

Abbot's Hall Community Primary School

Danescourt Avenue, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 1QF

Inspection dates

31 January–1 February 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the previous inspection, leaders and governors have successfully changed the school from a first school to a primary school, improving many aspects of provision while introducing Years 5 and 6.
- Leaders have created a culture where behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are extremely polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors.
- The curriculum engages pupils' interest and ensures that pupils make progress in a wide range of subjects
- The school's focus on sport and physical education (PE) promotes healthy living effectively.
- The early years foundation stage provides pupils with an excellent springboard for Year 1.
- Most teaching is enthusiastic and inspires pupils, but additional support is not always targeted well enough, especially in small-group interventions outside of the classroom. Assessment is not fine-tuned sufficiently to check what pupils can do and then to quickly challenge them to make further progress.
- The school is successful in ensuring that, at the end of Year 6, most pupils reach the standard expected for their age in reading and mathematics.
- However, given their success at the end of key stage 1, especially at higher levels, pupils' progress in key stage 2 has been insufficient to attain the higher levels in Year 6. As a result, although improving because of inspiring leadership, overall, pupils' outcomes, and particularly outcomes for the most able, still require improvement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for the most able pupils by:
 - ensuring that teachers throughout the school are aware of what is required for pupils to demonstrate 'greater depth' in Year 6
 - ensuring that leaders at all levels have the knowledge and skills to promote effective teaching and appropriately challenging targets to ensure that the most able pupils make strong progress throughout key stage 2.
- Improve assessment systems so that teachers are more precise in their understanding of what pupils can do and, as a result, set work in lessons and out-of-lesson interventions that challenges pupils of all abilities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have a clear vision for the school, which is shared by staff. Since the previous inspection, they have successfully managed the transition to the school's inclusion of Year 5 and 6 pupils for the first time. Leaders are aware that there remains work to do to ensure that pupils do as well at the end of key stage 2 as they do at the end of key stage 1 and in the early years foundation stage. The current Year 6 is the school's third cohort. Standards have improved in each of these three years. At the same time, leaders have ensured that pupils' behaviour has improved further, and their personal development and welfare have improved to outstanding. Leaders at all levels are enthusiastic and passionate about pupils doing well.
- The curriculum is broad and well designed. It rightly prioritises pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Leaders and teachers understand the knowledge and skills needed for success in different subjects. Art and music have an important role in the school. For example, singing was seen being taught effectively and specialist teachers provide instrumental tuition for Year 5 in trombone and violin. Pupils talk about their different subjects with great enthusiasm. The school makes good use of the local environment, for example with visits to the adjacent Museum of East Anglian Life and the forest school.
- Leaders' view of the school's performance is accurate. Governors and the headteacher have a clear understanding of their school and its strengths and areas for improvement.
- The pupil premium is used very well to support the progress of the small number of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the progress and attainment of this group of pupils have improved strongly and their outcomes are in line with other pupils nationally.
- Similarly, the PE and sport premium funding is used very effectively to drive up standards in PE and ensure that children enjoy the subject and achieve well. A specialist is employed to work with pupils and train teachers. As a result, a very well-planned PE lesson was observed by inspectors.
- Leaders ensure that spending to support pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is used effectively. They review and evaluate the effectiveness of their actions. The headteacher has a strong belief in the importance of maximising the availability of adults to support learning. These adults work effectively with the teachers. One wrote to inspectors to point out that, as a higher-level teaching assistant, 'We have regular observations with good feedback and points to improve on.'
- The school promotes equality and diversity very well. Leaders recognise that there is little diversity in the school and so work extra-hard to raise pupils' awareness of life in modern Britain and to promote British values.
- Leaders engage effectively with parents and carers. For example, during the inspection, parents of Year 2 pupils were working with pupils on letter formation. Nearly all parents are very positive about the school and its leadership. A typical comment was 'The whole staffing team at Abbot's Hall are amazing.'

Governance of the school

- Governors play a supportive and appropriately challenging role in the school's success. They have balanced academic success with maintaining the community character of the school during its reorganisation.
- Governors regularly visit the school and check that the quality of provision is as reported to them. As a result, they know the school's strengths and areas for further improvement.
- Governors regularly check safeguarding arrangements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils feel safe and are listened to. Pupils have lots of opportunities to raise concerns. Pupils understand how to stay safe in a range of contexts, such as when using computers or when using the roads.
- Staff are well trained and raise concerns where necessary. Records of checks on staff recruitment, child protection concerns and communication with external agencies are clear and well maintained.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers ensure that lesson time is generally very productive. The energy and excitement of teachers inspire pupils. Teachers use a range of strategies to engage pupils. As a result, pupils really enjoy their learning. Teachers consistently demonstrate high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils respond with highly positive attitudes.
- Most teaching is characterised by teachers' strong subject knowledge, leading to confident teaching. It also leads to teachers skilfully tackling pupils' misconceptions and to well-developed questioning to probe pupils' understanding and to take forward their learning.
- Most pupils know what to do to improve their work as a result of effective feedback from teachers. Pupils respond to this enthusiastically.
- The learning environments in classrooms are attractive and useful in using displays to remind pupils of their learning.
- The spelling, punctuation and grammar '5 a day' exercise has helped pupils do very well in national tests. It has built on the success of a similar activity in mathematics.
- Teachers use the full curriculum to promote mathematical and literacy skills. For example, in a PE lesson, pupils developed accurate subject-specific vocabulary, while a geography lesson on maps developed pupils' use of coordinates. In a powerful Year 6 lesson linked to Holocaust Memorial Day, most pupils remembered the meaning of propaganda from a different historical context.
- Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to pupils' learning by ensuring that pupils understand tasks and by asking useful questions.

- While teaching at key stage 2 is very successful at ensuring that pupils reach appropriate expectations for their age, there are not always enough opportunities to deepen the learning of higher-attaining pupils.
- Teachers identify pupils for extra support if their assessment shows the pupils to be falling behind. Interventions designed to give additional support with small groups outside the classroom are not always well matched to pupils' needs. For example, pupils were practising adding four-digit numbers, which these pupils could do with ease.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils discuss and debate issues thoughtfully. They demonstrate respect for each other and for their teachers.
- Pupils are confident. They can articulate their thoughts clearly and work collaboratively with one another.
- Pupils take pride in their work and in their school.
- Pupils report that they feel safe. They are well known by staff who are vigilant about their welfare. Very nearly all parents agree that their child is safe at school, is well looked after and is happy.
- Pupils are developing an understanding of the value of money and develop enterprise skills through activities such as the pre-Christmas fair.
- The school is rightly proud to be only the second primary school in Suffolk to have received the Association for Physical Education Quality Mark with distinction, reflecting the priority given to promoting healthy lifestyles through PE and sport.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development permeates the curriculum, especially through music, art and religious education.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Standards of behaviour are excellent around the school and pupils' very positive attitudes to learning ensure that learning is uninterrupted. Any low-level disruption is very rare. This allows teachers to be confident in choosing a range of activities. For example, in an assembly around the fundamental British value of democracy, pupils were voting with their feet, by moving their position to show their view on whether the voting age should be reduced to 16. Although there was the potential for mayhem, the exercise was very orderly.
- Pupils get on well together at break and lunchtime. The school is orderly at these social times.
- The behaviour of the very few pupils who have particular behavioural issues is managed well. A small number of parents raised concerns about incidents involving

these pupils, but all staff and the overwhelming majority of parents responding to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, believe that the school ensures that pupils are well behaved.

- Anti-bullying strategies are promoted well. Pupils say that there is no bullying and are confident that any would be dealt with effectively. Year 6 pupils spoke about the anti-bullying film they had recently produced. Again, the overwhelming majority of parents are positive about the school dealing with bullying effectively.
- Pupils enjoy attending school and, as a result, attendance is above average and persistent absence is well below that found nationally. Leaders work hard to encourage regular attendance and to challenge absence.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Progress last summer in reading and in mathematics was in line with other schools. In writing, however, pupils' progress was poor. Although improving, the progress of higher-attaining pupils in the current Year 6 is not strong enough because, until recently, leaders and teachers were not sufficiently aware of the requirements of working at greater depth for Year 6. As a result, higher-attaining pupils in the current Year 6 are needing to catch up.
- In the summer 2017 national tests, the proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching the national expectation at the end of key stage 2 was well above average in reading, mathematics and the combined score for reading, writing and mathematics. Nonetheless, the proportion of pupils gaining the higher level in reading and in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was below average.
- At key stage 1, the proportions of pupils attaining the national expectations for their age and the higher level were both above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The majority of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good progress from their starting points. These children have termly support plans written and shared with them and their parents.
- The achievement of pupils entitled to the pupil premium has improved over the last two years. In 2017, their attainment was similar to other pupils nationally. The majority of pupils are working at the expected standard for their age.
- In last year's phonics screening check for Year 1, the results were above average, giving pupils a strong foundation for reading. Inspectors listened to pupils read with fluency. Pupils read regularly and enjoy reading, but they could be given more demanding books sooner.
- Topic folders are used to check and demonstrate the progress pupils are making across a broad range of subjects. Teachers are clear about what is expected in the full range of subjects in the national curriculum.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development has been at least at the national average for the last three years.
- Pupils quickly settle into the early years, where their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils support one another in their learning. They demonstrate high levels of engagement and perseverance with learning activities.
- The early years leader is a long-established practitioner who combines a high level of experience and expertise. Her skill is valued by other schools where she provides support.
- Children enter the early years from a wide range of pre-school settings. The school's leadership is working with these settings to moderate the judgements over pupils' starting points in the school. The school's induction process for new children is very robust. It involves parents and the child's previous settings.
- Transition from the early years to Year 1 is very well organised. It involves meetings with Year 1 staff and the sharing of children's profiles. Provision during the summer term before the transfer ensures that pupils have the skills they need to work more independently, but support also continues into the autumn term of Year 1.
- Pupils use and apply knowledge very well, for example in mathematics, where they were counting out and talking about weight and asking which is the heaviest and why or the lightest and why.
- Adults work together exceptionally well as a team. They are highly trained and very effective, so pupils consistently make equally strong progress across the two classes. Staff are skilful at recording pupils' learning. Learning journals provide a systematic process for assessing the children. Suitable levels of challenge are provided to children who are working at the level expected for their age, while the really bright children are also challenged well.
- Children have a deep joy of learning.

School details

Unique reference number	124631
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10041802

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	405
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gary Kenworthy
Headteacher	Rachel Bailey
Telephone number	01449 612 818
Website	www.abbotshall.suffolk.sch.uk/
Email address	ad.abbotshall.p@talk21.com
Date of previous inspection	19 September 2013

Information about this school

- The school is of average size for a primary school. The school has added Years 5 and 6 since the previous inspection.
- The great majority of the pupils come from White British backgrounds, with very few from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion with an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is a little below average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning in a range of lessons, some of which were seen jointly with a senior leader. In addition, several short visits were made to a further range of lessons. Inspectors observed pupils at break and lunchtime and before and after school. Inspectors observed the teaching of reading and listened to pupils read. Pupils' books from different year groups were checked to see progress.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, three groups of pupils, a group of teachers, two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. A phone conversation was held with the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors looked at the 92 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 45 written text comments on the same questionnaire. They also considered 32 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team scrutinised information about pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance, looked at the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, read minutes of the meetings of the governing body and scrutinised pupils' work in lessons.

Inspection team

Adrian Lyons, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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