

Abbots Ripton CofE (A) Primary School

Wennington Road, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon, PE28 2LT

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
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 school has improved since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress because the headteacher has established a belief in excellence within its inclusive ethos.
- The headteacher, all staff, governors and members of the diocese have worked together effectively to improve achievement and teaching.
- Teaching is consistently good. Pupils are taught effectively because work is well planned, engages their interest and challenges them to think.
- Behaviour is impressively mature. Pupils are courteous, sensitive to each other and adults. They are confident and well-prepared for secondary schools. They are safe and cared for very well.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners and enjoy working together on projects, sports and supporting each other's learning. They say they feel very safe.
- The headteacher has led a successful drive to engage parents in their children's learning. Communication and information sharing are good.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because their needs are identified quickly and they are well taught.
- Children in the early years make good progress, are happy learners and kept safe.
- Governors are effective because they have been diligent in improving their understanding of how to hold the school to account for its performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in writing is not as good as it is in reading and mathematics.
- The school's revised assessment system is not yet fully established.
- Pupils' handwriting requires further improvement so that pupils write more fluently in a consistent style, as required by the school's policy.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in 6 lessons, three of which were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with school leaders including those responsible for English, mathematics and special educational needs.
- The inspector met with seven members of the governing body and, separately, a representative of the local authority. She also had discussions with a group of pupils regarding safety, and talked to individual pupils, throughout the school, about their learning.
- The inspector took account of the 62 responses of parents and carers to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View), one electronic communication, comments from a small number of parents and 10 questionnaires returned by staff.
- The inspector looked at a range of pupils' work in all subjects, displays, school policies and documents, minutes of governors' meetings, local authority evaluations and safeguarding arrangements.
- Data on achievement and attendance, the school's records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, the school's website and arrangements for managing staff performance were all studied by the inspector.
- A small number of pupils were heard reading in class.

Inspection team

June Woolhouse, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years attend full time in the Reception class. Older pupils are taught in mixed-age classes which vary in organisation according to numbers on roll.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, (those supported by the pupil premium, the additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- A pre-school group meet weekly in the school's buildings but it is not managed by the governing body and was not included in the inspection.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2013 and the assistant headteacher in 2014.
- The headteacher maintains a role within the local authority as part of the newly qualified teacher Appropriate Body committee that gives support to schools and newly qualified teachers in their induction year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching of writing in order to raise standards further by:
 - embedding the school's scheme of work and assessment practices for writing in all year groups
 - ensuring that all teachers teach handwriting as set out in the school's handwriting policy.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is providing very effective leadership. She has raised expectations for the whole school community through her drive, ambition and understanding of how children learn effectively. The pursuit of excellence is non-negotiable for both academic achievement and personal development. Pupils are confident learners who are increasingly well-prepared for their secondary education.
- The headteacher, ably supported by her assistant headteacher, has established an effective system for monitoring teaching and learning. Teaching is checked very regularly and staff benefit from in-depth discussions on how to improve. This information feeds into opportunities for further study and for sharing best practice with other professionals. Better teaching has resulted in improved pupil achievement, although improvements are not as well established in writing as they are in reading and mathematics.
- The leadership team understands how well pupils are making progress. They evaluate teaching and learning accurately and assess learning rigorously against national standards. They know where there are gaps and, as a result, act decisively to improve teaching. Equal opportunities are assured as a result of this scrutiny.
- The school has been well supported by diocesan personnel and the local authority early years adviser. The headteacher has benefited from good practical advice and support, and the early years provision is now consistently good.
- The headteacher has managed a period of staff changes very well. She has established a skilled team of teachers and teaching assistants who share her vision. While maintaining oversight of what pupils are learning, the headteacher is giving teachers more responsibility for managing curriculum subjects. Subject leaders are increasingly effective within the scope of their roles.
- Senior leaders conduct meetings each half term to check that individual pupils are achieving as well as they should. They assess groups such as the more able, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, or who are disadvantaged to check how well they are learning. The headteacher continues to refine the school's assessment system, which is not yet fully embedded, in the light of national developments.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to accelerate the learning of the small number of eligible pupils and to support emotional and social development that contribute effectively to their well-being and personal development.
- Teachers and teaching assistants support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs very well. The headteacher has improved this provision and leads staff in ensuring pupils are well taught and achieve as well as their classmates.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of the school's mission statement, 'We grow in Faith; Learn for Life and Achieve our Best'. All pupils have the opportunity to be equally well prepared for the future. Discrimination is not tolerated. Pupils are taught about British values of respect, kindness, consideration, responsibility, tolerance towards others different from themselves, in a very inclusive community that extends beyond the school. Pupils' excellent attitudes and behaviour are natural consequences of this teaching and daily interaction with very effective adult role models.
- The primary school physical education and sports funding has contributed well to pupils' increased enjoyment in sport and their physical and personal well-being. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in physical education. Clubs, out-of-school activities, nutritious school dinners and regular monitoring of packed lunches for unhealthy items help to maintain healthy life styles.
- Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. Staff give considerable attention to the care and welfare of all pupils. Their safety in and out of school is paramount. The vast majority of parents and carers are fully involved and appreciative of the school's safeguarding procedures.

- The curriculum is broad and sufficiently focused on English, mathematics and science. The school's current drive to improve standards in writing is yet to be as successful as the actions taken to improve reading. Other subjects are organised into interesting and practical topics. There is a strong tradition of art and music.
- Curriculum information is provided regularly so that parents can support their children's learning and understand the content and importance of the homework they should complete. Information technology supports individual learning very well. Individualised, on-line reading opportunities enable pupils to check their understanding of what they read and to test themselves. Pupils have made more progress this year and reading is now a strength of the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly committed to the school's continued development and improvement. They have become much better informed since the last inspection, and they know how to evaluate teaching.
 - Governors support the headteacher well and understand the range of evidence they must collect to challenge staff on pupils' achievements.
 - Governors understand the national data that inform them on how the school compares with all others and the extent to which funds have contributed to good learning for disadvantaged pupils. They receive good information from the headteacher and monitor pupil premium and primary sports funding rigorously.
 - Governors check that the performance management of the teachers is carried out effectively. They have attended training to improve the school's safer recruitment procedures.
 - The budget is well-managed and governors take a long-term view of how to maintain an effective learning community at the centre of their village.
 - Governors constantly review and monitor safeguarding procedures in conjunction with the headteacher. They meet all statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils come to school keen and eager to learn and this is evident in their punctuality, highly positive attitudes and ability to organise their own learning when necessary. The improvements since the last inspection have heightened the pupils' love of learning.
- Pupils behave extremely well in lessons, around school and during assemblies. They collaborate enthusiastically in group activities or listen attentively to their partners in class discussions before moving on to completing tasks.
- Pupils are very courteous and sensitive towards other people around school. They spontaneously help each other and enjoy being playground 'buddies' to the youngest children. The very effective personal, social and health education programmes contribute significantly to pupils' outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Pupils accept responsibilities very willingly and contribute wholeheartedly to the wider community through jobs in school, representing their classmates on the school council or raising money for charities at different times of the year.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- The school's safeguarding procedures are detailed and rigorous. The headteacher monitors all aspects of pupil safety very frequently and ensures that staff are well trained in child protection procedures according to the most up-to-date legislation. Staff have appropriate first aid qualifications. A dedicated governor makes regular visits to school to oversee the school's procedures. The vast majority of parents and carers

who responded to the online survey, Parent View, stated that their children were happy at school, felt safe and were cared for well. These views were confirmed during the inspection in conversations with pupils. The headteacher maintains comprehensive records of very thorough investigations into any instance or complaint made about alleged bullying.

- Pupils have an excellent understanding about safety at home and in school including possible dangers when using the internet or other electronic devices. The school's detailed policy for e-safety is available on the school website.
- Detailed risk assessments and audits precede educational visits or confirm that outdoor spaces are safe to use. The site is attractive and well maintained. Governors regularly check all aspects of safety in the school and grounds.
- Bullying is extremely rare and pupils are taught how to understand and manage any incidents that occur in school. The school's anti-bullying policy is very comprehensive and enables staff to protect pupils, and teach them about the various forms bullying takes, through the school's personal, social and health education scheme of work. Pupils say there is no bullying, but they say should it happen an adult would intervene quickly.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and, as a result, pupils are making good progress. Standards have risen by the end of Year 2 but teachers are still overcoming gaps in older pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Improvements in the teaching of reading have raised standards by the end of Year 6 but there are still aspects of the teaching of writing that are not yet as good as they could be.
- Reading is taught well from the Reception Year, including phonics teaching (the sounds that letters represent). Teachers consistently apply the school's scheme of work. Pupils are grouped according to ability to ensure that the most able or those with particular needs can make the progress of which they are capable. The school's electronic reading programme has enhanced reading achievement because pupils practise at home and in school. They complete tests to check they have understood what they have been reading. Leaders monitor progress frequently using this information as well as checking teachers' assessments.
- Teachers promote problem solving effectively in mathematics. Pupils benefit from activities that have real-life relevance. They understand that their mathematics knowledge and understanding have important purposes and applications. This was evident when pupils were very engaged in ordering presents of different weights, first to estimate and then to calculate which were heavier or lighter than a given value.
- Teachers plan lessons effectively to account for the range of abilities in each class. They explain clearly and briskly what pupils will learn and how they will know by the end of lessons if they have been successful. Pupils assess how well they have done using information provided by their teachers. This has a very positive impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Pupils are increasingly taking pride in their presentation but some have not been taught a fluent style of handwriting, in the past. In some classes, not enough is being done to establish fluent handwriting.
- Teaching assistants effectively support individuals or small groups of learners. They know exactly what pupils are expected to learn because they also use teachers' planning. They can refer to the literacy and numeracy schemes of work from an excellent handbook that gives consistent information for example, about the letters and sounds pupils learn in phonics lessons and how reading books are graded.
- Resources are well organised and accessible to pupils who keep them tidy throughout the day. Interesting displays support learning in English and mathematics and include reminders of those aspects of grammar, vocabulary and punctuation that will help pupils to reach the higher writing standards now expected of them.

- Teachers extend pupils' understanding in lessons through probing questions that require pupils to explain to others what they are learning. This was very successful, for example, when a pupil recalled a sequence of events that he would later expand in his written work.
- Not all elements of the school's new assessment system are well established, particularly to drive improvement in writing. Nevertheless, marking is very thorough and follows the school's policy. Pupils know what they must do to correct their work and how to improve it. They are given time to correct and reflect on what they have recorded and to refer back to what they were learning.
- Homework is effective in reinforcing pupils' learning but also to extend enquiry through projects based on termly topics. The homework procedures are set out clearly on the website for all parents and carers. Parents are pleased with the school's approach to homework.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The work in pupils' books and their learning in lessons show they are making good progress. This was reflected in the results of assessments at the end of Year 2, last year, but it was not as evident in the published test results, at the end of Year 6. Good teaching is continuing to increase the rate at which pupils are making progress throughout the school.
- Pupils in Year 6 are on course to attain higher standards than last year, in reading and mathematics but, in spite of their good progress, they have not quite caught up in writing. Standards at the end of Year 6, in 2014, were broadly average but weaker in writing than in reading and mathematics. This was because too few pupils made better than expected progress in writing.
- The very small numbers of disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled or have special educational needs are making good progress in line with their classmates. The number of disadvantaged pupils is too small to make a meaningful comparison of their attainment with either their classmates or with other pupils nationally.
- In 2014, standards at the end of Year 2 were above average in reading, writing and mathematics. They were a considerable improvement on the previous year and the direct result of the steps taken by the headteacher to improve planning, teaching and monitoring by senior leaders. Inspection evidence and school assessment information shows that pupils have continued to make good progress this year, and that attainment remains above average.
- The most-able pupils are making good progress. Last year, in Year 6, they achieved well in reading and mathematics but less well in writing. This year the most able pupils, in Year 6, are on course to make at least the progress expected of them and reach the higher levels in writing. At the end of Year 2 in 2014 nearly half of the pupils attained the higher Level 3 in all subjects.
- In the Year 1 national phonics check, in 2014, all pupils reached or exceeded the expected levels and these important reading skills are built on successfully, as shown in the above average reading standards in Year 2. Pupils in both Year 1 and 2 use their knowledge of letters and sounds effectively in their reading and spelling.

The early years provision

is good

- The setting is well led and managed by an effective practitioner who has improved opportunities for children to investigate and explore their world, both in the classroom and outdoors. Resources are attractive and varied enabling children to share, co-operate or play near to others undisturbed. Good planning and teaching ensure that children experience all aspects of the early years curriculum. Children are skilfully assessed and a good range of evidence is recorded in attractive learning journals, which provide detailed records for both staff and parents or carers to review, throughout the year.

- Children begin the Reception Year with the knowledge and skills typical for their age. The majority achieve good levels of development by the end of the year and are well-prepared for Year 1. School data show that children are making good progress and that more children will reach a good level of development this year than they did last year.
- Children are cared for very well. Parents and carers receive home visits, invitations to school in the summer term and good quality information, all of which provide a smooth transition for their children. They settle quickly and the emphasis placed on their personal development results in very good behaviour and confident attitudes.
- The teaching is good. Children listen attentively in sessions led by their teacher and teaching assistants and the majority successfully acquire the important early communication, reading and writing skills. Equal importance is attached to their mathematical development and they have good opportunities to practise number activities and measuring. A small group extended an activity on pouring water from one container to another into an investigation of how to get coloured water using chalk. There was much enthusiasm and animated discussion, as a result.
- Early assessments of disabled children and those who have special educational needs, and those who are disadvantaged result in appropriate and effective support. The school's emphasis on children's emotional and social well-being at the start of their schooling makes a significant contribution to their feeling very safe, their future progress and happiness. Parents and carers are fully involved in an effective partnership with the school.

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	110850
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	462125

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	91
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robin Price
Headteacher	Rebecca Ireland
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2013
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