and have good independent learning skills.
- No disruptive behaviour was seen in lessons, during assembly or in the playground. When teaching is less than good there are a small number of instances where pupils become less focused, often because the work is not fully challenging or motivating them.
- Pupils enjoy responsibilities, such as being milk and fruit monitors and being playground buddies, which they fulfil well around the school and in the playground. They take a prominent, active role in the life of the school as prefects and members of the school council.
- Pupils know about different forms of bullying, such as cyber-bullying and racism, and have a sensible understanding of how they can help to keep themselves safe. School records and logs confirm pupils' views that bullying is rare and, that if they do have a concern, adults sort it out quickly. Pupils told inspectors there is always someone to talk to if they have any worries so that they feel secure.
- Many varied activities contribute to pupils' outstanding personal development. The school's inclusive and nurturing ethos underpins what is a very caring and cohesive community. Pupils talk avidly about their personal contributions to the school community and how they are proud to be part of Abbey Road.

The leadership and management are good

- The acting co-headteachers, supported well by other leaders, are providing strong direction and stability following a period of uncertainty. The commitment of the staff to making sure standards are maintained has been successful and the impact on the experiences of the pupils has been minimal.
- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Well-planned activities enthuse and motivate children and have a clear focus on their learning and personal development. Outdoor learning complements what is done indoors.
- Leaders have quickly developed an accurate overview of teaching strengths from lesson observations and other self-evaluation practices, and along with subject leaders, have deployed staff effectively, especially in small-group work, to further accelerate progress in some pupils' learning.
- Improvements in the tracking of pupils' work have provided more accurate information about the rates of pupils' progress in each year group, and the recognition that a very small number of more-able pupils are not yet challenged enough to achieve the highest National Curriculum levels in writing.
- Establishing stronger links with parents has been a recent priority. The initiative to increase opportunities for parental feedback from achievement assemblies, parents' evenings and a literacy and numeracy workshop has proved successful. Survey results indicate improved parental opinions on communications about upcoming events and information about their children's learning.

- The curriculum is well organised so that pupils' skills are developed through making strong links between different subjects. A wide range of experiences takes place both inside and outside school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well including links with other countries. The school's ethos of care and support, valuing and including all pupils, and promoting their self-esteem, confidence and aspirations, ensures that there are equal opportunities for all and that there is no discrimination.
- The leaders recognise that school improvement planning does not fully reflect the school's ambition to further raise achievement. The plan has the right priorities but does not focus them sharply enough on increasing the proportion of pupils making outstanding progress and attainment.
- The local authority has a clear understanding of the school's needs and has supported the acting co-headteachers well during this time of transition in the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body know the school well. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and how well it performs in comparison with other similar schools. Governors provide experienced and valued support for the school, especially in auditing and managing the school's finances. They have a well-informed understanding and analysis of school data. There is a good understanding of the quality of teaching in the school and the links between teachers' performance and decisions about salary progression. Governors have a good knowledge of the new primary school sport funding and how it is being used. They discuss the use of the additional pupil premium funding and agree how it is spent. They ensure that the school meets all statutory obligations, particularly those relating to safeguarding and the safe recruitment of staff.

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	122599
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	425088

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	472
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Deborah White
Headteacher	Caroline Rees and Jane Gibbons (Acting Co-headteachers)
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2008
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