

# Abbey CofE Academy

Vicar Lane, Daventry, NN11 4GD

**Inspection dates** 16–17 July 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Under the highly effective leadership of the new headteacher, there has been a successful drive to improve behaviour, achievement and teaching throughout the academy. Senior leaders receive good support from other leaders and governors.
- Standards have risen since the school became an academy. Pupils in each year group now make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The teaching of writing is a strength. Pupils make particularly strong progress in writing and leave the academy with standards that are above the national average.
- The most-able pupils achieve high standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6. This is, in part, because of the challenging questions that teachers put to them.
- Gaps between the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils and others in the academy and nationally have narrowed in reading and writing.
- Teaching is good. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and their assessments of pupils' work are accurate. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and high expectations for their achievement and behaviour.
- The academy provides effective support for the small number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. As a result, they make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are courteous and polite and show great pride in their academy and their achievements.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils learn how to be safe, inside and outside the academy, and when using the internet.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted through well-planned lessons, assemblies and additional activities.
- Governance is effective. Governors ensure that the academy benefits from teachers' ready access to the high quality professional development and expertise that are available within the academy's educational trust.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make rapid progress in mathematics. This is because teachers do not always sufficiently develop pupils' mathematical reasoning, for example by testing predictions.
- Teachers do not ensure pupils develop a lasting love of books and thereby improve their reading as much as they could.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to engage in constructive and creative play at break and lunch times and in the academy's breakfast club.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 15 lessons, five of which were jointly observed with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors looked at pupils' work in their books and listened to younger pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with several groups of pupils, senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the academy trust.
- Inspectors took account of the 41 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and considered the 18 responses to a staff questionnaire. Inspectors also met with parents at the academy's sports afternoon on the first day of the inspection and the academy's summer fair on the second day.
- Inspectors examined the academy's own information on pupils' recent and current progress; the academy'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

Margaret Eldridge-Mrotzek

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Abbey CofE Academy is a junior school and is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The academy was created in December 2013. The academy's sponsor is the David Ross Educational Trust
- 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 similar to the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The academy runs a breakfast club which was included in this inspection.
- The academy met the government's current floor standards in 2014, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The academy's full governing body was constituted in September 2014, when a new Chair of Governors was appointed.
- The academy's new headteacher worked with the academy from January 2015 and has been substantively in post since March 2015.
- The academy has the support of a local leader of education through the David Ross Educational Trust.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching of mathematics and so raise the achievement of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, by providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical reasoning.
- Improve the progress that pupils make in their reading by encouraging them to develop a love of books and ensuring all teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to read for pleasure.
- Provide additional constructive and creative activities for pupils at break times and in the academy's breakfast club.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- As soon as the school became an academy in December 2013, the educational trust took swift and effective action to improve leadership and teaching. This led to marked improvements in the achievement of pupils leaving the academy in 2014. This improvement has gathered pace in the current school year and has accelerated rapidly throughout the academy under the dynamic leadership of the new headteacher.
- The headteacher has been exceptionally successful in sharing his high expectations with pupils, staff, parents and governors. This has led to the creation of an ethos and culture in which leaders at all levels focus on ensuring that good teaching and good behaviour can flourish. For example, the business manager, as a member of the leadership team, understands the academy's educational as well as financial priorities.
- The headteacher, supported by the governors, has transformed the academy's buildings over a very short period. This has resulted in pupils showing huge pride in their academy and has raised their aspirations and self-confidence. The weekly 'red carpet' assemblies in which pupils delight in sharing their successes with the academy community further support this.
- Senior leaders and governors have ensured that inadequate teaching has been eradicated and that pupils now experience a quality of teaching that is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. These improvements have resulted from leaders' close monitoring and evaluation of teaching quality across the academy. Academy leaders, including governors, share an accurate view of the academy's strengths and areas for improvement.
- While middle and subject leaders generally manage their areas well, leaders acknowledge that there is more to be done to accelerate the progress of pupils in mathematics, so that all pupils achieve higher standards when they leave the academy.
- In compliance with government guidelines, the academy has reviewed the way in which it assesses pupils' progress. Systems are now fully in place for Years 3, 4 and 5 and teachers use the newly agreed approach with a high degree of consistency. While pupils are clear how well they are doing, parents are still adjusting to the changes in the way that their children's progress is presented.
- The academy has used the outcomes from a recent review to ensure that it is now using the pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils to much greater effect than in the past. Well-targeted support in reading and writing has led to a narrowing of the gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others, both in the academy and nationally. The same impact has yet to be seen in mathematics.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. The leadership of this aspect of the academy's work is good. The coordinator identifies pupils' needs systematically and ensures the right support is in place. Support staff provide high quality of care and guidance that is helping improve these pupils' achievement. The academy's effective work with this group of pupils demonstrates senior leaders' commitment to equality of opportunity and to tackling discrimination.
- The academy offers a broad range of experiences through its curriculum. Pupils' basic skills are developed across the curriculum, although there is more effective support for pupils' literacy skills than their numeracy in other subjects. Teachers encourage pupils to make links between different areas of knowledge so that they expand their understanding of the wider world. The curriculum promotes British values, such as tolerance, respect for the rule of law and the protection of liberty, well. These values, combined with the academy's work in building pupils' resilience and perseverance, prepare them well for secondary school and for life in modern British society. However, there are not enough opportunities provided in the breakfast club or at break times for pupils to be creative and to play collaboratively.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strength of the academy. Pupils learn about a

range of faiths. They have quiet times and thoughtful debates when they contemplate spiritual and moral concerns. Assemblies, in particular, promote pupils' understanding of 'doing the right thing' for themselves and for others.

- The academy's safeguarding arrangements are effective and meet statutory requirements. Staff are well trained and alert; this contributes to ensuring pupils feel safe.
- Pupils successfully compete at local and regional level in a range of sports. The academy makes good use of the primary physical education and sports funding to support the sports programme and to ensure all pupils are able to take full advantage of the opportunities on offer. The educational trust also organises sports events from which the academy's pupils benefit, such as a recent sports day alongside Olympic athletes.
- The academy's sponsor has provided very good support and challenge to the headteacher and governors, particularly through the work of the local leader of education. It has provided effective training to support leaders and governors, where necessary. The academy's partnership with local schools has also enabled it to access good training opportunities and specialist support.

#### ■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is effective. The newly constituted governing body consists of a small number of well-trained and experienced governors. The governors have plans in place to expand the governing body in the near future. Governors have a good understanding of their roles in supporting and challenging academy leaders. Governors have received training to enable them to understand how well the academy is doing compared to other schools. They are aware of its strengths and what it needs to do to improve further, both in the short and the long term. Governors regularly come into lessons and look at pupils' books, which helps to keep them well-informed about the quality of teaching. They are equally well informed about the recent changes to assessment practice and the new National Curriculum, and know how the academy is responding to the new curriculum's requirements.
- The governing body is effective in measuring the impact of the academy's work, including of its use of the pupil premium and sports funding. They have a clear understanding of the system for the appraisal of teachers, and know how the academy manages salary progression, rewards good teaching and tackles underperformance. Together with academy leaders, governors ensure that the academy meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding. Governors uphold the values of the academy while ensuring that pupils are aware of the diversity of faiths and cultures in modern Britain. They make themselves available to parents and have a high profile within the academy

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is because they are proud of their academy and are eager to work to the best of their abilities.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and this helps them to make good progress in lessons. They are adamant that any low-level disruption of their lessons is rare, and that any that does occur is dealt with swiftly by the teacher.
- Pupils show mature behaviour around the academy. They are thoughtful and considerate to each other and to adults. Parents, staff and pupils are very positive in their responses to questionnaires and in their discussion with inspectors about behaviour in the academy. The academy's policies are applied consistently and pupils are clear about how the system of rewards and sanctions operates.
- Pupils readily undertake whole-academy responsibilities, such as being members of the academy council or being playground 'buddies'.
- Pupils are quick to let visitors know how proud they are of their academy. They show this pride in the neat presentation in their books, their smart uniforms and their respect for the academy environment. The academy provided the first uniforms free of charge and there is support with uniform costs for parents of

disadvantaged pupils.

- It is a mark of pupils' growing enjoyment of being at the academy that attendance and punctuality for all groups of pupils continues to improve. It is currently in line with the national average and is carefully monitored by leaders.
- No pupils have been permanently excluded from academy since it opened and the low number of temporary exclusions relates to a very small number of pupils. Exclusion, in either form, is only used as a last resort.

### Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents, staff and pupils all agree that this is a safe academy.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying, such as emotional or cyber bullying, but any occurrences are extremely rare and are dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Pupils are kept safe in the academy and on educational visits. Visitors to the academy are suitably checked and monitored.
- Pupils are clear that discriminatory language is not heard at their academy. They show sensitivity and consideration when discussing how words can be used hurtfully.
- The academy site is safe and secure. Pupils receive instruction about the risks posed by fire and the importance of road safety.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers know their pupils well. Their marking and assessment of pupils' work are consistently good across the academy. Teachers make lessons interesting and varied and, as a result, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers use questioning well to deepen and develop pupils' understanding, particularly for the most able. They regularly and effectively set homework tasks that encourage pupils to explore a topic or a concept in greater depth. This helps their progress.
- The teaching of writing is particularly effective and leads to pupils making exceptional progress. Pupils show rapid improvement in their handwriting, spelling and use of grammar as they move through the academy. In the last academic year, they have developed both their fluency and their skills by regularly writing at length. They display a high degree of imagination and creativity in their work.
- The teaching of reading is good, particularly in the younger years where specialist teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) enables less-able readers to catch up. Teachers regularly monitor pupils' comprehension of the texts they have read throughout the academy. Academy leaders acknowledge that there are not always opportunities for pupils to read for pleasure, for example in the breakfast club or at playtime. This aspect of the academy's work to improve pupils' reading requires further development.
- The academy has improved the teaching of mathematics in the past year and pupils currently at the academy now make good progress. However, inconsistencies in the teaching of mathematics in the past, some of which remain, have meant that not enough pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, make consistently good progress in mathematics. This is because teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical reasoning, for example making and testing predictions, and searching for patterns and relationships.
- There is some outstanding practice in the academy in the teaching of both literacy and mathematics. This is shared with all staff and is helping further to improve the quality of teaching. Most teachers make good

use of support staff and this is helping to raise pupils' achievement, especially that of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

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

- Following the move to academy status, standards rose at the end of the school year in 2014, although overall they remained below the national average. Results for 2015 show further improvement and indicate pupils are now reaching standards that are in line with the most recently published (2014) national average in reading, and above these averages in writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has improved in the last year and is now good. The proportions of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 making expected progress in reading and mathematics are similar to those found nationally, while in writing the proportion is above the national average. The proportions making more than expected progress are in line with the latest available national averages in reading and writing.
- The progress of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics across other year groups in the academy is good. Progress is strongest in the lower year groups while older pupils are rapidly overcoming the legacy of weaker teaching in the past.
- The most-able pupils achieve standards at the end of Year 6 that are in line with published averages in reading and mathematics. In writing, they are above. The proportions achieving the very highest levels in mathematics and writing have been above the national averages for the last two years. Academy data and a scrutiny of pupils' books show that the most-able pupils in younger year groups receive an appropriate level of challenge and are making good progress.
- The gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 in reading and writing with others nationally and in the academy has narrowed since 2014. This improvement has followed the academy's own effective review of its use of pupil premium funding. According to the latest available data about the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, the gap between the academy's pupils and others nationally reduced from around three-and-a-half terms to around one-and-a-half terms in reading. It fell from around four terms to no gap at all in writing. The gap with others in the academy reduced in reading from around three terms to one term, and in writing from around four-and-a-half terms to one-and-a-half terms. However, in mathematics the gap in Year 6 with others nationally has widened from two-and-a-half terms to three terms. The gap with other pupils in the academy has grown from one-and-a-half terms to three terms.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils in other year groups has accelerated and compares favourably with other academy pupils. This is because of the use of the additional funding to provide high quality one-to-one and small group support has been very effective. It has also led to these pupils developing highly positive attitudes to their learning that have had a direct impact on their achievement.
- The academy supports the very small number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs very effectively. As a result they make good progress, often despite the very challenging nature of their difficulties.

## 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>	140190
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	450159

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	197
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nigel Woodcock
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dan Sutton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01327 702433
<b>Fax number</b>	01327 301397
<b>Email address</b>	acolson@abbeyceacademy.co.uk

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