

Inspection of a good school: Abbotsweld Primary Academy

Partridge Road, Harlow, Essex CM18 6TE

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 March 2023

Outcome

Abbotsweld Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy and safe at Abbotsweld. They are warm and kind to their friends, teachers and visitors. They know that there are adults in the school who can help them if they are worried about something.

Pupils enjoy their lessons because leaders have thought carefully about what they want children to learn. Lessons are interesting and demanding. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils enjoy reading and see it as an important part of school life. This is because leaders have made reading a priority.

Pupils enjoy a range of after-school activities and other opportunities. Most of them take part in after-school clubs. Weekly social challenges help pupils to develop positive habits and to contribute to the wider community.

Pupils behave well in class and focus on their learning. This is because expectations of their behaviour are clear and easy to understand. Teachers model these expectations and help pupils meet them. This is a school where bullying is not tolerated. If bullying happens, teachers work to resolve it quickly.

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

Leaders and teachers have worked together with the multi-academy trust (MAT) to develop a high-quality curriculum. Leaders have sequenced carefully the important knowledge that they want pupils to learn. Teachers teach the curriculum well. They use a range of strategies, such as regular recap and recall, to ensure that pupils remember important knowledge from their lessons. In a small number of instances, pupils are not prepared with the knowledge they need to complete an activity or a task successfully. This can sometimes leave them frustrated and unable to move on with their learning.

Reading is a curriculum priority. Pupils appreciate the small libraries on corridors throughout the school and the dedicated reading areas in their classrooms. They enjoy reading and value the opportunities teachers give them to read, such as 'cosy reading' or independent reading in the morning and afternoon. Children learn to read from the moment they start school. Teachers check regularly how well pupils can read to ensure that they have the right help to get better. Staff are well trained to teach reading. Regular opportunities help them to develop their expertise in this area. As a result, the teaching of reading, including phonics, is of a high quality.

Leaders have identified the important vocabulary that they want pupils to learn. Teachers plan carefully how this will be taught to ensure that children know and can use ambitious words in their lessons. This starts in the Reception classes, where children learn and use words such as 'systematically' to describe how they do things. Pupils are proud to know a wide range of vocabulary. They use this to read challenging texts or to make their writing more interesting.

Pupils demonstrate positive behaviour in lessons and around the school. They listen carefully to their teachers' explanations and wait patiently to ask questions. Leaders have worked with staff and pupils to create simple rules to promote positive behaviour. This includes a children's charter, which is used effectively in classrooms to manage behaviour. Pupils play well together at breaktime. They sit and talk happily about their day over lunch in the dining hall. Leaders deal with the rare occasions of poor behaviour appropriately.

Leaders have considered the wider development of pupils carefully. There is a comprehensive programme of opportunities for pupils to build their knowledge of how to stay safe and look after their well-being, and how the fundamental British values apply to them. The school's 'SELF' values run through the positive attitudes that pupils exhibit. The school offers a range of clubs for pupils, including choir and gymnastics. Pupils enjoy these clubs, so they are well attended.

Leaders, including governors and trustees, have ensured that staff workload and well-being are prioritised. Leaders have worked to reduce unnecessary burdens on staff. This includes changes to the marking policy and curriculum planning across the MAT. Staff have regular training. They benefit from opportunities to work with other colleagues across the MAT to share expertise. Staff value these opportunities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong safeguarding culture. Staff are well trained and are alert to safeguarding risks. Leaders know pupils and their families well. This helps them to identify safeguarding concerns early and intervene.

Pupils feel safe at school. They trust adults to look after them. They know that if they report a concern, it will be dealt with. They learn how to keep safe, including when they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, pupils are not prepared with the knowledge they need to be successful in the activities set. Consequently, this can lead to pupils feeling frustrated or unable to move forward in their learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers check if pupils have secured the knowledge required before pupils are asked to complete the associated tasks.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2017.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

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	141380
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10255235
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	292
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Shephard
Headteacher	Katherine Benson
Website	www.netacademies.net/abbotsweld/
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.
- The school provides a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and groups of staff and pupils. The inspector also met with governors, trustees and the chief executive officer of the National Education Trust MAT.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector also looked at a sample of other curriculum plans and visited other lessons.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector checked the single central record of pre-employment checks, spoke with leaders responsible for safeguarding, looked at safeguarding records and spoke with staff and pupils.
- The inspector visited the breakfast club and an after-school club. He also spent time on the playground and in the dining hall. He spoke to some parents and carers as they were dropping children off at school.
- The inspector considered 26 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including 25 written responses from parents. He considered the Ofsted questionnaire responses from 21 members of staff. There were no responses to the Ofsted questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

Marc White, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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