

Abbeys Primary School

Melrose Avenue, Milton Keynes, MK3 6PS

Inspection dates 04–05 March 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Since the previous inspection, pupils make consistently good progress in all year groups. As a result, standards at the end of Year 6 are rising.
- Pupils are polite and friendly and routinely behave well. Pupils feel safe in school and know how to keep safe in different situations.
- Teaching over time is typically good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use questioning effectively to challenge pupils' thinking skills.
- The learning environment in the early years provision is stimulating and prompts children's imagination well.
- Attendance has improved since the previous inspection. This is as a result of the school's robust approaches with those pupils and their families where attendance has not been regular enough.
- Middle leaders play a key role in raising standards in their subjects and accelerating pupils' progress.
- The curriculum excites and motivates pupils in their learning. It is helping pupils to use and develop their basic skills in mathematics and English in a range of subjects.
- The headteacher and staff have created a stimulating and caring school which promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The headteacher and governors have taken successful actions since the previous inspection to address areas requiring improvement, especially relating to the quality of teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' finished work in books is not always presented to a high enough standard.
- Teachers do not consistently check pupils' understanding in their use of punctuation, spelling and grammar. They do not always check to see whether pupils are learning from their errors.
- Sometimes staff in the early years provision do not always intervene and ask questions at the most suitable times when children are working on their own. This occasionally slows the pace of their learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons, two of which were seen together with the deputy headteacher. Inspectors also observed an assembly.
- Inspectors met with: two groups of pupils; school staff; three members of the governing body; and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils’ books and on displays. They listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of the 23 responses to Ofsted’s online parent questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered the 26 responses to the staff questionnaire and the school’s analysis of its own questionnaires.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents including: minutes of the governing body meetings; the school’s own evaluation of its performance; information on pupils’ current progress; and records relating to behaviour and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sharona Semlali, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andy Syers	Additional Inspector
Michael Buist	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an averaged-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. However, the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is increasing. This is broadly average at present.
- Almost one in every three pupils is from a minority ethnic background. This is also broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs is slightly above average.
- A significant proportion of pupils join and leave other than at the start of the academic year.
- The early years provision consists of two full-time Reception classes.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There have been some changes to the leadership team and teaching staff since the school's previous inspection.
- The school is part of the Bletchley Partnership of Schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by ensuring that teachers:
 - make sure that pupils present their finished work to a high standard
 - consistently correct pupils' understanding of punctuation, spelling and grammar throughout all subjects to check that pupils are not repeating the same mistakes.
- Ensure that all staff in the early years provision intervene and ask questions at the most suitable times when children are learning by themselves.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's high expectations and strong leadership have been the driving force for improvement since the previous inspection. She is well supported by a team of motivated staff. All leaders have created a welcoming, caring and effective school where pupils thrive.
- Senior leaders' efforts and strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and raising standards have been effective. They do not shy away from making any difficult decisions. There is increased rigour in the checking of teaching and learning. Plans that are in place to address any remaining relative weaknesses in teaching are working well. All senior and middle leaders play a strong part in this process and are effective in raising standards in their subject areas.
- Leaders use the additional funding effectively to ensure that the achievement of disadvantage pupils is similar to that of other pupils. For example, some of it is used to fund extra adult help for those that need more support. This demonstrates how the school is promoting equality of opportunity. It does not tolerate any form of discrimination.
- The curriculum is interesting and motivates pupils well. There is an effective emphasis on giving pupils a range of valuable experiences through going out on visits and having visitors in the school. The curriculum promotes and prepares pupils well for life beyond school, including an appreciation of modern British society. Also, pupils in Key Stage 1 are involved in a worthwhile community project to improve their local area.
- Pupils have ample opportunities to visit a range of different places of worship. The whole school focuses on a different value each month such as patience. All of this is effective in contributing to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and promoting British values.
- The sports funding is used well to improve teachers' skills and confidence to teach physical education. Pupils benefit from high quality teaching in this subject and are more engaged than in the past. An increased number of pupils take part in competitions at weekends and have a wider choice of after-school clubs.
- The school has fostered strong relationships with other local schools through the Bletchley Partnership of Schools, where they share good practice. This is helping the school to move forward in improving the quality of teaching.
- The local authority has in the past provided intense support to the school. This helped to strengthen the leadership team, improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement. The local authority rightly reduced the support given when it felt the school no longer needed it. Inspectors endorse the local authority's view that the school is much improved.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements so that pupils are kept safe.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has significantly improved since the previous inspection. Governors play a vital role in helping to determine the strategic direction of the school. They have undertaken useful training that is relevant to their roles. All new members are inducted well.
 - Governors routinely challenge school leaders and each other. They make regular visits and sometimes get involved in the school activities, such as residentials. They make time to meet with the school council and have lunch with pupils. This helps them to understand how they feel about the school. Governors also undertake surveys of how parents feel about the school. They have made a booklet that shows the results of parental responses and actions taken as result of this. All of this contributes in helping governors to have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
 - Governors have a good overview of the quality of teaching in the different year groups and use information about pupils' achievement well to know how the school is performing compared with other schools nationally. In addition to this, they receive detailed and accurate reports from the headteacher.
 - The headteacher's performance management is securely in place. Governors ensure that any increase in pay for teachers is linked to improvements in pupils' progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They show positive attitudes to learning which positively have a positive impact on their progress. All staff set high expectations of behaviour which pupils respond to well.
- Pupils understand and adhere to the school's rules and respond well to its rewards. They are keen to gain certificates and book prizes in the weekly rewards assembly. They behave calmly and sensibly around school and in lessons.
- At lunchtimes and playtimes, pupils interact with each other respectfully. Pupils say that the school is very good at helping them to be aware of the different values promoted by the school such as respect, tolerance and kindness. Good support is offered for pupils with known behavioural difficulties who occasionally do not conduct themselves well.
- Pupils take their responsibilities around the school seriously. This includes being a school council representative and a play leader. Pupils feel their views are heard well through the school council.
- Most parents, staff and pupils agree with the inspection findings that behaviour is good. It is not yet outstanding because on a few occasions where an activity does not engage their interest, pupils are not always fully focused. Also, pupils do not always take enough care in the way they present their completed pieces of work.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Detailed and up-to-date risk assessments are in place. All training in relation to safeguarding and child protection for staff is up-to-date. Fire drills are undertaken regularly.
- Pupils are actively involved in being safety conscious. For example, they make signs to show others which side of the staircases to walk on. They have created informative posters on how to keep safe when using the internet. Members of the school council have led assemblies showing pupils how to keep themselves safe when crossing the road. All of this ensures pupils are kept safe in and beyond the school environment.
- Pupils say they feel safe. They know who to go to if they have any concerns. Pupils know what bullying is and the different forms it takes such as physical, verbal and emotional bullying. They say that on the rare occasions bullying does occur, it is dealt with well by all staff.
- School leaders have worked hard over time to increase attendance, for example giving out fixed penalty notices, when appropriate, and strongly promoting the importance of coming to school. The school now has an attendance officer. As a result, attendance is improving and is now in line with the national average.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is typically good over time. This is partly because school leaders ensure that teachers have high quality support and training. This included getting them to observe and learn from good and outstanding practice in other schools. Teachers have good subject knowledge and help pupils to build on previous learning effectively.
- Mathematics is taught well. Teachers ensure that pupils understand the relevance of mathematics. In a successful lesson seen during the inspection, pupils in a Year 6 group designed and made a community on the moon within a restricted budget. They thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of solving problems in mathematics using a context that was linked to their topic. Interesting displays around the school and work in pupils' books show further examples of this. Pupils were also seen making good progress in understanding the concept of 'ratio' by following the different proportions of ingredients to make juices and rating the different tastes.
- School leaders ensure that pupils who are at the early stages of reading have the skills to work out unfamiliar words. Teachers and teaching assistants receive effective training to ensure that they have the skills to teach these pupils. This is reflected in the above average results from the Year 1 phonics (letters that sounds make) screening check in 2014. During the inspection, the large majority of pupils came to school dressed up as a character from a book for 'world book day'. They were full of excitement about the books they read and the characters in them.
- Pupils practise their writing skills in all subjects. Writing is generally taught well. Teachers use stimulating topics such as a trip to motivate their ideas well. Recent surveys from pupils show that all of them enjoy writing.

- Teachers' marking gives pupils very helpful guidance as to how they can improve their work. Pupils generally act upon the advice given about the content of their work. However, work in books shows that teachers do not always check pupils' understanding of punctuation, spellings and grammar. This sometimes results in pupils continuing to make the same mistakes in their work. Also, the finished work in pupils' books is sometimes untidy.
- Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well in lessons. They use questioning and their own initiatives well to probe pupils' understanding.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well over time. In 2014, the proportion of pupils making more than the minimum expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics was above average. This helped to raise standards in these subjects at the end of Key Stage 2 from previously well below to close to the national average. Information about how well current pupils are achieving and work in pupils' books show that pupils in all year groups make consistently good progress.
- Like other groups, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. This is because they receive effective support that is tailored to their particular learning needs. Their progress is closely monitored by school leaders.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make rapid progress from their starting points. Good use is made of computer technology for translation. All adults ensure that they are fully included in lessons. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds also make good progress that is similar to the others in the school.
- The school caters well for the most-able pupils. This includes having an after-school revision club for mathematics and reading. Leaders work closely with a group of local schools to provide a programme of events for these pupils. Teachers include a challenge in their planning for them. Consequently, the most-able pupils are making good progress. Inspection evidence indicates that an increased proportion are on track this year to achieve the higher levels than in the past.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics and better progress in writing from their different starting points. In the 2014 national tests, disadvantaged Year 6 pupils were the equivalent to just less than half a term behind in reading and just less than a term behind in writing. There were wider gaps in mathematics as they were just over two terms behind.
- The gaps were slightly wider when disadvantaged pupils are compared to others nationally. They were around two terms behind in reading and writing. In mathematics, they were just under four terms behind. As a result of improving teaching, gaps across different groups between disadvantaged pupils and others are closing rapidly.

The early years provision is good

- Children make good progress from their starting points in all areas of learning. Boys are much more engaged in their learning since the introduction of topics such as pirates and dinosaurs. The gaps between the attainment of boys and girls have closed. An increasing proportion of children are well prepared to enter Year 1.
- Teachers' planning caters well for the different needs and interests of children. The learning environment in both the indoor and outdoor areas are stimulating and used well as an extra teaching tool to develop children's ideas. Teachers work closely with the teaching assistants to ensure that children feel safe and enjoy learning. Children behave well because they know and follow the rules and routines. They respond quickly to all adults and show plenty of respect and tolerance in the way they communicate with each other.
- During the inspection, children showed high levels of engagement when using large cardboard boxes as props for their imaginative play. Others quietly focused on developing their computer skills to design different vehicles. A few were observed sitting together, imagining they were in a boat and singing nursery rhymes. However, adults do not always intervene and ask children questions at appropriate times during their imaginative play or when children are working on their own.
- New leaders are in post in the early years provision. They have quickly gained an accurate understanding of strengths and areas which could be developed. They are supported well by the local authority.

- Parents have good links with staff so that they become involved in their children's learning. For example they are invited to stay and read with their child each week.

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	110401
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	453593

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	266
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Preston
Headteacher	Sophie Good
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 January 2013
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