

Inspection of a good school: Abbey Hulton Primary School

School Road, Abbey Hulton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST2 8BS

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 October 2023

Outcome

Abbey Hulton Primary School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Lesley Brookes. This school is part of Orchard Community Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the senior executive officer, Rob Johnstone, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gill Howell.

What is it like to attend this school?

This caring school has high aspirations for all its pupils. Pupils know that staff value them and expect them to do well. This helps them to be positive and feel happy. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school and work hard in lessons.

Pupils begin school with very different starting points. Expert individual attention in the Nursery helps all pupils get off to a good start. As they progress through the school, pupils get extra help when they need it, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to enable them to achieve well.

Pupils are enthusiastic and behave well in school. This helps them learn the curriculum. Pupils are polite and friendly. They are usually kind to each other at playtimes. Any disagreements are dealt with quickly by staff. A small number of pupils struggle to manage their emotions, but they are supported effectively by specialist staff. Pupils say they feel safe in school.

The school provides many experiences for pupils to learn about the world around them. Most take part in exciting educational visits and clubs. Pupils contribute well to the wider life of the school, including through the lively school council, and actively support their local community through charity work.

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

This school's curriculum is ambitious and broad. It includes all subjects in the national curriculum. It sets out the specific knowledge and vocabulary that pupils should learn, for each subject and year group, from Nursery through to Year 6. It is organised and

sequenced carefully. The school provides guidance to staff on effective teaching strategies for different topics in most, but not all, subjects. Where it exists, it strengthens the delivery of the curriculum and helps pupils to learn well.

Early reading is taught well. Pupils benefit from regular and expert phonics teaching. The school makes sure that staff are experts through frequent training and coaching. Pupils that struggle, including those with SEND, benefit from high-quality interventions and become increasingly confident and fluent readers. Beyond the phonics programme, pupils have access to a wide selection of interesting books. A popular 'reading miles' scheme, with weekly rewards in assemblies, encourages wider reading across the school. Children are supported well in developing their speech and communication skills in Nursery. This helps to prepare them effectively for Reception.

Pupils enjoy learning mathematics. Staff are confident in teaching the curriculum, including in the early years. Pupils grow in mathematical knowledge and fluency as they progress through the school. However, some older pupils struggle with applying their mathematical knowledge when reasoning, and in unfamiliar contexts, despite having a good grasp of multiplication tables.

Teachers check on pupils' learning at the end of each topic. However, teachers do not always check during topics that pupils have secured the basic knowledge they need before they move on to new work. Consequently, some pupils do not always learn as well as they should.

Pupils with SEND achieve well from their various starting points. Staff identify their needs early. Effective teaching, support and care from well-trained staff help nearly all of them learn the same curriculum as other pupils. A few pupils with SEND have significant challenges in regulating their behaviour. Specialist staff skilfully support these pupils.

Pupils behave well in this school. Staff insist on high standards of behaviour from the early years onwards. They establish consistent routines in lessons. This helps pupils to concentrate and have positive attitudes. Relationships in the school are respectful. The ambition that staff have for all pupils is palpable.

The school provides effectively for pupils' broader development. A programme of assemblies and lessons, including on career opportunities, helps to raise aspirations and keep pupils healthy and safe.

Alongside the trust, the school gives all pupils ample opportunities to discover the wider world as well as to develop their interests and talents, for example through singing in the choir, volunteering, taking part in sporting and other clubs, and visiting museums, universities and mosques. The school's work to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of a high quality.

The school is led and managed well. Leaders take care to support staff and manage their workload. Staff are proud of working at the school. Governors, trustees and executive leaders know the school in detail. They challenge the school effectively and use management information about the school to ensure that it improves performance and

that statutory requirements are met. The school has positive relationships with parents and carers, who usually recommend the school to others.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is variation in how well the curriculum is implemented in some subjects. This means that pupils do not always learn as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that teachers are supported to implement the curriculum consistently well across all subjects so that pupils always learn as well as they can.
- Some older pupils lack confidence in applying their mathematical knowledge when reasoning. This means that pupils struggle to do as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that pupils have more opportunities to practise using their mathematical knowledge when reasoning in mathematics.
- Teachers do not always make sure that pupils have grasped key learning within a topic before moving on to new work. As a result, new learning is sometimes built on insecure foundations. Leaders should make sure that teachers check that all pupils are ready for next steps before moving on to new learning.

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 predecessor school, Abbey Hulton Primary School, to be good in February 2016.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	146487
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10290655
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	228
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gill Howell
Headteacher	Lesley Brookes
Website	www.abbeyhultonprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Abbey Hulton Primary School converted to become an academy school in May 2019, when it joined the Orchard Community Trust.
- When the predecessor school, Abbey Hulton Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted in February 2016, it was judged to be good overall.
- A new headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2021.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education and music. For each deep dive, the lead inspector held discussions

about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour and attitudes in lessons and around the school, including during an assembly and at playtimes.
- The inspector scrutinised key performance information and other school records.
- The inspector also spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior staff. He met with a large number of other staff, pupils, a group of parents, governors, trustees and trust officers.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers, staff and pupils through meetings and Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Mike Cladingbowl, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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