

# Abbotsweld Primary Academy

Partridge Road, Harlow, Essex CM18 6TE

## Inspection dates

20–21 September 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- This school is improving rapidly. As a result of the outstanding leadership of the executive headteacher, supported well by leaders at all levels, the quality of teaching is now strongly good and outcomes have risen accordingly.
- Pupils are now making good progress in English and mathematics throughout the school. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are high and they respond accordingly.
- Pupils behave very well, both in their lessons and during less-structured parts of the day. A consistent approach by all staff means that pupils always know what is expected of them.
- The school benefits from working collaboratively with the other schools in its 'hub'. The shared lead practitioners have a clear impact on improving the quality of teaching.
- The school is a safe place. Safeguarding is given an appropriately high priority and is seen as everyone's responsibility, throughout the school.
- The school's culture of continual development means that teaching is always improving. Teachers are given excellent opportunities to develop their own practice.
- Children's education gets off to a good start in the early years classes. From often low starting points, pupils make good progress so that they are ready for Year 1 at the end of their time in Reception.
- Attendance remains below the national average and is particularly low for some groups of pupils. There have been recent improvements and leaders are addressing this issue.
- Evidence of the progress pupils make in subjects other than English and mathematics is limited. However, it is clear that pupils learn about an appropriately broad range of subjects.
- Some pupils' progress in reading is limited by the narrow range of genres they read and their ability to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words.

## Full report

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

- Further improve standards in reading by:
  - broadening the range of books pupils read, in terms of genres and subjects
  - providing pupils with a range of strategies for understanding the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- Improve tracking in non-core subjects, such as history and music, so that pupils make rapid progress in these areas over time, by:
  - developing systems for assessing the progress pupils make in these subjects
  - ensuring that expectations for pupils' progress match those in English and mathematics.
- Raise overall attendance so that it is at least in line with the national average and the attendance of no group of pupils is low.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The executive headteacher has made an enormous contribution to the improvements in this school in the two and a half years that she has been in post. She uses the 'fire in her belly' and her very high aspirations to continually and doggedly pursue excellence in every aspect of school life. The executive headteacher has a very clear vision for the future development of the school, based on a thorough understanding of what works in education and how children learn.
- The newly appointed head of school shares the executive headteacher's vision. The thorough handover process put in place by the school means that the change from the previous head of school's leadership to the current postholder has been seamless. In the three weeks that the head of school has been in post, she has already developed a clear picture of the school.
- High aspiration pervades leadership at all levels at Abbotsweld. Some leaders 'belong' to the school, while others 'belong' to the hub. This makes no difference. The vision and the passion to provide the best possible education remain the same. The school has improved enormously and continues to improve rapidly as a result.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is led and managed very well. The hub shares an experienced and knowledgeable special educational needs coordinator. She ensures that additional funding is used well to meet the needs of individual pupils. Teaching assistants are provided with the training necessary for them to meet pupils' specific needs.
- English and mathematics are also led very well. The hub employs lead practitioners for each subject, who lead these key areas of the curriculum across all four schools. Both leaders have the skills and knowledge necessary to carry out their roles particularly well. The impact of their work in improving the quality of teaching in their subjects, and thus in improving outcomes for pupils, is clear.
- The school's curriculum offers pupils a wide range of interesting and exciting opportunities. Pupils learn about the full range of subjects in the national curriculum. They are also provided with a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities such as clubs for everything from debating and philosophy to football and aerobics. Staff and pupils have devised a list of '50 things to do before you're 11'. Opportunities such as visiting the seaside or the Tate Gallery broaden some pupils' life experiences enormously.
- The school is highly effective in developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. For example, the recent inclusion of philosophy into the school's curriculum is already having an impact on pupils' ability to reflect on their and other people's actions. Pupils learn about a wide range of religions and this encourages them to develop understanding and tolerance of other faiths.
- Pupils are given increasing opportunities to take on responsibilities as they progress through the school. This helps pupils to be ready for the move to secondary school by the time they reach the end of Year 6. Some of the oldest pupils are employed as 'pupil advocates' and take on a range of tasks around the school. This is a much-coveted role and pupils are selected following a written application and an interview with the head

of school. The pupil advocates carry out their duties extremely well and are an absolute asset to their school's leadership team.

- The pupil premium grant is spent effectively. Leaders very sensibly take identifying the potential barriers to learning for each pupil as their starting point in planning what needs to be done to meet each pupil's needs. This means that the funding is spent in a wide variety of ways. For example, some of the funding is used to help to employ a family support worker. This has been highly effective in helping some families to become more involved with their children's education.
- The sport premium funding is also used well. Some of the funding is used for the school's subscription to the local sports partnership. This has increased pupils' participation in competitive sport. The funding has also enabled the school to increase the number and variety of sports clubs offered to pupils. The school has received awards for both its sporting achievements and its work towards encouraging healthy lifestyles.
- The quality of teaching is now strongly good, and is continuing to improve, largely as a result of being part of the hub. Leaders are able to provide a wide range of continuing professional development opportunities, such as courses and demonstration lessons, because these costs are shared across all four schools.

### **Governance of the school**

- A single 'local' governing body has responsibility for all four of the hub's schools. The governing body, in turn, is responsible to the trust board. The chair of the governing body has recently become a trustee of the organisation.
- Governors ensure that they are provided with good-quality information about each school before meetings take place. This enables meetings to be organised, business-like and productive.
- The governing body is made up of members with a wide range of skills, experience and professional backgrounds. For example, one governor is the headteacher of a primary school and another works in business and marketing. As a result, the governing body has the range of skills, knowledge and experience necessary to fulfil its corporate responsibilities well.
- Governors are highly aspirational for the school, its staff and its pupils. They know the school very well and hold leaders fully to account. They manage the difficult task of balancing challenge with support extremely well.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is given a high priority. Procedures for admitting visitors to the school are thorough and routines are well established. The school's single central record of pre-employment checks is maintained well and meets statutory requirements. The school takes seriously its obligations to ensure that only suitable people are employed to work, or allowed to spend time, with its pupils.
- The hub's safeguarding lead sets the right tone for this crucial area. She and the

supporting designated safeguarding leads are appropriately trained to enable them to carry out their roles effectively. They know what to do when child protection concerns are raised and there is clear evidence that they take appropriate action in a timely fashion.

- Pupils feel safe at Abbotsweld. Pupils value the external counselling service, based at the school, and know that they can book a time to go and speak to someone in confidence. They know too that they can talk to any member of staff at any time if they are worried about something. This plays a key part in ensuring that pupils are safe at school.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now very clearly good, with elements that are better than this. The executive headteacher tackles weaker teaching effectively and this has helped to raise standards. Some teaching is of a very high quality and is used as an example to others.
- Staff are provided with a wide range of continuing development opportunities. For example, courses are provided on a range of topics and subjects. The English and mathematics leaders act as coaches to help individual teachers to develop their practice in these key subjects.
- Learning is planned well. Teachers work with their year group partners in the other hub schools to plan teaching that is exciting and of high quality and reflects the school's high standards. They are supported by the hub's lead practitioners. Leaders have found that this approach has had a great impact on improving the quality of teaching.
- Throughout the school, staff manage pupils' behaviour very well. Teachers and support staff have equally high expectations for how pupils should behave, both in the classroom and as they move around the school. Teachers use positive strategies to reward pupils who are behaving well, alongside suitable consequences to deal with undesirable behaviour. As a result, very little learning time is lost in lessons.
- Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects that they teach. The school employs specialist teachers in subjects such as art, physical education and Spanish. Leaders have found that this has improved the quality of teaching in these subjects. For example, pupils now achieve better outcomes in physical education because expectations are high and they are given clear demonstrations of how to carry out particular skills.
- Teaching assistants support pupils well, particularly those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together and teaching assistants are well informed as a result. This close cooperation ensures that pupils who need additional support are able to be successful in lessons.
- Teachers 'scaffold' pupils' learning well. That is, they provide pupils with the support they need at the beginning of their learning and gradually enable them to become more independent as their proficiency develops. Teachers ensure that skills are taught in a sensible, developmentally appropriate sequence.
- Assessment in English and mathematics is well developed. Teachers know where pupils' strengths lie and where they need to develop further. The school has found that

techniques such as peer assessment, where classmates check each other's work, are used well to encourage pupils to support each other and to answer each other's questions.

- Assessment in other subjects is less well developed. Subject leaders are working together within the hub to establish suitable systems for assessing pupils' progress in their individual subjects. For example, leaders in science and physical education have created skills grids on which teachers can map pupils' progress. The school is not yet able to track pupils' progress clearly across the range of subjects in the curriculum.
- There remains a very small amount of weaker teaching in the school. Where this is the case, pupils achieve less well because teachers' instructions and explanations are not clear enough. The school's leaders are aware of where teaching is weaker and are taking action to address it.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are confident and appropriately self-assured. They enjoy talking about their learning and their school.
- Leaders' high expectations are evident in all aspects of school life. Pupils are very polite and well mannered because they know that this is what is expected of them. Pupils routinely say 'please' and 'thank you', and hold doors open to allow adults or their classmates to pass through.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They say that bullying is rare. Pupils know that they should tell an adult if bullying does take place. They have faith that staff will sort out incidents of bullying quickly, should they arise. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a range of ways, such as learning about road safety and through fire drills.
- Pupils are taught about e-safety, including how to stay safe when using the internet. This is having a clear impact on pupils' ability to understand this challenging issue. When discussing with the lead inspector why it is not a good idea to befriend a stranger on the internet, one pupil commented that 'you don't know any facts about them that are real'.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to equality. They are taught to judge people on their actions, not on the colour of their skin or any other characteristics protected by law. When discussing equality, one pupil explained that no skin colour is better than any other because 'we're all the same'. This sums up clearly the message that pupils are given at Abbotsweld.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well both in lessons and around the school. Routines are well established and this helps pupils to know what is expected of them. All staff have high

expectations of how pupils should behave and all adults ensure that pupils follow the rules, and take action when they do not.

- For the most part, pupils show pride in their work. They take care with their handwriting and set their work out neatly and carefully. Pupils show an interest in the subjects that they learn and are keen to find out more.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because attendance remains below the national average and, for some groups of pupils, well below average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils, girls and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remains too low. Leaders are taking appropriate actions to address this issue and there have been recent improvements.

### Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Many children enter the school with skills and abilities below those typical of their age. They make good progress during their time in the early years provision. The proportion who reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has improved since the school opened and is now similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who reach the expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening check has also improved steadily since the school opened and is now similar to the national average. Pupils' fluency in reading is increasing as a result of their improved phonics knowledge.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 improved in 2017. The proportion of pupils who attained the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics was similar to the national average, having been below average previously.
- Results of the key stage 2 national tests improved greatly in 2017. In 2016, pupils made broadly average progress in reading and mathematics. In 2017, this was much improved and above the most recent national average.
- Pupils' attainment in the national tests has also improved greatly this year. Previously, pupils' attainment was well below the national average in reading and mathematics. This year, attainment in both subjects was similar to the national average.
- Outcomes in writing at the end of key stage 2 have been consolidated. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected level in 2016 and 2017 was similar to the national average. This represents excellent progress for these pupils from their starting points at the beginning of the key stage.
- The pupil premium grant is spent effectively and disadvantaged pupils make good progress throughout the school. Results of the 2017 tests showed an improvement in outcomes for this group of pupils, both in progress and attainment. Few of the most able disadvantaged pupils have, historically, reached the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. This is now beginning to change.
- The most able pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. They are given appropriate challenges, and expectations for this group are high. Results of the 2017 national tests showed that the most able pupils made very rapid progress in writing in 2017.
- Additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is

used well. In most year groups, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their classmates. In some cases, their progress is rapid. Where pupils make slower progress, there are clear reasons why this is the case.

- The school's own assessment information shows clearly that different groups of pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school. At this early stage in the academic year, there is a limited amount of work in pupils' books. The work that pupils have already completed is at an appropriate level for their age. Samples of pupils' exercise books for the previous academic year show that pupils are making the progress that they should.
- Pupils tend to read mainly fiction rather than a broader range of texts. Some pupils read with a level of fluency appropriate to their age, while others find deciphering texts much more difficult. Similarly, some pupils demonstrate a much better understanding of the meaning of the texts they read than others do.
- Some pupils have limited strategies to help them to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words. This means that words that are relatively common, such as 'orphan' and 'defeated', are read or used without their precise meaning being known. This limits pupils' ability to discuss topics at greater depth or to answer comprehension questions with a high degree of accuracy.
- There is limited evidence of the progress that pupils make in subjects other than English and mathematics. Although it is clear that pupils achieve well across the curriculum, there is no evidence that pupils make substantial and sustained progress in these subjects.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The early years leader is new to the post. She is being supported well by the assistant headteacher and has already developed a good understanding of the provision's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders ensure that additional funding is used effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Children make good progress, often from low starting points, during their time in early years. This is because their needs are met well. Alongside a thorough baseline assessment, children's communication and language development is assessed in depth. This provides staff with the information they need to ensure that children's individual needs are met.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early. The special educational needs coordinator works closely with the early years staff to ensure that appropriate support is put in place as quickly as possible.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together. They plan a good range of learning opportunities for children, covering all the areas of the early years curriculum. The environment, both indoors and outdoors, is attractive and interesting for young children. For example, children are provided with physical activities that give them the opportunity to learn to manage risks safely.
- Children learn the rules and routines in the early years classrooms very quickly. Despite being only a matter of days into their school careers at the time of this inspection, most children already know how to behave and what is expected of them. However,



some children are able to persevere with activities for extended periods of time, while others flit from place to place.

- Children are prepared increasingly well for the greater demands of Year 1. The proportion of pupils that reach a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year is now similar to the national average. This means that most children are working at an appropriate level when they enter Year 1.
- The purpose of some of the activities that are provided for children to work on independently are not always clear. Where this is the case, children enjoy playing with the equipment that has been provided for them but do not extend their learning more deeply.

## School details

Unique reference number	141380
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10036102

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	299
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Harry Meikle
Executive headteacher	Joanne Coton
Telephone number	01279 630 120
Website	<a href="http://www.netacademies.net/abbotsweld">www.netacademies.net/abbotsweld</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@abbotsweld.netacademies.net">office@abbotsweld.netacademies.net</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school opened as a sponsor-led academy on 1 January 2015. Abbotsweld is sponsored by NET Academies Trust and works within a hub of four NET schools.
- The executive headteacher has led the school since it opened as an academy. The head of school joined Abbotsweld at the beginning of the current school year.
- The school meets current floor standards. These are the minimum standards, set by the government, for pupils' progress and attainment.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning over time. Inspectors observed parts of 26 lessons, some jointly with the head of school or assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors looked closely at the work in pupils' exercise books. They listened to pupils read and talked to them about their work.
- Inspectors looked at a range of the school's documents, including assessment information. They checked the school's single central record of pre-employment checks and other documentation concerned with the safer recruitment of staff and volunteers.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school, other leaders, governors and a group of pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection and with parents as they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors considered 27 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

## Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Bridgette Gough

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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