

Inspection of a good school: Abbots Hall Primary School

Abbots Drive, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex SS17 7BW

Inspection dates:

10–11 December 2019

Outcome

Abbots Hall Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. In keeping with the school values, many behave with compassion and respect. Adults, too, model these values. Leaders provide thoughtful support for pupils' and staff's well-being. Pupils understand the school's message that 'it is ok, not to be ok'. Individuals who need extra help receive high-quality support.

Learning takes place in happy, productive classrooms. Pupils enjoy their lessons and say they learn a lot in many subjects. This is because learning is organised and taught well. Leaders are making improvements in the very few subjects where learning is not as effectively ordered or delivered.

Pupils told me that they feel safe. Parents agree. Pupils understand that bullying is unpleasant and wrong. They told me that there is very little bullying at their school. Any that takes place is sorted out quickly by adults.

The school has grown in size and popularity. A significant minority of pupils join midway through the school year. This is giving leaders new challenges in maintaining the good quality of education. They continue to make changes so that all pupils who are new to the school make the best possible start.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have made well-thought-out changes to the curriculum in many subjects. Curriculum leaders have been appropriately trained to develop subject plans. These plans lay out what pupils will learn in a logical order. Teachers deliver the curriculum skilfully. They know what needs to be taught and the best order in which to teach it. For example, in geography, teachers give pupils plenty of chances to remember previous learning. Pupils pick up and discuss new knowledge with confidence.

Teachers have a good knowledge of most subjects that they teach. They make effective use of well-chosen resources. Teachers use assessment well. They quickly spot when

pupils need extra help. Pupils respond with enthusiasm to their teachers' guidance. These strengths are evident in mathematics, which is capably taught. Pupils know what is expected of them. They gain confidence in their understanding and use of important mathematical knowledge. Pupils' work is of good quality, and they achieve well. The curriculum in modern languages is not as carefully planned and taught as other subjects.

Reading is central to pupils' learning. Children learn to read from the start of Reception. Adults emphasise sounds, letters and words as they work with children. The children are very interested in words and stories. Teachers teach reading well in key stages 1 and 2. Pupils enjoy the enthusiasm with which teachers read to them. Pupils in key stage 2 retain their passion for reading. Pupils who fall behind get the help that they need to become more confident readers. Leaders are taking action so that they can establish more quickly how well pupils who join the school mid-year can read.

Adults adapt learning so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have access to the full curriculum. Staff have high expectations for all pupils. Work is suitably demanding. Pupils with SEND make strong progress.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and each other's company. This means that learning takes place in calm, happy classrooms. Pupils like the fact that adults notice and reward good behaviour. A small number of pupils, some new to school, show less enthusiasm for their learning. While the attendance of many pupils is high, that of a small number is low.

The early years provides children with a great start to their education. The learning areas are well organised. The good range of resources help children develop their skills in literacy and numeracy. Adults model the behaviour and routines that they expect of children. Children respond splendidly. They get along happily in learning and play.

Pupils and parents praise the variety of extra activities that the school offers. Pupils develop confidence and resilience through creative, computing, sports and outdoor activities. Pupils understand the diverse nature of British society. They are respectful of different beliefs and cultures. One pupil summed up the views of many, saying, 'We are all human and should be treated equally.'

Leaders and governors work effectively together. They know where the school's strengths are and what could be better. All staff who responded to the online survey agree that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. The view expressed by one member of staff reflects those of others: 'Leaders are constantly striving to ensure we have a good work-life balance, whilst not jeopardising the children's chances to succeed.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils are safe and know how to stay safe. Leaders provide pupils with age-appropriate information to help them stay safe when online and in other environments.

Staff are well trained and know what signs may indicate that a pupil is at risk. Adults

understand the importance of passing on concerns accurately and promptly. Records show that leaders provide appropriate support when a pupil or their family is in need of additional help.

Governors make sure that the school carries out the necessary checks on staff who work with pupils. The record of these checks is accurate and well maintained.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Over the past two years, leaders have carefully redesigned the curriculum in many subjects. Curriculum leaders have been given appropriate training so that they have the skills and knowledge that they need. The headteacher, with the support of governors, has made sure that this work has been done thoroughly and to a realistic timetable. Leaders now need to put into practice their plans to develop the curriculum in languages so that it is as carefully sequenced and capably delivered as learning in other subjects.
- The number of pupils at Abbots Hall Primary School is growing. Higher proportions of pupils are joining the school at times other than the start of the school year. Leaders need to further review the school's processes to establish what pupils know and can do when they join the school so that these pupils make the best possible start, quickly adapt to leaders' high expectations for pupils' attendance and behaviour, and make rapid gains in their reading where needed.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since Abbots Hall Primary School converted to be an academy in May 2013. We judged the predecessor school to be good in November 2010.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	139605
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10110307
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	251
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Rita Garner
Headteacher	Laura James
Website	www.abbots-hall.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 March 2016

Information about this school

- The number of pupils on roll at the school has increased since the previous inspection. However, the school remains smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Higher proportions of pupils join or leave the school at times other than the start of the school year than is the case nationally.
- There is a lower-than-average proportion of pupils with SEND at the school. However, the proportion of pupils with an education health care plan is higher than average.
- The school is an academy. It is not part of a multi-academy trust.

Information about this inspection

- I held meetings with the headteacher, both assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, the school business manager, teachers and teaching assistants, and members of the governing body.
- I also had a telephone conversation with an independent consultant who works as the school's improvement partner.
- The subjects considered in depth as part of this inspection were reading, mathematics, and geography. In each subject, I spoke with curriculum leaders, teachers, and pupils,

and I visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, I reviewed school policies, procedures and records. I spoke with the headteacher, who is also the designated lead for safeguarding. I also spoke with staff, governors and pupils about the school's approach to keeping pupils safe. I also considered the views of parents.
- I spoke with several groups of pupils, and with others informally, when visiting lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime. There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupils' survey.
- The 59 responses and free-text comments submitted to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were considered. I spoke with parents to gather their views about the school. I considered the school's analysis of its own recent surveys of pupils', staff's and parents' opinions.
- The 15 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff were considered alongside the views of staff gathered during meetings.

Inspection team

John Lucas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019