

# Abbots Farm Infant School

Abbots Way, Rugby, CV21 4AP

**Inspection dates** 9–10 October 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching requires improvement because expectations are not high enough in writing and mathematics. This means that pupils do not make consistently good progress in these subjects.
- Some teachers set work for the most-able pupils that is too easy for them.
- Children are not getting off to the best possible start in Nursery because it does not provide the stimulation they need in order to thrive. Not enough children reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.
- The school's systems for checking pupils' progress lack rigour and are not always accurate.
- Leadership and management requires improvement because, in recent years, leaders have not responded with enough urgency to signs of pupils making slower progress in their learning.
- Governors have lacked the skills and training to offer sufficient challenge and support to school leaders. They are not fully involved in developing the school's plans and priorities.
- The school does not give pupils a sure enough start in understanding different cultures and faiths and preparing them for life in modern Britain.
- Safety on the school site requires improvement because procedures are not completely clear. Hazards are not always dealt with swiftly enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- Behaviour is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They enjoy coming to school and they are cared for well.
- In the last two years, leaders have successfully improved the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Pupils achieve consistently high standards in their reading at the end of Key Stage 1.
- The teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) is good and the achievement of pupils in their Year 1 check is above the national average.
- The new headteacher has a clear view of what needs to be done. School leaders and staff are working together to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement across a range of subjects.
- Parents are extremely positive about the school. They say they are kept well informed about their children's progress and feel the move up to their next school is very well managed.
- Pupils' physical well-being is strongly promoted, from learning 'balance ability' in Early Years to team games and swimming in Key Stage 1.

### Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 10 lessons, four of which were jointly observed with the headteacher. In addition, the inspection team looked at pupils’ work in their books and listened to younger pupils read.
- There were meetings with groups of pupils, senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 61 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and considered the 13 responses to a staff questionnaire. Inspectors also considered responses by parents to a recent questionnaire from the school.
- The inspection team examined the school’s own information on pupils’ recent and current progress; the school’s evaluation of how well it is doing and its records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

### Inspection team

Richard Boswell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Anna Smith	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Abbots Farm Infant School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils who are supported through the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for students in local authority care and those previously known to be eligible for free school meals) is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs or who are supported with a statement of special educational need is below average. There are no pupils with an education, health or care plan.
- Since the previous inspection, the governing body has taken over the management of the nursery provision on the school site. The school refers to the Nursery as Preschool. The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school is a member of and receives support from Rugby Central PLC, a consortium of schools.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2014.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement, by all teachers:
  - setting more ambitious targets for the progress of their pupils in writing and in mathematics
  - giving all pupils in Key Stage 1, and particularly the most able, more opportunities to write at length and to extend their writing skills
  - providing children in the Early Years Foundation Stage with stimulating activities and a lively learning environment.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
  - ensuring that all school planning has clear, measurable outcomes that link directly to pupils' progress and that swift action is taken to improve any areas of weakness
  - governors improving their skills through further training so that they know the school well and are fully involved in planning for its future
  - developing pupils' understanding and appreciation of other faiths and cultures through their lessons and by visits to and from other communities
  - ensuring that any hazards on the school site are quickly dealt with and that all staff are completely clear about responsibilities and procedures.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- School leaders and governors have not ensured that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement is consistently good across all subjects and in all year groups, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is because expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly the most able, have not always been high enough and weaknesses have not been identified early on.
- The school's systems for measuring and recording pupils' progress are not consistent and give a partial, and occasionally inaccurate, picture. This means, for example, that weaknesses in Key Stage 1 mathematics were not identified early enough in 2013, nor were weaknesses in writing in the following year. The headteacher's introduction of new approaches to assessment is aimed at tightening these procedures.
- The new headteacher has made a strong start in her first few weeks at the school. She has accurately identified the key areas for improvement and has the support of staff, governors and parents in making the necessary changes. Prior to becoming headteacher, she had already demonstrated success in her management of a programme to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in this and other schools.
- Since the last inspection, the school's evaluation of teaching has been too focused on lesson observations rather than on pupils' books and outcomes. Very recently, many of the school's leaders have taken on new responsibilities for subjects and areas of the school's work and there is greater accountability at all levels. A clearer link has been established between teachers' performance and their progression on the pay scale.
- The curriculum requires improvement because the provision for the most able is not sufficiently challenging, particularly in writing. The school's use of ability groups, however, in Years 1 and 2 promotes the progress of lower achieving pupils and there is effective one-to-one support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. In addition to reading, writing and mathematics, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through work on topics and themes. However, there are gaps in pupils' understanding of faiths other than Christianity and of the diversity of cultures in modern Britain. Pupils' social and moral development is promoted in lessons, in play and in 'golden time', when pupils share thoughts and feelings.
- The school meets the statutory requirements for checking the suitability of adults to work with pupils, for child protection and for safe recruitment.
- The headteacher has made good use of support from the local consortium of schools and from school consultants to refine and focus school planning. The local authority has not regarded the school as requiring additional support in recent years. The new headteacher had not received any visits from local authority representatives up to the time of the current inspection.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and feel that there is good communication about their children's progress. The school's efforts to make a smooth transition to junior school are much appreciated; for example, in combined sports activities which are supported by the school's sports funding. This funding also supports lunchtime activities and the use of professional coaches. The school's before- and after-school clubs assist parents and offer pupils enjoyable and healthy activities.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have not always held leaders fully to account for the performance of the school. This has, in part, been due to a lack of specific training for all governors in how to analyse data. The governors have yet to be fully involved in checking the school's current strengths and weaknesses and in the introduction of new ways of assessing pupils' progress. Governors have not sufficiently challenged the school in regard to pupils' understanding of diverse faiths and cultures. They do, however, ensure that performance management of teachers takes place and they oversee the setting of targets for the headteacher. They manage the school budget prudently and ensure that the pupil premium funding is used to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that the sports premium benefits all pupils.

Governors see that safeguarding policies are in place and that the school website is up to date and provides parents with appropriate information. The governors' attendance at school events and involvement in school activities contribute to the high regard with which parents view the school.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

## requires improvement

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy their time at school. They are confident speakers and listeners who enjoy asking questions about the world around them. They are keen to share their successes and discoveries with each other and with staff and visitors.
- Pupils work well with each other and are attentive in lessons. They learn to stick with tasks they have been set, and keep trying even when they encounter difficulties. Pupils show respect for their teachers and follow instructions well in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils show pride in their school and enjoy taking on responsibilities as monitors, playground helpers and members of the school council. They know and display the school's key values of kindness and honesty.
- Attendance is broadly average and has improved year on year. It is promoted through the school's breakfast club and through rewards and certificates. No pupils have been excluded from the school since the previous inspection

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. While the school meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding and child protection, the procedures for keeping the school site safe and secure require improvement. This is because hazards on the school site are not always quickly identified and dealt with, and staff are not completely clear about their responsibilities for the locking of school gates.
- Older pupils know what bullying means and are equally clear that it very rarely occurs in their school. Records are kept by classroom teachers of even the most minor incidents. Only very recently, however, have these been gathered by school leaders to look for any patterns or concerns.
- Pupils work and play together very well. They show sensitivity and maturity when talking about the use of 'unkind' words and are clear that they rarely hear them at school.
- Pupils from an early age learn about staying safe in the playground, in the home and on the internet. They were able to tell inspectors about road safety and fire safety.

## The quality of teaching

## requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement as it is not consistently good across the school, particularly in writing and mathematics. Not all teachers have high enough expectations of their pupils. In some lessons, the work is not closely matched to the abilities of groups of pupils, especially the most able.
- Teachers do not always encourage pupils to develop and extend their writing, and there are not enough opportunities for older pupils to write at length from different points of view. In mathematics, pupils' books show a focus on calculation but far fewer examples of the application of mathematics to the real world; for instance, in making measurements or in using money.
- Teachers show sound subject knowledge and their explanations are clear. Very recent improvements in marking are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning, and teachers consider the specific learning needs of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special education needs in their planning.
- When support staff are used well by teachers they accelerate the progress of individuals and groups in the lesson. Pupils enjoy talking with them about what they have learnt but are not frequently encouraged to extend their verbal responses to the writing of words and sentences.

- The quality of teaching of reading skills is good, with well-structured sessions on letters and sounds. Many pupils make rapid progress in reading and they enjoy listening to their teachers reading them stories at the end of each day.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics has varied from one year to another. In 2013, standards in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 fell to well below the national average, while standards in writing were in line. In 2014, standards in mathematics recovered, while it was standards in writing that fell. Pupils' progress in these subjects has been similarly inconsistent due to the variable quality of teaching.
- The achievement of the most-able pupils has shown the same inconsistency in mathematics and in writing. This is due to a lack of ambitious targets and expectations that are too low. The work in books of the most-able pupils shows some teachers failing to provide sufficiently challenging activities.
- Disadvantaged pupils have been the focus of a local, multi-school programme which was led by the new headteacher in her previous role. This has successfully narrowed the gaps in attainment between these pupils and others in the school in the last year. From being four terms behind their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics in 2013, and about a year behind pupils nationally, they were two terms behind in reading and half a term in writing and mathematics in 2014. This improvement is as a result of disadvantaged pupils making good progress.
- The small number of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs receive good care, guidance and support. Their progress in reading, writing and mathematics shows a broadly similar pattern to other pupils. In some cases, pupils who have struggled to remain regularly in school have been successfully included and are making good progress. This demonstrates school leaders' commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Pupils have consistently attained standards above the national average in reading, and most pupils have made good progress in this subject. This is as a result of effective teaching strategies throughout the school, particularly in the development of younger pupils' skills in learning letters and the sounds they make (phonics).
- The proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the Year 1 phonics check has been above the national average for the past two years.

### The early years provision

### requires improvement

- Children join the school's Early Years Foundation Stage in either Nursery or Reception with language and communication skills, and with physical, personal and social development, that are broadly typical for their age.
- While they make better progress in some areas of their development, the proportion of children reaching an overall good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage has been below the national average for the last two years. This includes disabled children and those who have special educational needs. Disadvantaged children are known to teachers and their progress is checked to ensure that it is at least in line with other that of other children.
- The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement as the progress children make in different classes is variable. On occasions, the activities set for the children lack challenge, particularly for the most able, as teachers do not always make the most of a task to promote learning. However, the school's successful teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) begins in the Early Years Foundation Stage with regular work that develops each child's skills.

- The accuracy of the assessment of children’s progress has been inconsistent at times and the learning environment, particularly in the Nursery, lacks suitably stimulating displays and resources. For these reasons, the leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement.
  
- Children behave well, listening and responding to adults appropriately. They learn to work together, making choices and taking turns. The welfare requirements of the children are all met, and there are appropriate safeguarding and child protection procedures.

## 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>	125573
<b>Local authority</b>	Warwickshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	448560

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	211
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Chair</b>	Debby Short
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jeanette Lovejoy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01788 543093
<b>Fax number</b>	01788 543093
<b>Email address</b>	admin2410@welearn365.com

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