

# Abbey Primary School

Abbey Road, Mansfield, NG18 3AF

**Inspection dates** 24–25 March 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- The headteacher and her highly skilled senior leadership team set high standards and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the areas which need further development.
- Action taken by the school's leadership team has reversed pupils' weak performance at the end of Year 6 last year. Most pupils are now making good progress and are achieving well. Their progress is accelerating.
- Leaders make frequent checks on teaching and provide challenge, support and guidance for teachers to improve.
- Governors work effectively. They are making sure that significant improvements to pupils' achievement are secure through support and challenge for school leaders.
- Teaching is good. Children make good progress in phonics (the sounds that letters make) from an early stage. The proportion of Year 1 pupils that meet the required standard in the phonics check is above average.
- Pupils are hard-working, behave well and make a significant contribution to their school by doing many voluntary jobs. The displays they create around the school are of exceptional quality and exhibit both the school's values and their hard work.
- The early years is led and managed well. Children enjoy a wide range of stimulating activities so they achieve well.
- Pupils are looked after well. They feel safe at school. Pupils are friendly and polite and behave well.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most-able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by the tasks they are set, and so these pupils do not attain the highest levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not consistently provide useful feedback to pupils in their books and pupils do not always act upon the advice to improve their work or present it neatly.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in each class across the school. In total, 15 lessons or part-lessons were seen, of which four were observed jointly with the headteacher or her deputy. The team also observed an assembly, together with pupils' behaviour at break times, lunchtimes and as they moved about the school during the day.
- Inspectors held meetings with both senior and middle leaders in the school, including the leader for special educational needs, the leader of the early years and subject leaders of mathematics and English. Inspectors also met representatives from the school's governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors discussed pupils' work with them in lessons, heard pupils read, and met more formally with groups of them to discuss particular aspects of their experiences at the school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documentation, including the school's improvement plan; the school's data for tracking pupils' progress; records of leaders' checks on the quality of teaching; work in pupils' books; individual case studies showing the impact of the school's support for pupils who are vulnerable, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs; anonymised records regarding the performance management of staff; and school documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors analysed the responses from 72 parents on Parent View (the Ofsted online questionnaire) and spoke informally to a number of parents and carers on the playground as they brought their children to school.

## Inspection team

Roary Pownall, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Dilip Kadodwala

Her Majesty's Inspector

Caroline Evans

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school compared to others of the same type.
- Most pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- Children in Reception attend full time.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

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

- Make teaching outstanding so that more pupils attain the highest levels in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - making sure that all teachers set tasks that fully stretch and challenge the most-able pupils
  - ensuring that teachers consistently show pupils how to improve their work and that pupils always act upon the advice they are given, including having neat presentation.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is a determined leader who has a clear vision for the school. She is determined to ensure that all aspects of the school are nothing less than consistently good. She has successfully built a new and effective leadership team around her to improve the school. This team is well supported by a very committed governing body. Parents rightly express high levels of confidence in the school's leadership.
- The school's newly-appointed deputy headteacher and middle leaders are already making an excellent impact on improving the quality of teaching in the school. The co-ordinator for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs makes sure that teaching is suitably adapted for their needs, so that they make good progress.
- High expectations from leaders are apparent to visitors from the moment they enter the school, with pupils' displays and three-dimensional model work of exceptional quality. The school's beliefs and values are set out brightly in the entrance, and this continues in vibrant displays in every corridor. Pupils' work celebrating British values such as tolerance and respect for all are complemented by poems and artwork encouraging hard work and the importance of contributing to the school and its community. Their work helps build their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well. This helps to prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders evaluate the effectiveness of the school accurately. Their robust analysis identifies strengths and weaknesses which broadly match those found by inspectors. Leaders are fully aware that results in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils leaving the school dropped significantly last year. As a result, they put in place a rigorous action to ensure progress is now good and most pupils are attaining the levels they should.
- School leaders frequently check the impact of teaching across the school. Such checks are making sure that overall learning in all year groups is good. Effective challenge to improve, matched with highly-tailored support and development for teachers, is helping each of them to improve the quality of teaching.
- Leaders track the attainment and progress of pupils, as well as their behaviour and attendance. Careful records of assessment show accurately how different groups of children, and different classes, are performing, and so provision can be adjusted quickly where necessary. Leaders also expect pupils to attend regularly and to behave well, and governors then monitor all these aspects carefully.
- Governors and school leaders noted that spending of the pupil premium was not effective in the last academic year because it was not successful in closing the gaps in attainment for disadvantaged pupils. However, leaders have learned from this and have made significant changes to how they spend the funding. The pupil premium is now being well spent and support is proving successful in quickly narrowing the gaps.
- The school's curriculum is rich, balanced and broad. While rightly focused on the priorities of reading, writing, communication and mathematics, it includes many exciting cross-curricular themes to which the pupils themselves contribute ideas. Clubs are much enjoyed by the pupils, as are the many visits and residential trips. When pupils leave, they show their appreciation by writing and performing their own 'Year 6 Memories Assembly' to share their experiences at Abbey with their parents and younger pupils in the school.
- School leaders stress the importance of equality and good relations. They, like their pupils, do not tolerate discrimination of any form.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and are effective. Leaders take rapid and decisive action to protect pupils who are potentially vulnerable or who cause concern and they work well with the local authority.

- The local authority has provided light support for the school while checking that necessary improvements are occurring quickly.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is well used. It has resulted in a significant increase in the number of after-school clubs which the school offers and a widening participation in sports through the school.
- The school's development plan is based on thorough analysis and is focused on the right priorities.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are effective because they have an accurate understanding of the school's performance and act with integrity. They have ensured that leaders have successfully improved the school's performance. Governors have the necessary skills to evaluate data about pupils' achievement, and the outcomes of their analysis are used effectively to ask challenging questions of senior leaders. They are strong supporters of the school's leadership team, but are not afraid to challenge leaders if they require further information.
  - Governors closely monitor the school's new curriculum, including whether it is preparing pupils for life in modern Britain.
  - The governing body monitors closely the quality of teaching in the school. There is a strong link between appraisal and salary progression, and teachers only receive salary increments if this is justified by good performance. Governors are also clear that underperformance cannot be tolerated because this means that pupils will not make the progress that they need to. In addition, governors are taking an increasingly effective role in planning for school improvement.
  - Governors know that they must work in an open manner and that they are accountable. They act fairly at all times, upholding the values of the school which promote respect for people of all or no faith, and different cultures and lifestyles. Governors carry out their statutory duties with conviction. This includes carrying out a broad range of checks on the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures.

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

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff are all working well to enhance pupils' attitudes to learning. They do this through rewarding persistence, effort and productivity at all times. In this way they promote the school's values in assemblies and lessons. Certificates and postcards of celebration are sent home to families whose children have made a particular improvement in their attitudes. Pupils told inspectors how much they value these.
- Pupils' attitudes to their work are good. They are keen to learn and make good progress. They work well and cooperate happily with the many different groups and partners that they have in their classroom. They like being challenged and want to succeed.
- Low-level disruption in lessons is rare. When it occurs, it is almost always quickly attended to by staff.
- Around the school, the behaviour of pupils is particularly good. They are polite to each other and to staff and visitors alike, holding doors open and smiling happily. Teachers have created a climate where courtesy is the norm, and one in which pupils do not need to be reminded to be friendly and helpful. Pupils see a clear link between upholding the school's rules and the need for justice and the rule of law to promote good citizenship later in life.
- Pupils say that it is important to be respectful to everyone and to treat all people equally. They believe that diversity is a good thing, and are keen to learn about faiths and cultures different from their own. They enjoy visiting places of worship from different faiths and say this helps them to understand different communities.
- Pupils are very proud to be part of the Abbey Primary School community. They wear their uniform with

pride and want to make a contribution. They help keep the school tidy and pick up any litter they see. They also formally apply for roles such as sports and play leaders, information technology technicians and members of the very active school council, which pupils feel gives them an important democratic voice.

- Attendance has been above the national average for several years and is still rising. This is because the school works hard to tackle absence and promote the importance of pupils being in school for learning. In addition, pupils are punctual because they do not want to miss the start of the day.
- There are no permanent exclusions. Fixed-term exclusions are rare and well below the national average.
- Presentation in books is good overall, with many examples of neat handwriting and careful completion of work, even with very young pupils. However, a small minority of pupils produce some messy work and teachers do not always insist that the high standard shown by most is adhered to by all.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school takes the safety of its pupils very seriously. It teaches pupils from a young age about a wide variety of risks in an appropriate and sensitive manner, including e-safety. As a result, even pupils from Year 1 know how to use the internet safely and can protect themselves.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and can approach any adult, who will quickly attend to any issue or worry they might have. Parents' views are also extremely positive, with all those who responded to the Parent View survey saying that their children are happy and feel safe at Abbey Primary.
- Bullying is extremely rare and the school follows up any instances quickly and effectively. Pupils understand the need to behave kindly and get on well with each other. Those who do misbehave or are unkind to others are honest and try hard to improve as a result.
- Pupils are eager to volunteer for the wide range of roles and responsibilities within the school. This includes the health and safety committee, who monitor the school site each term with the caretaker to ensure that any hazards are quickly spotted and made safe.
- Leaders ensure that all visitors are checked and monitored appropriately, and that they observe any speakers in assemblies.
- Pupils spoken to by the inspectors were clear that no malicious name-calling takes place. Pupils are friendly towards each other. Pupils are opposed to any form of prejudice and, for example, are keen to show visitors their work opposing racism in sport.
- Year 6 pupils told inspectors that they feel they will be well prepared for any challenges they might face at secondary school. They are alert to the dangers of bullying and gang culture and are resilient.
- Though the school keeps effective logs of accidents and concerns, these are not collated in their file as systematically as they could be. The school is aware of this and is attending to this quickly.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and is improving. Lessons are usually exciting and engage the pupils, with teachers setting them work that is well matched overall to their different abilities.
- Staff have high expectations, and these are rising further because of the monitoring and support from senior leaders. There are good, productive relationships between pupils and they respect their teachers who, in turn, value pupils' ideas and thoughts. Consequently, there is now a vibrant community of learning in the school where everyone is expected to work hard.
- Teachers assess what their pupils know, understand and can do, both during lessons and at the end of

each term. As a result, teachers can match work well to the needs of most pupils and quickly spot if any pupils are falling behind. For example, pupils who arrive at the school with very low skills in reading receive high quality daily support. This has a strong impact on their progress. During the inspection, such pupils could read an unfamiliar book with confidence, enthusiasm and accuracy.

- Support from teaching assistants is good. They provide effective support to pupils that help them to make good progress. Adults do not give more help than is needed, but instead give a sufficient amount so that pupils become confident to achieve their potential.
- In some lessons, teachers have very high expectations of pupils and they make outstanding progress. One Year 2 lesson seen by inspectors was characterised by pupils of all abilities producing lots of high-quality written work, as they recounted a trip they had made the previous day to Sudbury Hall. Not a moment of time was spared, with pupils borrowing ideas from each other as they wrote, and the teacher helping those who needed support with their sentence structure. As a result, pupils' skills and vocabulary were being rapidly developed.
- As a result of good teaching, pupils are developing good strategies to solve problems in mathematics and to use correct mathematical vocabulary when explaining their work.
- Inspectors examined pupils' books at length, for each year group and for differing abilities. Those seen by inspectors clearly confirm that standards of work are in line with national expectations, and that progress for pupils is good, and accelerating.
- Marking is securely good overall, and helps pupils to learn. Teachers mark books in line with the school's policy and pupils say they know the targets they are working on. Though it evaluates what has been learned, not all marking gives short, sharply-focused ideas to help pupils understand exactly what to do next. A small amount of improvement points are also not always acted upon by pupils. However, marking is improving and recent examples demonstrate that it is more effective in ensuring that pupils make good progress.
- Pupils do not yet make good progress in all lessons. In a small number of them, the learning is not sufficiently well planned. As a consequence, some pupils become confused.
- Teaching is also not yet outstanding because not all teachers make sure that they provide work that really challenges the most-able pupils.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Published results from 2014 did not show good achievement for pupils who left the school at the end of Year 6. Leaders took immediate and decisive action to tackle the underachievement. Pupils' progress began to increase from the beginning of the new school year and the rate of this progress has been accelerating since. Last year, results were weak in both writing and mathematics, and particularly so in reading. Attainment for all subjects is now in line with national expectations, with reading showing the strongest improvement.
- Pupils enter the early years with skills in reading, writing and number that are less well developed than other areas. However, they make good progress. By the time they leave Reception, a higher proportion than nationally have attained a good level of development.
- During Key Stage 1, children continue to make good progress. They make particularly good gains in developing their phonics skills.
- Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 2. The school's accurate assessments, which are checked with other local schools, show that pupils are making good gains in their learning. This was confirmed by a detailed examination by inspectors of both the school's data, progress seen in lessons and in workbooks.

- Year 6 pupils are well prepared for secondary school by the time they leave. They are producing accurate calculations and creative work of high quality. For example, one pupil had written sentences such as, 'The car spontaneously veered off left into a rabbit warren of dingy side streets.'
- The school accepts that the progress of disadvantaged pupils was insufficient last year. As a result, they left the school at the end of Year 6 with skills that were approximately one term behind their classmates in writing. There was no discernible gap with other pupils in the school in mathematics. The gap in reading was one-and-a-half terms behind. Compared with other pupils nationally the gap in attainment of disadvantaged pupils was two-and-a-half terms behind in writing, almost three terms behind in mathematics and four-and-a-half terms behind in reading. School leaders responded decisively by thoroughly reviewing the support they were providing for them. Now intervention is effective and gaps in learning are closing quickly, so that pupils are on track to attain broadly similar levels to their peers and other pupils nationally.
- Those pupils who are disabled, or who have special educational needs, are provided with high-quality support which is both meeting their needs and ensuring that they are making good progress.
- Though the rate of progress for the most-able pupils is accelerating, they are not always well challenged in all lessons and as a result not enough of them are yet reaching the highest levels of attainment of which they are capable in reading, writing and mathematics.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children make good progress during their time in Reception, because almost all lessons are interesting for them, and they want to listen and learn. Teachers use engaging approaches, such as the use of a guinea pig, to prompt effective discussion and stimulate children's fascination with the world.
- While lessons are occurring, staff are observant and note what is being learned by each child, so that they can then plan next steps for them. As a result, almost all children are well prepared for Year 1 by the time they leave the early years. This includes those who are disabled, or who have special educational needs, because these children are well supported.
- There is a structured approach to the teaching of phonics which enables children to consolidate and practise what they have already know, as well as learn new sounds and 'tricky words'. This means that pupils become confident and begin to develop the ability to write from a young age.
- Behaviour is good because all staff consistently remind pupils if they are not doing what is expected. As a result, pupils develop good manners and work well together, joining in activities, learning well and playing happily.
- The leader of the early years knows the children very well and ensures that activities are well planned and taught. She understands the importance of keeping pupils safe and makes sure that staff are well-trained and developed.
- In a small number of lessons, learning slows for the most-able children because staff do not move them on to other things once they show that they have learned something. Teachers' questioning is also not always challenging enough to enable children to make outstanding rates of progress.



## 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>	133280
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	456016

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	302
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Maxine Bithel
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kim Wakefield
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 June 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01623 481117
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