

# Abbey CofE Infant School

Aston Road, Nuneaton, CV11 5EL

**Inspection dates** 16–17 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Since the headteacher joined this school, there has been rapid improvement in all areas of its work.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes achieve exceptionally well in all areas of learning. They develop the ability to learn rapidly by themselves and use their curiosity to investigate a wide range of stimulating activities.
- In Years 1 and 2, the achievement of all groups of pupils continues to be outstanding. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average.
- Pupils benefit from consistently high quality teaching across different subjects in all year groups. Much teaching is inspirational and fires pupils' interest.
- Teachers are very good role models, which encourages pupils to do their very best and behave outstandingly well. This makes an exceptional contribution to learning because pupils concentrate fully over long periods of time.
- All aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted very well. This is highly effective in helping pupils to develop strong relationships and outstanding attitudes to learning.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel very safe in school.
- Teamwork among staff is exceptionally strong. Senior leaders work alongside other staff to set a high-quality example.
- The progress of all groups of pupils is carefully checked, but it is not helpfully recorded for some pupils who get extra support.
- Staff are set rigorous targets to improve their work. This has resulted in a rapid improvement in the quality of teaching and hence learning over the last three years.
- Senior leaders are highly effective in checking how well the school is doing and planning to improve teaching and learning. Governors also play a critical role in this work.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 14 lessons and learning sessions, 10 of which were seen together with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, governors and staff. Inspectors also spoke to a group of pupils formally, and others informally during lesson observations and at break times.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of school documentation including: the school's own evaluation of its performance and its development and improvement plan; information about pupils' progress and the support given to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs; evidence about leadership's monitoring of teaching; records relating to safeguarding and attendance.
- A phone-call discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 37 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also looked at the school's own survey of parents' views. An inspector spoke to parents who attended the 'Praise Assembly' and one parent who asked to see an inspector.
- Inspectors considered 20 responses to the questionnaire for school staff.

## Inspection team

David Speakman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Richard Kentish	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized school.
- Nursery sessions take place each morning and afternoon, and the arrangements for children's attendance are flexible.
- There are two single-age classes in the Reception Year and in Years 1 and 2. Pupils are grouped by ability for literacy lessons.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and pupils who speak English as an additional language are broadly average. A few are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is about average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by extra funding through the pupil premium is above average. In this school it applies to children who are in the care of the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Since the previous inspection there have been many changes of teaching staff, including the appointment of a new headteacher in 2011 and a new deputy headteacher.
- There is a privately run nursery, Abbey Fields Day Nursery, on the school site. It is inspected separately. The school is in the process of taking over the responsibility for running this nursery.
- The school receives no external support.
- The school provides support to other local schools through:
  - the headteacher leading Early Years' networking meetings
  - two teachers in Key Stage 1 acting as assessment moderators for the local authority
  - other teachers visiting to observe the work of the learning mentor and nurture group, the school's effective implementation of a commercial literacy scheme, and the way children are taught in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Review the way pupils' progress is tracked, so the progress made by all groups of pupils who have special educational needs is recorded accurately.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with low levels of attainment. Only about one child in 10 joins with skills, knowledge and understanding typical of their age and the rest below. By the time they join Year 1, attainment is close to the national average.
- The development of children's personal and social skills is rapid. Children become very confident learners. They make excellent choices during 'planned play' times and sustain their interest and concentration over long periods of time. During the inspection observations, no child was seen to be wandering around the areas unoccupied.
- Children develop good communication skills. They talk about their work using a wide vocabulary. Most are able to tell their own versions of stories such as *Jack and the Beanstalk*, adding interesting reasons for why things happen as they tell them.
- Some more-able children, including some who speak English as an additional language, write extended pieces of writing to retell a story, at levels well beyond those expected for their age. Their stories are accurately structured, writing is legible and spelling mostly accurate. This is a result of excellent learning in taught literacy sessions.
- Children develop a range of good skills across all areas of learning. They count accurately and work out the answers to simple number problems. They have a good idea about shape, as seen in their patterns created using computers. Their art work is colourful and paintings accurately reflect the topics they study, such as paintings of beanstalks. Children learn equally well indoors and outside. They are exceptionally well prepared to join Year 1.
- Outstanding progress continues throughout Years 1 and 2. Over the last three years, there has been a rapid rise in standards at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics and they are now above the national average. This improvement is sustainable, as all groups of children currently in Years 1 and 2 are working at levels above those nationally expected for their ages.
- Results of the phonics (the sounds letters make) check in Year 1 are similar to the national percentages of pupils reaching the expected standard. This represents excellent progress from their low starting points. Pupils use these skills very well to read unfamiliar words and are becoming fluent readers. They know about simple punctuation and when to pause and add expression to their reading.
- Writing is of a good quality. Year 2 pupils produced some exceptionally good pamphlets persuading people to visit Africa for their holidays. The presentation of their work was excellent, writing was very well ordered and a good level of persuasive language used.
- In mathematics, pupils work at levels beyond the expectations for their ages. They have a good command of number, which they use effectively in different mathematics topics. Pupils organise themselves very well to conduct simple surveys, analyse the information gained and then draw accurate graphs.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is excellent for individual pupils. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support these pupils in class or through one-to-one or small group support to help them catch up. However, the actual progress and standards attained by the whole group of pupils supported at school action are not

clear. The school's data on pupils supported at 'school action' include all pupils who receive extra support. As some of these are more-able pupils or pupils being supported to achieve the higher levels, it is not easy to check and make sure the 'school action' group are doing as well as others.

- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve exceptionally well. Once they have mastered the English language, they make rapid progress. Some receive support for being gifted and talented pupils.
- Pupils supported through pupil premium funding narrowed the attainment gap in 2013, and in reading, writing and mathematics it was within a term of other pupils in Year 2. Their attainment was above the national averages for all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, reflecting outstanding progress during their time in the school.

### **The quality of teaching is outstanding**

- Many areas of strength in teaching have developed under the robust checking of teaching by the headteacher and other senior leaders. High quality teaching is now consistent across the school and promotes excellent learning in both the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2.
- Adults have very high expectations of pupils' capability and provide consistent challenge to move children at all attainment levels on rapidly. In the Nursery and Reception classes, teachers are skilled at providing stimulating opportunities for children to learn through exploring and investigating. They intervene only when appropriate, and even then, they ask questions or make suggestions rather than telling children the answers or what to do next. This encourages children to find things out for themselves.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage adults keep ongoing records of individual progress in children's learning experiences and use this information exceptionally well to plan the next steps in learning for all children and to ensure balance across all areas of learning. Adults constantly adjust the pace and level of challenge for their groups in response to how well children are progressing at any particular time.
- In the infant classes, teachers have equally high expectations of pupils' capabilities. Tasks are effective in moving pupils on to the next steps rapidly because they are based on what pupils have already learned. All adults are skilled in recognising and providing prompt support for those at risk of falling behind and intervene effectively to give pupils the skills to take them confidently on to the next steps in learning.
- Adults are acutely aware of each child's abilities and carefully tailor learning activities to match them extremely well, ensuring successful learning. As a result, disabled children and those who have special educational needs learn exceptionally well. In the same way adults are highly effective in moving the most able pupils and those supported through pupil premium funding on very quickly in their work.
- Teachers respond exceptionally well to children's interests. Pupils discuss what they are interested in and teachers plan around pupils' comments. For example, much of the current work in literacy and in the 'creative curriculum time' focuses on Africa. Consequently, pupils show high levels of interest in their work and do their very best. This is typical of the skilled way in which teachers use ideas that come from the pupils to make learning memorable.
- Teachers provide excellent role models for the pupils. Their writing on marker boards and in

books is neat and well presented. They are courteous to pupils and to each other. They show good subject knowledge and their teaching is accurate and well explained.

- Teachers encourage pupils to assess the quality of their learning for themselves in very effective ways. At the end of a literacy lesson, pupils were asked to tell the teacher something they had learned that they did not know at the beginning of the lesson. Those who hesitated were gently encouraged to think carefully and most pupils were able to say what they had learned.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This contributes enormously to their learning and to the safe and calm atmosphere in classrooms and around school. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school and join in all activities enthusiastically. Parents and pupils speak well about behaviour in school.
- Pupils in both the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. They attempt new work with confidence and with a determination to do their very best. They are conscientious and are relied on to carry on working without the direct supervision of an adult. This means that class teachers and teaching assistants are able to work with their focus groups without interruption.
- Relationships between children, and between children and adults, are of the highest quality. In Nursery and Reception, children work cooperatively with each other very well, helping and supporting each other where possible. They share equipment and take turns so the atmosphere in the setting is calm and yet busy at the same time.
- Pupils work hard in lessons and take care to present their work tidily. They respond thoughtfully to the teachers' comments about how to improve their work, taking care not to repeat any mistakes.
- Pupils are not afraid to 'have a go'. A strong 'I can' attitude helps them make excellent progress. For example, one pupil conducting a survey about what pupils had for breakfast was asked if he could spell 'yoghurt'. 'I don't know, but I'll have a try' was the immediate response.
- Attendance has improved and is now broadly average. The school uses rigorous procedures to follow up absence and to discourage unauthorised absence.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils have a mature and thoughtful approach to how they would deal with any issues that threaten their safety. They are adamant that there is no bullying in school, although they say there are sometime squabbles. All of the pupils spoken to would give their school 10 out of 10 for keeping them safe.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- Staff are exceptionally well led by the headteacher and work as a highly effective team. Since joining the school, the headteacher has shown very high expectations of the work of the staff. Professional supervision is of the highest quality. As a result the headteacher has secured steady improvement in all key areas of the school's work.
- Leaders, staff and governors share an exceptionally high level of ambition for the future of this school. Their rigorous arrangements for the frequent checking of teaching and pupils' progress

have resulted in eradicating any teaching that was less than good and increasing the proportion that is outstanding. Targets set to improve teachers' work are challenging and have helped improve teaching.

- Leadership at all levels is strong. There have been some recent changes in personnel responsible for some areas of leadership. However, the headteacher and governors have made sure that those taking over are exceptionally well prepared and skilled to step into their roles and maintain the previously highly effective leadership.
- Leadership of special educational needs provision is good. Very effective one-to-one and small group support is very well organised and closely checked to ensure its high quality. The progress of pupils who are supported at school action, however, is not fully clear. Data for the whole group are mixed with that on all pupils receiving small group support, so the special educational needs leader does not have a clear picture of how well this group are doing.
- The curriculum is carefully planned to engage pupils' interest and attention. There is an appropriate emphasis on English and mathematics, with detailed guidance for teachers to help them plan for the steady building of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding from year to year. The curriculum makes excellent links between subjects so learning is meaningful. This aspect of the curriculum is a key factor in forming pupils' excellent attitudes to learning.
- The curriculum, other school experiences and the whole school environment support the outstanding promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All four aspects are promoted equally well. Of particular note is the pupils' understanding of social and moral aspects, supported by strong school's promotion of values, attitudes and beliefs, that result in outstanding behaviour.
- The school works well with the local education community. School leaders are sufficiently knowledgeable and skilled to lead different professional groups, moderate at a local authority level and receive visitors to whom aspects of the schools' work are showcased.
- Finances are managed very well. Pupil premium funding is used to improve the progress of individual qualifying pupils through supporting areas where they do not do as well as they should, by funding pupils to attend school clubs to give equality of opportunity, and purchasing learning resources for one-to-one support. The school has made detailed arrangements for spending the primary sports funding to improve and widen opportunities for pupils to take part in sports activities and improve teachers' expertise in dance and gymnastics.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors work exceptionally well with leaders at all levels. They are proactive in dealing with important issues identified through regular monitoring. They have a secure understanding of the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.
  - Governors are regular visitors to the school and gain a good knowledge of how well teachers are doing through first-hand experiences and through the discussions with staff. They are knowledgeable, and their professional expertise gives them a thorough understanding, for example, of assessment data. This means they are fully aware of how well the school is doing and how the achievement of pupils compares with other schools.
  - They challenge senior leaders on school improvement. They set clear targets in managing the performance of the headteacher and staff, making sure teachers' pay increases link to competence.
  - They make sure statutory requirements are met, including for safeguarding.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	125654
<b>Local authority</b>	Warwickshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	431528

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	209
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Allred
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sharon Thorpe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 May 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	024 763 86101
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