

# Abbey Meadows Primary School

Galfrid Road, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB5 8ND

## Inspection dates

13–14 December 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- There has been a significant decline in pupils' achievement since the previous inspection owing to ineffective leadership and frequent staff changes.
- Pupils' progress, including that of disadvantaged pupils, is inadequate in reading, writing and mathematics. Current standards are low across the school, including communication skills.
- The use of the pupil premium grant has been ineffective and has not led to improvements in the achievement of pupils it is intended to help.
- Planning and assessment vary too much and do not support pupils of different abilities to make good progress across different subjects.
- The outdoor areas of early years do not promote children's high-quality learning.
- The expectations for pupils' behaviour are not consistently applied by all staff. When work is not explained clearly and pupils do not understand what to do, they become distracted and inattentive.
- A small minority of pupils do not show sufficient respect and understanding for others.
- Pupils' attendance is below average.
- Some parents and carers are unhappy about changes in staffing and leadership and the quality of school communication, especially when they have concerns.
- Pupils' skills and knowledge are limited across some subjects because leaders are in the early stages of improving the planning of the curriculum.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher, leaders and governors are taking determined and effective action to improve the quality of teaching, assessment and pupils' learning.
- Leaders have brought about improvements which ensure that children are safe and that most follow the expected standard of behaviour.
- Most staff, including newly appointed teachers, are supportive of leaders' work.
- The quality of leadership, teaching and children's achievement is improving in the early years.
- Children say, and their parents confirm, that they are happy, safe and well looked after.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

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

- Improve pupils' outcomes in reading, writing, communication and mathematics by making sure that all teachers:
  - use assessment information effectively to plan work which is challenging for pupils of all abilities
  - provide effective opportunities for all pupils to read at greater depth
  - extend the opportunities in all years for pupils to develop their written skills in subjects other than English
  - provide work and activities which support pupils to use their mathematical knowledge thoroughly, through solving problems and doing higher-order calculations
  - challenge pupils to explain their thinking and reasoning thoroughly when using questions.
- Improve pupils' attitudes to learning and personal development by making sure that:
  - all members of staff apply the school's behaviour policies consistently
  - pupils are clear about how to do their work
  - relationship education is taught effectively in all year groups
  - pupils' absence is reduced and is at least in line with national averages.
- Improve pupils' skills and knowledge across the curriculum by making sure that all subject leaders, including those recently appointed, improve the quality of planned work and activities across the different subjects.
- Improve the quality of the outdoor area in the early years so that children have wider opportunities to learn well.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - new and accurate assessment information is shared quickly so that all subject leaders and teachers can use it effectively for lesson planning
  - leaders take effective action to reduce the variation in the quality of teaching across the school
  - all subject leaders plan thoroughly for the development of relevant skills and knowledge across the different areas of the curriculum
  - all leaders, including governors, rigorously analyse the effectiveness of support for disadvantaged pupils and the use of additional funding, and take effective action to address weaknesses
  - any parental concerns received are acted upon quickly and parents informed of the

actions staff have taken.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium 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

- Until recently, leaders have not successfully ensured that the school has provided an effective standard of education. Since the previous inspection, the quality of leadership has been ineffective, while teaching and behaviour have been negatively affected by significant changes in staffing, including at the most senior level. As a result of this decline, particularly in teaching, pupils' achievement is inadequate.
- The newly appointed headteacher and her capable leadership team have quickly brought about the required momentum to improve the school's performance. These new leaders and the governors recognise that the performance of the school has been ineffective and the pace of improvement has been too slow.
- Previous arrangements for assessment were inadequate and prevented leaders from monitoring pupils' progress and acting to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- New leaders have rapidly established effective testing and assessment systems and are able to use the findings to direct improvements and set demanding academic targets. However, this valuable information is not yet shared quickly enough for teachers to use it for planning effective learning activities.
- Leaders demonstrate the capacity to improve because they are holding teachers firmly to account for how well pupils achieve so that the progress made by pupils currently at the school is now improving. Teachers are now focused on improving pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics. This improvement has secured a more united focus on raising pupils' achievement. Leaders' assessments of the quality of teaching and pupils' work are now accurate and they use the findings to provide effective training and guidance for teachers.
- Leaders have not ensured that additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Until recently, leaders' decisions and planning lacked a focus on the pupils they were supposed to be helping and presented an inaccurate picture about the spending involved. As a result, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils has been inadequate and has not improved quickly enough. Current leaders have accurately evaluated past weaknesses but have not had sufficient time to bring about the improvements which are required.
- The leadership of support and teaching for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities has been quickly improved. Consequently, the pupils are identified and assessed accurately and effective provision is planned. The group of pupils currently in the school have low attainment, but their progress is improving owing to the support which is now in place for them.
- Senior leaders ensure that performance management arrangements focus on improving teaching and they make regular, accurate checks on how well teachers are developing pupils' learning. Leaders support staff to meet their improvement targets but they do not avoid tough conversations about the quality of performance if these are necessary.
- Since the start of this academic year, leaders have quickly reduced the numbers of teachers leaving the school. They have successfully recruited teachers who are highly committed and feel supported, including the newly qualified. New teachers reported

that the help given to develop their teaching was 'a breath of fresh air' and the most effective they have experienced in their careers.

- Current subject leaders are well qualified and offer effective subject knowledge and teaching experience. Improvements to the leadership of English and mathematics have had the most impact on pupils' achievement in the current year. Pupils' writing skills are now being developed in different subjects, such as history and religious education. However, with the exception of English and mathematics leaders, most have been appointed recently and it is too early to assess the effectiveness of their development work.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It requires further improvement in order to support pupils' good achievement and personal development. The development of more effective knowledge and skills across the different subjects requires greater attention from subject leaders.
- Extra-curricular opportunities include arts, crafts and cookery. Pupils have also had the opportunity to undertake trips, including a visit to the Houses of Parliament. Pupils appreciate these opportunities.
- Additional funding to promote physical education and competitive sport is used effectively, and the number of pupils involved has rapidly increased. There are now nine different clubs covering athletics, field sports, gym, cricket and football. Leaders have worked successfully with other schools, and effective sports coaching is shared.
- Leaders and teachers encourage pupils to 'grow together', while other recently established values promote curiosity, imagination, independence, ambition and resilience. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is now effective in most areas, including their understanding and respect for different beliefs and religions. However, some pupils still need support to develop relationship skills.
- Leaders and governors recognise that, until recently, there were significant concerns from parents and pupils about the quality of behaviour at the school. New leaders have taken firm action. As a result, the school is a more harmonious environment, and parents and pupils agree that new leaders have acted quickly to bring this about.
- Parents agree that the overall quality of education at the school is improving. However, a significant number report that they do not agree that leaders communicate effectively or respond quickly enough to their concerns.
- The local authority has been closely involved in determining the direction of the school in the last academic year and, working with governors, has firmly challenged the underperformance of previous leadership and teaching.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have effectively challenged previous underperformance and the decline in the quality of education. They have sought to hold leaders to account and have acted decisively to reset the direction of the school.
- Governors recognise that the school's previous weaknesses were not addressed quickly enough. Despite the clarity and persistence of their challenge to leaders, they were unable to secure accurate information from leaders about the performance of the

school and its use of the pupil premium grant.

- Governors have acted quickly with new leaders to ensure that development priorities are now based on an accurate understanding of the performance of the school and the urgency required.
- Governors have made frequent visits to the school. Their well-focused activities have helped them to keep well informed about the progress of the new leadership team in directing its improvement work.
- The governors take their obligations about safeguarding children very seriously and have ensured that all staff give the priority it requires.
- The governing body brings rigour to arrangements which ensure that performance management and pay awards are linked securely to the quality of teaching.
- Working successfully with local authority officers and current leaders, governors have brought about required improvements to ensure that the school's finances are now secure.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff and governors work continually to maintain an effective culture of safeguarding, where pupils are protected from harm and risk. Parents agree that their children are kept safe.
- All checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are effective.
- Leaders responsible for safeguarding work are suitably trained. All staff, including the most recently appointed, receive effective training which refers to national guidance and takes account of all potential risks to children, including neglect, online dangers, abuse of all types, radicalisation and extremism. Leaders and governors check on the difference that training makes, and staff are well aware of how to act on any concerns.
- All adults employed within the school act quickly and refer any concerns to the relevant leaders. Leaders responsible for safeguarding children and the management and sharing of information are highly efficient. Consequently, they are able to share concerns effectively with the appropriate agencies, including the local authority.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has declined since the previous inspection and is not consistently good throughout the school. Frequent changes in staffing have also meant that some teachers have not had sufficient time to establish their effectiveness with some classes.
- Current leaders' actions are ensuring that teaching is improving across the different year groups and particularly in Year 6 and Year 2. However, there has not been sufficient time to make a sustained improvement so that pupils' past underachievement is overcome.
- There is still variability in the quality of learning within and between classes and across

subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics.

- Some teachers do not plan work and activities which are suitably matched to pupils' different abilities. As a result, pupils are provided with work which is not sufficiently challenging.
- Although arrangements are made to help all teachers to identify different pupils' needs, including the disadvantaged, some teachers do not plan for this effectively, which limits the quality of pupils' learning.
- Some teachers are not using assessment information to organise learning effectively. Pupils' previous difficulties are not taken into consideration, and work is not explained clearly. In other examples, teachers' checks on pupils' progress in lessons fail to pick up on their difficulties. Consequently, pupils sometimes do not know how to approach their work and they can become distracted or inattentive.
- Pupils' spoken communication requires improvement in order to help them speak with confidence and clarity. Some effective examples of questioning were found which are addressing this. One good example was in Year 5 mathematics. As a result of effective questioning and discussion, pupils were able to explain the value and different purposes of buildings and how to calculate the area of each building.
- The teaching of phonics is currently effective in the early years and key stage 1. Leaders have introduced a well-designed programme to help older pupils in key stage 2 who are still struggling with their phonic knowledge. However, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of this work.
- The teaching of reading is improving and more pupils are able to read with confidence. However, the higher skills such as inference are not taught effectively enough.
- The teaching of writing is improving in English. However, pupils are not currently being provided with enough opportunities to develop their writing skills across the different subjects. Nevertheless, a good example was in a Year 4 drama lesson, when effective teaching helped pupils to write interesting scripts for a play about Robin Hood.
- The teaching of mathematics has developed because activities are now supporting pupils to use their knowledge more thoroughly. Where teaching is effective, more pupils are being guided to tackle mathematical problems and use their knowledge of numbers to solve them. However, teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to use their knowledge in solving problems, or challenge them to complete higher-order calculations.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities now benefit from effective support from teaching assistants within classrooms and sometimes in additional lessons. Newly appointed leaders have ensured that pupils are assessed accurately and are provided with sensitive help which challenges them and also supports them to use their knowledge with greater skill.
- Classrooms and corridors are brightly decorated with interesting displays of pupils' work and helpful guidance for learning. These resources and examples of good work encourage pupils and show them what they can achieve.

**Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Requires improvement**

## **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Leaders' and governors' accurate assessments demonstrate that, until recently, pupils' attitudes to learning, relationships, bullying and lack of peaceful resolution of disagreements between pupils were a significant cause for concern.
- Changes in staffing have prevented the establishment of successful learning relationships. However, this situation is improving as new teachers have been recruited and have stayed at the school.
- Previous arrangements for the logging of pupils' welfare and incidents, and the use of this information to bring about improvement, were inadequate and ineffective. Current, improved record-keeping shows that a very small minority of pupils still need to be frequently directed to make the right choices when seeking resolution of disagreements.
- Current leaders have worked with urgency to ensure that all pupils are guided to follow the school's motto of 'growing together'. In addition, teachers have taught pupils to improve relationships and reduce conflict. Although these are recent developments, the school's accurate records demonstrate fewer incidents of conflict.
- While there is still variation in some behaviour and improvements are at an early stage, when teachers establish the correct expectations, pupils are cooperative, patient with one another and actively seek solutions to difficulties. A good example was seen during a Year 5 lesson about conflict resolution, where pupils maintained their attention during challenging discussion work.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school, although a small number are still concerned about bullying. However, pupils say that when they report incidents of bullying, leaders and staff act quickly to stop it.
- The work of leaders and teachers to help keep pupils safe when using the internet and communication technologies is effective. Consequently, pupils are able to explain risks, how to avoid them and the types of social media which are age appropriate.
- Pupils are encouraged to lead healthy lives. Leaders and teachers have ensured that far more pupils take part in active sports, and the school provides a healthy menu of food choices.
- Parents agree that their children are looked after and kept safe. They also report that there has been an improvement in pupils' relationships since the new leaders were appointed.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a decline in pupils' behaviour and conduct at the school.
- Pupils' behaviour varies across different classes. Distracted or inattentive behaviour is evident in some classes when teachers do not properly explain work and activities or



when pupils are unsure of what to do and lose interest.

- In some instances, staff do not apply the school's behaviour policy consistently, and this results in pupils' inappropriate behaviour.
- Current leaders have acted with determination and urgency to improve pupils' behaviour. They have introduced high expectations and a new policy for behaviour. Pupils now understand what is required as acceptable behaviour. Equally, detentions and removal from class when behaviour has fallen below that which is acceptable have worked well to reduce the number of incidents in the current year.
- Leaders and staff make sure that all behavioural incidents are logged accurately and shared quickly so that they can tackle any problems. As a result, pupils are more confident about behaviour in the school and have noticed that there have been fewer incidents of poor behaviour since summer 2017.
- Around school and at break or lunchtime, pupils' conduct is generally positive and sensible. Pupils are largely courteous to teachers, visitors, support staff and one another.
- Some good attitudes to learning are evident, for example in upper key stage 2, where teachers' expectations of behaviour are very clear. When staff encouraged positive behaviour and provided clear feedback during a Year 6 mathematics lesson about the reflection and rotation of shapes, pupils maintained their effort with challenging discussion work.
- Attendance is below the national average, including the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, new leaders and staff responsible for attendance now make sure that absences are quickly followed up with parents in order to minimise persistent or unauthorised absences. This determined activity is improving pupils' attendance this year.
- The proportion of pupils excluded from school for poor behaviour has been well above national figures since the previous inspection. However, current leaders' determined actions to improve behaviour have reduced the number of exclusions in the current year.
- A very large majority of parents agree that behaviour is improving, and approve of the work of leaders, governors and teachers to tackle poor behaviour.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Inadequate

- Outcomes have declined significantly since the previous inspection. Pupils' past underachievement means that those currently attending the school have low standards of knowledge and skills for their age, and their progress is inadequate.
- Although new leaders' work to improve teaching is bringing about change, there has not been sufficient time to address the current inadequacy in pupils' outcomes.
- Pupils' higher-level skills in reading are not effectively developed. Some pupils find it difficult to infer the meaning of words chosen by writers. Some older pupils have not yet secured their phonics knowledge and struggle when reading the sounds which letters make.

- Many pupils lack confidence and fluency when they speak about their learning or try to explain their ideas.
- Past underachievement means that some struggle with calculation and problem solving in mathematics.
- Children join Reception with levels of development slightly lower than those expected for their age. They go on to achieve levels of development broadly similar to the national average. Despite this achievement, results for key stage 1 in all subjects across 2016 and 2017 demonstrate pupils' underachievement by the end of Year 2. This means that they are not sufficiently prepared for the challenges of the key stage 2 curriculum.
- Below-average proportions of pupils achieved the expected phonics standard in Year 1 in 2017. Arrangements to help them catch up are in the early stages of development.
- In key stage 2, pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016 and 2017 were very low compared with national results and, in 2017, their results represented very weak progress. This was the case for pupils from all different starting points, including those with average and higher prior attainment.
- By the end of key stage 2, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils from their starting points has been inadequate and has shown little improvement. In 2016 and 2017, the standards they reached in reading, writing and mathematics were very low.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities currently in the school are making stronger progress from their starting points than other pupils because their support programmes are carefully planned and their needs are accurately assessed. Recent developments have not had sufficient time to secure good progress.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- Following changes in the leadership and staffing of early years, new senior leaders have firmly challenged the performance of teachers in the current year. This has brought about improvements in children's progress.
- Arrangements for assessing children's levels of skills and knowledge upon entry to the Reception class are now accurate. The school's records show that children currently in the school began with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age. Current assessment records, children's work and observations of their learning show that their progress requires improvement owing to some variations in the quality of teaching.
- Leaders and new staff have quickly brought about improvements to arrangements which help children make an effective start and settle in to school life. Parents are supportive of the school's work and communication in this area. They also approve of the online assessment system which allows them to view their children's progress.
- Leaders have challenged teachers, including those recently appointed, to provide learning activities which are more suitably matched to children's individual skills and abilities. There is now a greater focus on early reading, writing and mathematics, with teaching organised to support these activities. As a result, children are better prepared at this point in the year than last year's Reception Year.
- Following improvements made to teaching, the school's assessment records show that

children's achievement in phonics is improving, particularly for those children with lower starting points.

- While the organisation of the provision has improved, there is still some variation in the current quality of teaching, which can slow down children's learning. In some examples, the planning of activities and use of support assistants are not sufficiently matched to the needs of the children, including the disadvantaged, who are not always known to teachers as needing additional support. This leads to some children becoming inattentive when their learning is less structured and they are unsure of what to do.
- Where teaching is most effective, assessment is used very well and work is matched precisely to children's needs and abilities. Teachers explain work clearly, and teaching assistants provide effective support for children, while also encouraging them to think for themselves by the appropriate use of questioning. One good example was in a lesson where children were helped to improve their counting skills by using a range of apparatus and familiar objects.
- Children receive effective care and attention. The school's values are well promoted, and clear expectations for the standards of behaviour are set. Children's personal development is good and they display positive, kind attitudes towards one another when learning through play and sharing activities. Children are also sensible while playing during break, and a number said that 'everyone is kind here.'
- Arrangements for keeping children safe work effectively, and parents agree. All staff are suitably trained in relevant safeguarding practices and act quickly on any concerns.
- The outdoor learning environment is safe, but requires development in order to offer children a fuller range of learning opportunities matched to the early years curriculum.

## School details

Unique reference number	132127
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10037637

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	480
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Davey
Headteacher	Josephine Angel
Telephone number	01223 508611
Website	<a href="http://www.abbeymeadows.co.uk">www.abbeymeadows.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@abbeymeadows.cambs.sch.uk">office@abbeymeadows.cambs.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	26–27 June 2014

## Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of children from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs is average.
- There is a breakfast club that is managed by the school.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

- The school does not meet the government's floor standards. Floor standards are the minimum national expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 2.

## Information about this inspection

- The current headteacher and senior team have been in post for less than a full academic term.
- The inspection gathered evidence from lessons covering all classes within the school, some of which were visited jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of information and school documents, including self-evaluation records, improvement plans, curriculum information, checks on the quality of teaching, performance management arrangements and details of governors' work.
- Inspectors looked at the school's arrangements, records and policies for the safeguarding of pupils, records of attendance, exclusions and behavioural incidents.
- Inspectors looked at work from each year group and listened to pupils read. They also scrutinised the school's records of pupils' achievement/attainment and progress.
- Meetings were held with various teachers and support staff, the headteacher, subject leaders, the local authority's senior adviser, another education adviser and the governing body.
- Meetings were held to discuss the progress of pupils, attendance, exclusions, staffing levels and the work of leaders since they were appointed.
- Meetings were held with pupils from key stage 2 to discuss their experiences.
- Inspectors observed pupils at break and around the school.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of school on the second day of the inspection. They took account of 49 parental responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 30 written responses. Inspectors also took account of the school's own recent parental surveys. The views of 39 staff from Ofsted's online staff survey were considered, and inspectors met with newly appointed support staff and teachers to discuss their experiences at the school and their training in school.

## Inspection team

David Turner, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lynsey Holzer	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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