

Abbey Meadows Primary School

Galfrid Road, Cambridge, CB5 8ND

Inspection dates 26–27 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher has been dynamic and has formed a highly skilled leadership team. Together they have transformed the school from one with serious weaknesses to one with considerable strengths.
- Leaders work very well together and have led rapid improvements in teaching and achievement since the previous inspection, especially in reading and writing.
- Accurate and frequent monitoring of teaching has helped to improve teaching, and pupils in all year groups make good progress in their learning.
- Teachers' marking shows pupils how to improve their work. Pupils use teachers' comments to make their work better.
- Pupils enjoy learning. They enjoy sharing their work with parents in celebration assemblies.
- Pupils are proud of their school and their work. They feel safe and behave exceptionally well.
- The curriculum is very well planned. Links have been established with the University of Cambridge to raise pupils' educational aspirations and ambitions.
- Areas for improvement set at the previous inspections have been swiftly addressed, showing the school has excellent capacity to secure further improvements.
- The governing body is highly effective. They challenge the school to accelerate pupils' progress and they make sure that funds are spent to improve opportunities for all pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress is not as quick in mathematics because the work set is not always hard enough, especially for more-able pupils.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their skills in writing and mathematics in other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups and saw 11 lessons. Most of the observations were conducted with the headteacher or assistant headteacher. Inspectors also observed an assembly.
- Inspectors completed 'learning walks' with members of the senior leadership team to look at writing, support for disabled pupils or those with special educational needs, the curriculum, pupils supported by the pupil premium, and support for pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- An inspector listened to pupils read in Year 1 and Year 5.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, subject leaders, a group of pupils, two representatives from the local authority and the Chair and five other members of the Governing Body.
- The 57 responses to the online survey, Parent View, were considered, together with a small number of letters from parents. The 16 responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered.
- The inspector and the headteacher looked at the work in pupils' books as well as their work displayed in all classrooms.
- A number of documents were examined, including: two monitoring visit letters, the school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses; improvement plans; records of meetings of the governing body; safeguarding files; data on pupils' current progress; and information on the management of teachers' performance and the monitoring of teaching.

Inspection team

Emily Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Stonier

Additional Inspector

Veronica McGill

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- Abbey Meadows is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups is above average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, and at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care, is well above average.
- The school meets the governments' current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for progress and attainment in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, three assistant headteachers and four teachers have joined the school. There have been a number of new members of the governing body.
- Since the previous inspection, a nursery has opened on the same site. It has the same governing body as the school but is separately registered so receives a separate Ofsted inspection.
- The school shares a site with The Fields Children's Centre. This is separately registered and inspected by Ofsted.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve achievement and teaching, especially in mathematics, by ensuring that the work set is not too easy and that it challenges more-able pupils to think hard and reach higher levels.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use their writing and mathematics skills in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children begin Reception with skills well below those typically found for their age. Careful use of assessment information, very effective teaching and a rich and vibrant learning environment in all Reception classes mean that the percentage of children who begin Year 1 with a good level of development is now in line with national averages. This represents good progress.
- Achievement has improved considerably since the previous inspection, especially in Key Stage 1. Results in 2014 are above the 2013 national average in writing and in line with the 2013 national average in reading and mathematics. This is good progress from pupils' below-average starting points.
- Progress in Key Stage 2 is rapidly improving. School data is scrutinised by school leaders and the local authority. Along with the extensive work in pupils' books, it shows that pupils in all year groups are making accelerated progress in reading and writing. Progress is slightly slower in mathematics because work is not always hard enough for pupils to make rapid progress and reach the higher levels.
- Teachers' assessments for Year 6 show the proportion of pupils making and exceeding expected progress is significantly higher than the 2013 national average in reading and writing. The proportion making and exceeding expected progress is average in mathematics.
- Pupils do well in reading. Year 1 pupils have scored above national figures in the phonic screening check because the school has a clear and systematic programme for teaching and assessing progress in pupils' understanding of the links between letters and the sounds they make.
- The progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language has improved significantly since the previous inspection. This group of pupils now make as much progress as their classmates and, in many instances, make more progress. Support for these pupils is expertly led, and a wide range of support is provided, dependent on individual pupils' needs and their stage of language acquisition.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. The special educational needs coordinator checks the progress of this group of pupils every half term and changes the support available if pupils are not making enough progress. Excellent relationships with parents and outside support agencies contribute to pupils' good progress.
- In 2013, the attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium was behind that of their classmates. The gap was the equivalent of around 18 months in mathematics and was almost two years in reading and writing. The appointment of a pupil premium leader means the progress of these pupils is now carefully checked and leaders, including the governing body, carefully monitor decisions on how best to spend additional funds. The employment of an additional teacher to lead small groups and the provision of a nurture group have helped these pupils to make good progress and is closing the gap between them and their classmates.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers make lessons lively and interesting. They inspire pupils to approach all their work with a strong sense of endeavour. Teachers have worked on developing and rewarding pupils' positive attitudes to learning and, in every class, pupils are resilient and determined learners,

eager to find out more and try their very best.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and carefully plan lessons that enable pupils to develop technical skills. In Year 2, for example, pupils used their knowledge of mathematical equipment to choose the correct resources when measuring the perimeter of different-sized shapes.
- Teaching assistants are directed well and provide good support to different groups of pupils. They do not always support the same pupils in the same classes. Therefore, while pupils receive good support, they also develop their skills of working unaided and do not become overly reliant on additional adult help.
- The school has introduced a new marking scheme whereby teachers show pupils how to make their work better and provide time in lessons for pupils to check the helpful comments and improve their work. Pupils like this marking and can explain how it has helped them to make more progress in their learning.
- In lessons, teachers make sure that their explanations are crystal clear and ask questions that challenge pupils to think carefully for themselves. Pupils often discuss their work without being prompted by an adult because they are eager to find out more.
- Teachers plan lessons well to make sure that different groups of pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language or those who are disabled or have special educational needs, make good progress. In some mathematics lessons, more-able pupils do not have hard enough work that enables them to make the very good progress of which they are capable.
- Displays in classrooms and corridors are bright, interesting and helpful. They celebrate pupils' achievements, including homework projects completed to a very high standard, and provide good support for learning. For example, 'enabling tables' display a wide variety of mathematical equipment that pupils select for themselves when completing investigative activities.
- The teaching of writing is very good. Pupils have numerous and frequent opportunities to complete extended writing in English. This is accurately marked and targets are set to help pupils improve. This has helped pupils to make much faster progress in writing than at the previous inspection.
- Pupils study a wide range of interesting curriculum topics and produce high-quality work, especially in art and in design and technology. They do not have many opportunities to develop their specific skills in writing and mathematics as they study other subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They love to learn; in lessons they listen attentively and approach all learning activities with full enthusiasm. Observations completed by the school, considered alongside opinions expressed by staff, parents and pupils, show this is typical behaviour. Pupils' eagerness to learn even more has helped to improve the progress they make in school.
- Excellent relationships based on mutual respect exist between staff and pupils. Pupils behave well for all adults in school, including mid-day supervisors and supply teachers, because all speak politely and courteously to each other.
- The presentation of pupils' work is excellent. All pupils take great care when writing in their

books; this is evidence of their pride in their achievements.

- Pupils arrive at school punctually, smartly and happily each morning. Attendance is checked carefully and continues to improve. It is now slightly above the national average.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Rigorous safeguarding procedures ensure that policies are up to date and the school site is kept safe at all times.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They are taught how to keep safe when using the internet, and the school has rigorously followed up rare incidents of inappropriate use of social media outside of school hours so that problems do not arise at school.
- Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare in school; their view is supported by detailed record keeping. They are confident that adults in school, especially their phase leaders, will help them should a problem arise.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- School leaders, led by a very effective and dynamic headteacher, were quick to embrace the challenges of the previous inspection and bring about rapid improvements. They successfully motivated staff, and their clear actions have eliminated past inadequacies and improved teaching and achievement so that both are now good.
- The headteacher reviewed the leadership structure of the school and provided each assistant headteacher with a key responsibility based on the areas for improvement set at the previous inspection. The successes of the leadership team in bringing about rapid improvement – for example, in writing, provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language, and in Key Stage 1 results – show the school has an excellent capacity to secure further improvements.
- Every half term, leaders check how well pupils are doing in reading, writing and mathematics. Data is checked carefully against the work in pupils' books and lesson observations. By comparing these different elements, leaders have been able to provide very precise support to teachers that has successfully improved pupils' progress.
- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding; by developing the quality of teaching in the Reception classes, children's progress has significantly improved since the last inspection.
- The school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development. This is reviewed by leaders and governors every term, and the analysis is used to write a 'termly operational plan'. This evaluation cycle has proved highly effective, as it has led to rapid improvement across the school.
- Additional funding provided to primary schools for school sport as part of the Olympic legacy is spent well. Achievement in physical education has improved and pupils enjoy numerous opportunities to participate in competitive sporting events across the county. School teams are very successful and pupils enjoy these successes immensely.
- The school made excellent use of additional support provided by the local authority to develop the role of English and mathematics subject leaders and this has improved the monitoring of work in pupils' books and the use of the new marking policy.

- The local authority has an accurate evaluation of the school. It recognises the strength in leadership and the discernable improvements that have been brought about in the last eighteen months. Its evidence also shows that the school has improved to be good overall.
- The school forms excellent partnerships with parents. Responses to Parent View show parents are happy with the school and its leaders. Parents new to the school are especially appreciative of the support they receive.
- The school's curriculum is very well planned. It is enhanced with numerous visits to extend pupils' learning. Recently, links have been established with the University of Cambridge to encourage pupils to have high aspirations regarding their futures and to understand how working hard at school is key to helping them achieve well. This contributes to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have supported and challenged the school through the process of removing inadequacies and have helped it to move forward to become a good school.
 - Governors are fully committed to their own development to help them in their work. They took on board areas identified for their improvement at the previous inspection and attend frequent training. They have conducted two reviews of their own effectiveness since the last inspection. Governing body meetings are now fully integrated into the school's self-evaluation and improvement cycle. This helps governors to check on the improvements that are being made.
 - Governors receive regular information about how well pupils are doing and use this, together with evidence from frequent visits to the school, to ask questions of school leaders about how to speed up progress.
 - Governors check the school budget carefully and make sure that spending decisions are fully focused on improving pupils' achievement, including how to allocate additional pupil premium and sports funds. The pay policy is being reviewed in consultation with teachers and their unions to reflect how teachers' pay will be linked to achievement, with incremental rises withheld if pupils' progress is not good.

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	132127
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	441917

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	422
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheryl Willianson
Headteacher	Chris Beddow
Date of previous school inspection	19 February 2013
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