

Inspection of a good school: Abbey Junior School

Barclay Road, Smethwick, West Midlands B67 5LT

Inspection dates:

11–12 December 2019

Outcome

Abbey Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love learning in this lively and happy school. They enjoy the way teachers make lessons fun. They often find work intriguing. They are positive about school. They behave well and have lovely manners.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils. Teachers and other staff work hard to make learning memorable. Everything in school is well organised. Teachers get on well with pupils. In most lessons, teachers make pupils think. This helps pupils achieve well.

Pupils enjoy fantastic opportunities inside and outside classrooms. They learn many of the skills they will need later in life. For example, they learn to cook healthy food and make an emergency call. They learn to work in a team. Most pupils discover new talents. They develop into rounded individuals by the time they leave school.

Pupils learn to manage their own feelings. This helps them to get on nicely with others. Any disagreements between pupils are sorted out quickly. Often, pupils sort out problems themselves. Bullying is rare. If it happens, teachers and other staff deal with it. Pupils' attendance is very good.

Nearly all parents and carers would recommend the school to others. A very small number believe that leaders could respond more to concerns they raise.

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

Pupils learn the national curriculum subjects in a well-organised way. As they grow older, they have a good grasp of most subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well. Disadvantaged pupils also do well. In a few foundation subjects, pupils' learning is less thorough. This is because teachers lack some confidence and subject knowledge.

A few pupils start Year 3 with reading difficulties. Intensive support from specialist staff

helps them catch up. These pupils practise by reading well-chosen books. Any pupils who struggle also attend a book club. This helps to improve their comprehension.

Reading competitions keep the profile of reading high across the school. All pupils read together and by themselves each day. They are eager to read. The school has a good stock of well-used and interesting books.

Determined work by leaders and staff has improved mathematics teaching. Teachers set interesting work for pupils. They make sure that pupils start new work with solid foundations. Pupils love to reason. Many enjoy showing off mathematical proofs. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils' progress in reading and mathematics is above average.

Teachers work hard to make learning fun and memorable in science. Lessons often intrigue pupils. Pupils absorb knowledge from enthusiastic teachers. The curriculum fosters scientific thought and skills. It helps pupils to think like scientists and use specialist vocabulary to test different hypotheses. Their contributions in class are usually detailed and often insightful. Pupils usually work at or above the standard expected for their age.

Pupils' personal development is very important in this school. Pupils learn life and social skills. These are very well taught. For example, pupils take turns leading others. They practise cooperation and communication. They learn to enjoy problem-solving and creativity. They help each other inside and outside of lessons. Most pupils grow into very confident learners.

Staff encourage all pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities. They make sure that pupils have good opportunities to develop personally. Pupils visit churches, a gurdwara and a mosque. They raise funds for local charities. Pupils' successes inside and outside school feature in the school newsletter, *Abbey Lens*. For example, pupils recently achieved a world record by designing a piano-playing machine.

Visitors to school enrich its life. They give pupils new experiences, such as 'The mighty Zulu Nation' and 'Bhangra' dance workshops. Assemblies help pupils to understand the world they live in.

The experienced leadership team is stable and very effective. It is improving the school. Leaders support staff well-being and are mindful of workload. Subject leaders and other staff are trained well. Governors provide regular challenge to leaders. Together, they make sure that the school does not rest on its laurels.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know what to do if they have any worries. They understand how to keep themselves safe on the internet.

All staff know what to do to protect pupils. Regular training keeps staff aware of the different risks pupils may face. These include crossing local roads, playing out in the local

park and using the internet.

Staff work well with other agencies to report any concerns they have. They follow concerns up to make sure that pupils get the help they need. Safeguarding records are thorough and detailed. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has made substantial improvements to its curriculum since it was last inspected. However, pupils' learning in modern foreign languages, music and design and technology needs further attention. Leaders in these subjects have begun to review subject content where it needs refreshing. As they do this work, they need to ensure that curriculum content in these subjects is sufficiently challenging. They also need to ensure that teachers have sufficient specialist knowledge of each subject, including an understanding of relevant pedagogy, so that they can help all pupils learn as much as possible.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 1 May 2015.

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	103929
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10088543
Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dr Robert Hart
Headteacher	Dr Richard Kentish (executive headteacher)
Website	www.abbeyfederation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 April–1 May 2015

Information about this school

- The school is federated with Abbey Infant School. Abbey Junior School and Abbey Infant School share an executive headteacher, a deputy executive headteacher and a single governing body.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, I visited classrooms to watch pupils learn. I observed pupils at playtimes and lunchtimes. I spoke with pupils about their work and their daily life at school. I looked at the work they do and checked how well they are learning the curriculum.
- I focused on reading, mathematics and science, and also considered other national curriculum subjects by speaking with staff and pupils.
- I met with leaders and staff from the school. I spoke to them about the quality of education provided by the school, the pupils' wider development, pupils' behaviour and staff workload. I met with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- I scrutinised a range of key documents, including safeguarding records and published information about pupils' attainment and results. I took account of 68 responses to

Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 46 written responses. I also took account of 34 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Mike Cladingbowl, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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