

# Abercrombie Primary School

Higher Albert Street, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S41 7QE

## Inspection dates

7–8 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Senior leaders have an overgenerous view of pupils' academic achievements in key stages 1 and 2. They are not effective enough in analysing the school's information on pupils' outcomes.
- Senior leaders' monitoring of standards has not been rigorous enough to identify and address pupils' underperformance. Improvements in pupils' outcomes have not been rapid enough.
- Governors have not been tenacious enough in challenging the school's leaders about pupils' outcomes, particularly those of disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors' use of performance management to link pay progression to pupils' achievements has not been effective.
- Teachers do not plan lessons that meet the needs of pupils with different abilities. Too often, the least able and the most able do not make enough progress in their lessons.
- Teachers are not as good as they need to be at identifying pupils' next steps in learning. Pupils do not develop and deepen their understanding nor secure their learning over time.
- Pupils do not make the progress they are capable of in key stages 1 and 2. They do not build on the good progress they make in the early years.
- Pupils, particularly the most able disadvantaged, do not attain as well as they should in key stages 1 and 2. Their outcomes do not match the potential they show in their lessons.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders', staff's and governors' commitment to the well-being and personal development of each pupil is unwavering. They are good role models for the pupils.
- The school's caring culture is ever present. Pupils are considerate and thoughtful towards others.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning is strong. They have the potential to make good citizens for the future.
- Children make a good start to their schooling in the early years. They make very good progress from their starting points.

## Full report

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

- Increase the pace and impact of leaders and managers on raising pupils' outcomes in key stages 1 and 2 by:
  - improving and refining their analysis of information relating to the academic performance of pupils
  - using pupils' performance information to pinpoint and address key priorities
  - ensuring that the processes for monitoring and checking the performance of pupils and teachers are robust and provide accurate information to inform and secure school improvement.
- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body in securing school improvement by ensuring that:
  - the additional funding provided to support disadvantaged pupils is monitored closely and used more successfully to improve the outcomes for this group of pupils
  - the procedures for managing the performance of staff are more robust and closely monitored to ensure improved outcomes for pupils
  - the processes for monitoring, checking and challenging the impact of school leaders on raising pupils' outcomes are rigorous.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - ensuring that teachers match work more closely to pupils' abilities
  - improving teachers' accuracy in identifying the next steps in pupils' learning.
- Increase the rates of progress for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds in key stages 1 and 2 to ensure that in reading, writing and mathematics:
  - the proportions of pupils meeting and exceeding the higher levels of attainment match the national average or go even higher in key stages 1 and 2
  - the proportions of pupils meeting and exceeding the expected levels of attainment match the national average or go even higher in key stage 1
  - the most able, and particularly the most able disadvantaged, pupils consistently attain at the highest levels.

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

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The senior leaders do not use the available assessment information on pupils' progress and attainment to assess the performance of the school accurately. Their analysis is not detailed enough, particularly in relation to the impact of initiatives designed to improve pupils' outcomes. As a result, leaders have an overgenerous view of the impact of teaching and learning on pupils' achievements in key stages 1 and 2.
- The senior leaders are not as precise as they need to be in identifying and prioritising the steps required to improve pupils' progress and attainment further. They are not adept enough at assessing the quality of pupils' learning through lesson observations or the scrutiny of work in pupils' books. This has contributed to their inaccurate view of standards.
- Leaders do not monitor and scrutinise the impact of their actions, nor that of teaching on pupils' learning, well enough. On too many occasions, the senior leaders attribute the cause of pupils' academic underperformance to matters over which they believe they have little or no control. On other occasions, the leaders wait too long to check if their actions to improve pupils' outcomes have been effective. These have acted as barriers to leaders identifying and addressing some aspects of pupils' underperformance as quickly as they need to.
- Since the last inspection, the senior leaders have improved many aspects of the school, particularly in relation to pupils' emotional well-being and social development. They have introduced systems and procedures that have cemented the school's caring and nurturing ethos towards, and between, pupils. Parents and visitors to the school are left in no doubt about the high aspirations leaders and staff have for each pupil, regardless of their ability or background.
- The senior leaders' commitment to the school radiates outwards and is embraced by staff, pupils and parents. The leaders listen to the views and opinions of pupils and parents, acting on these to improve the school. Corridor displays show the quality of ancient Roman army shields and honey cake models, made by pupils in response to parental requests for more creative homework. The newly opened school lending library is the result of pupils asking for the opportunity to extend the range of literature they can read in their own time.
- The school's broad and balanced curriculum ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very effective. Enrichment activities and extra-curricular clubs equip pupils well, socially and emotionally, for their life in modern Britain. The fundamental British values of respect, tolerance, service to others and democracy are ever present and evident in even the youngest of pupils.
- Senior leaders hold a number of subject leadership roles as a result of recent changes in teaching staff. Where these roles are held by other members of staff, such as the special needs coordinator, subject and middle leaders understand their roles and responsibilities. The special needs coordinator's termly meetings with the parents of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensure that valuable information is shared between teachers and parents. This helps to improve the achievements of this group of pupils.

- The senior leaders are increasingly effective at assessing the impact of the pupil premium on the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Following an external review of the school's use of the pupil premium, the senior leaders check the progress and achievement of disadvantaged pupils much more closely. This has enabled the leaders to be better at planning and monitoring the use of these additional funds to meet the needs of individual disadvantaged pupils.
- The leaders have used the additional funds provided by the physical education and sports grant well. They have utilised the teaching expertise available from a local secondary school and sports partnership to improve teachers' skills and confidence in teaching physical education and games. Meanwhile, the range of sports available has increased to include fencing, dodgeball and cheerleading, resulting in an increase in pupils' participation rates in sporting clubs and competitions.
- The support provided to the school by the local authority has not been effective in improving pupils' outcomes at the school. This is despite the school being identified as a school causing concern soon after the last inspection. Although local authority advisers have correctly identified that pupils' outcomes are not good enough, they have not shown sufficient rigour in challenging this, nor tenacity in insisting on rapid improvement.

### **Governance of the school**

- The governors have not ensured that the additional funding provided through the pupil premium has been used effectively. Governors have not been good enough at analysing how effectively this funding has been spent in the past, particularly in relation to its impact on improving the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. However, an external review of pupil premium spending is not recommended as the governing body is now taking appropriate steps to address this situation.
- The governors do not understand their role in managing the performance of staff well enough. They have not been as effective as they need to be in linking pay progression to improved pupil outcomes. This has contributed to outcomes not improving as quickly as they need to.
- The governors' understanding of pupils' progress and attainment is not as good as it needs to be to hold the school's leaders fully to account. The minutes from meetings of the governing body and its committees show that, despite receiving regular information, governors have not challenged senior leaders as effectively as they should about pupils' underperformance.
- The governors are ambitious for the school and every pupil. They know the importance of having a wide range of backgrounds and experience on the governing body and take positive steps to address this when vacancies arise. Their knowledge of safeguarding is strong. They have a good understanding of parents' and pupils' views of the school and work alongside the school's leaders to improve some aspects of the school as a result. Nevertheless, the governing body would benefit from an external review to support the actions necessary to improve their impact on school improvement.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Statutory requirements are met, with governors and staff, including those who work in the Before School Club, undertaking regular training to ensure that their practice is current. The adults in school are aware of, and vigilant for, the signs of different forms of abuse, including female genital mutilation, children missing in education and child sexual exploitation.
- Parents and pupils believe that the school is a safe place. They agree that bullying and name-calling are rare, and that any issue will be dealt with quickly and effectively. This reflects the culture of care that is evident in pupils of all ages and supported by the very positive role models provided by leaders and staff. The rare incidents that do occur are meticulously recorded and analysed regularly by senior leaders so that any trends or patterns can be addressed promptly.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Teachers do not match work consistently well to the abilities of different pupils. Too often, pupils work at tasks at the same level, regardless of their starting points or abilities. Some of the work set is too easy for the most able pupils, yet too hard for the least able. As a result, over time, the progress of too many pupils in too many lessons is not as good as it could be.
- Teachers are not sufficiently adept at assessing pupils' understanding and do not identify the next steps in pupils' learning well enough. Pupils' work shows that new skills are often not consolidated. Consequently, errors and misconceptions are not eliminated over time because pupils' understanding has not been secured before they move on to something new.
- The pupils are enthusiastic, eager to learn and determined to do their best. Teachers and teaching assistants encourage pupils of all abilities and backgrounds by valuing their best efforts. The vibrant school environment adds to the purposeful and positive atmosphere that encourages pupils' learning and celebrates their work.
- Teaching assistants, students and volunteers are generally used effectively to support the learning of pupils of different abilities. Teachers ensure that these additional adults are clear about their roles and the intended learning outcomes of each lesson. Occasionally, the impact of this extra support is not as good as it could be, because the adults are not skilled at adjusting the work to meet the needs of pupils who require more support or challenge to help them make progress.
- Work in pupils' books is consistently well presented in all classes. Teachers follow school policies and leaders' directives fully. This results in uniformity of other aspects of teaching and learning, such as the feedback teachers provide to pupils on their work. This is helping pupils to assess and improve the quality of their own work and that of their peers.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are proficient at teaching phonics. This extends to student teachers because the school's mentoring programme ensures that they employ the use of pure sounds to develop pupils' early reading skills. Pupils of different abilities are confident in using their phonic knowledge to attempt new and unusual words.

- The teachers encourage pupils to read regularly at school and at home. In most, but not all, classes, pupils' reading books are changed regularly. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading and benefit from the range of fiction and non-fiction texts available to them.
- Workbooks show that teachers plan opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge regularly. Pupils are often encouraged to show reasoning through explaining what they have done and why. This is particularly well done in Year 6, and pupils make much better progress in mathematics than is seen elsewhere in the school, as a result.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils develop positive attitudes towards their learning, embracing and putting into effect the school's golden rules and values.
- By the time they reach Year 6, pupils relish their roles of responsibility and discharge them with maturity and care towards younger pupils. They listen to each other's ideas and views, weighing up what they have heard and responding with reasoned and thoughtful arguments. They are impressive ambassadors for the school.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, such as when using the internet or mobile phones. From their entry into the early years, pupils are taught to value and celebrate the similarities and differences they have with others. The school's curriculum equips them with the knowledge and understanding necessary to accept and respect others regardless of their culture, religious beliefs or family background.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' conduct around the school and at different times of the day is very good and sometimes exemplary. There is little disruption in classrooms even when the work teachers set is not at the appropriate level for pupils' abilities.
- Pupils are respectful to their peers and to the fabric of the school. They take pride in their appearance and in their work. Pupils are polite and well mannered to each other and to adults, including visitors to the school.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are punctual and attend regularly, ensuring that absence levels are similar to those seen nationally. In 2016, the levels of persistent absence were higher than the national average, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. However, current rates of persistent absence suggest that leaders are taking effective action to address this.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Requires improvement**

- The rates of progress for pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are not good. From their starting points, too few pupils make the progress necessary to propel them to the higher levels

of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. This is effected by teachers not setting work that is well enough matched to pupils' abilities.

- By the time pupils leave key stage 2, rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics are low in comparison to those seen nationally. In some, but not all, cases, the historical assessment of pupils' attainment may not have accurately reflected their true ability. However, too much has been made of this and there has been insufficient focus on maximising pupils' progress in the intervening years. Pupils' outcomes in key stage 2 have not improved as quickly as they might, as a result.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 is below the national average at the higher levels in reading and mathematics. This is because pupils previously assessed as attaining at age-related expectations do not make the accelerated progress necessary to raise their attainment during their time in key stage 2.
- By the end of key stage 1, the attainment of pupils who left the early years at expected and at good levels of development is below that of pupils with similar starting points nationally. This is the case for reading, writing and mathematics and is the result of pupils not making enough progress during their time in key stage 1.
- Lower proportions of the most able, and particularly the most able disadvantaged, pupils attain at the highest levels than are seen nationally in both key stage 1 and key stage 2. In 2016, no key stage 1 disadvantaged pupils achieved the higher levels of attainment in reading, writing or mathematics. The school's most recent assessment information suggests that disadvantaged pupils' attainment at the higher levels is still too low in the majority of year groups.
- Leaders have identified the need to improve pupils' outcomes in key stages 1 and 2. They have developed links with other local schools to review samples of pupils' work and standardise judgements about the assessment of pupils' attainment in different year groups. As a result, leaders are satisfied that teachers' judgements about pupils' attainment are increasingly accurate.
- Children leave the early years at levels of development that are broadly in line with those seen nationally. Typically, the proportion achieving the early learning goal in reading is well above the national figure. By the time they leave key stage 1, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly in line with the national average. This is also the case at the end of key stage 2.
- The most recent pupils' assessment information suggests that the rates of progress for pupils of all abilities are highest in Year 6, particularly in reading, reflecting the quality of teaching and learning in that class.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is accelerating so that the difference between them and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally is starting to diminish in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The least able pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support in class. Leaders and teachers review the impact of this support, modifying or replacing it with more appropriate support where the improvement has not been significant. However, their progress is affected when work is not well matched to their ability.

## Early years provision

Good

- Children make a good start to their education in the early years. They are lively and inquisitive learners who are keen to talk about their work. The children quickly adapt to new and effective routines that promote their learning and development. These routines also promote the calm learning environment that mirrors the rest of the school.
- Teachers ensure that the values of the school are present in the early years from the time children start attending. The culture of care that is present throughout the rest of the school begins here and is evident in children's thoughtfulness towards each other and adults. The children show great pride in their attendance, their uniform and their work. Safeguarding is effective and all statutory duties are met.
- Teachers encourage parents to play an active role in their child's development. Parents value highly the good communication between the school and home. They follow, and contribute to, their child's development record. A number of parents of children in the early years told inspectors that they believed that teachers' expectations of what children can achieve have increased compared to that expected of their siblings in previous years.
- The early years leader, who is also the headteacher, has a very clear vision and understanding of good early years practice. Together with her teachers, she has identified the areas of development that are typically weakest for children entering the school and adapted the provision to address these. For example, the morning Nursery session has a greater emphasis on preparing children for school, while the afternoon session focuses more closely on children's physical and emotional development.
- The teachers plan activities that build on children's learning needs and interests. The Reception teacher is particularly skilled at using her daily assessments of children's learning to modify tasks for the following day. Over time, she uses this information to identify and address specific areas of learning where children are less well developed, and this helps them to make good progress over time.
- Learning themes run through both the indoor and outdoor provision, allowing children to build on their learning throughout each day. The children often focus on activities for increasingly extended periods of time and without direct supervision. This is helping children to challenge themselves and is building their resilience as learners.
- The teachers deploy other adults well to support pupils of differing abilities and developmental stages. This is particularly effective in the teaching of phonics where adults are skilled in using pure sounds and expect the children to do the same. As a result, children achieve particularly well in their reading by the time they leave the early years.
- Children enter the early years at levels of development that are below those typically seen in children their age. As a result of effective teaching and assessment, children of all abilities and backgrounds make at least good progress from their starting points. By the time they leave the early years, the proportion achieving a good level of development is broadly in line with the national figure. This ensures that the majority are well prepared for the next stage of their education.



## School details

Unique reference number	112670
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10023144

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	249
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Maddison
Headteacher	Tracy Gannon
Telephone number	01246 232425
Website	<a href="http://www.abercrombie.derbyshire.sch.uk">www.abercrombie.derbyshire.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:headteacher@abercrombie.derbyshire.sch.uk">headteacher@abercrombie.derbyshire.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	3–4 July 2013

## Information about this school

- Abercrombie Primary School is an average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in single-age classes, including children in the early years, who attend full time. Children attending the school's Nursery attend for half days and have their own classroom.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language are below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below the national average.

- In 2015, the school met the national floor standards for pupil achievement.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all year groups. They observed the teaching of early reading skills and listened to pupils reading. Inspectors talked to pupils about their school and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, special needs coordinator, representatives of the governing body and the school's adviser from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start of the school day. They took account of the 84 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's own self-evaluation of current performance and plans for improvement; the school's most recent information on the achievement and progress of pupils; information relating to the safeguarding of pupils; the school's most recent information relating to the attendance of pupils and minutes from a number of governing body meetings.

## Inspection team

Stephen McMullan, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ann Cruickshank	Ofsted Inspector
Kim Bower	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. [www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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