

Inspection of a good school: Abbey CofE Academy

Vicar Lane, Daventry, Northamptonshire, NN11 4GD

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2024

Outcome

Abbey CofE Academy continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Deborah Godfrey. This school is part of The David Ross Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Stuart Burns, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Ross.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils describe Abbey CofE Academy as being safe, friendly and supportive. They say it is a place where they can be themselves.

Pupils benefit from positive, caring relationships with the adults at the school. Staff know the pupils well. They treat them with kindness and respect. Pupils say, 'The staff here always have time for you. Nothing is ever too much for them.'

Pupils are polite. They behave well. They have positive attitudes to learning. Most pupils sustain their concentration well.

The school wants the very best for all pupils. This aim is underpinned by values of aspiration, ambition, courage, respect, compassion and integrity. Staff teach pupils what these values mean and why they are important. Pupils know, for instance, that integrity is about doing the right thing even when no one is watching. They try to show these qualities in their work and through their interactions.

Pupils are proud of their school. They appreciate the multitude of opportunities on offer to broaden their horizons. Pupils like being part of The David Ross Education Trust (DRET). They say, 'Being part of DRET is great. We do lots of things with other DRET schools, such as sports master classes and competitions.'

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious and well sequenced. It is a curriculum for all its pupils. The school ensures that learning is adapted for disadvantaged pupils and those

with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff know where these pupils have gaps in their learning and how to meet their individual needs. Modified tasks, additional resources and skilful adult support help these pupils to achieve well.

The development of pupils' vocabulary is a consistent feature of all lessons. Staff define new words and model how to use them. In mathematics, for example, this enables pupils to explain themselves succinctly. However, the school's focus on communication and language is not as sharp as it could be. Staff do not always pick up on errors in pupils' spoken and written English well enough which means mistakes are sometimes repeated.

Staff explain new learning clearly and engagingly. They anticipate common pitfalls, helping pupils to succeed. Staff use quizzes at the beginning of lessons to keep current topics fresh in pupils' minds. As a result, pupils have detailed knowledge of what they are presently learning. However, this approach does not help pupils remember key content from previous years. Some pupils forget the important knowledge they have covered in the past which prevents them from deepening their understanding.

Pupils enjoy reading. They like spending time in the school library. During their time at Abbey CofE Academy, pupils read a host of exciting and challenging texts, including complex and thought-provoking poems. Anyone who does not know the letter sounds that they should, is given the additional support they need straight away. Good phonic teaching ensures that these pupils catch up as quickly as possible.

Attendance is high. The school ensures that parents and carers understand the impact that absence has on their child's education. Staff work well with families and other agencies when pupils have too much time off school.

Pupils' personal development is strong. Through its high-quality curriculum and well-planned enrichment offer, pupils learn about themselves and the world they live in. The school's extra-curricular programme provides something for everyone. This includes film and gardening clubs, numerous sports events and well-being activities after school, such as 'chat and chill'. In addition, a variety of rich experiences offer pupils the chance to try new and wonderful things, such as taking part in operatic performances. Pupils show respect for difference and diversity. They are very knowledgeable about Christianity and other world faiths. Pupils learn about British values in personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons and across the curriculum.

Staff feel trusted and well supported. They appreciate the time they are given to carry out additional duties. Local governors and the trust team provide effective challenge and support, ensuring that the school keeps improving.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff do not always address errors in pupils' spoken and written English. These mistakes are sometimes repeated. Consequently, not all pupils learn to communicate as accurately and effectively as they could. The school must sharpen its focus on communication and language so that staff enable all pupils to talk and write precisely and fluently as soon as possible.
- Staff do not routinely revisit prior learning from previous years in all subjects. As a result, some pupils forget the important knowledge they have learned before. This prevents them from gaining the deep and detailed understanding that the school intends. The school must review its approach to the recall of prior learning, helping pupils to remember key curriculum content from across the key stage securely.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 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 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	140190
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10347581
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Ross
CEO of the trust	Stuart Burns
Principal	Deborah Godfrey
Website	www.abbeyceacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The principal has been in place since June 2022.
- The school is part of The David Ross Education Trust.
- This is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Peterborough. The most recent section 48 inspection of Abbey CofE Academy took place in April 2023. This is an inspection of the school's religious character.
- 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 their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. For the deep dives, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also visited science lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work in science and talked to pupils about their learning in this subject.
- The inspector met with the principal and the deputy principal, subject leaders, teachers and support staff. The inspector met with the leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- 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 examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation and the academy improvement plan, as well as documentation relating to behaviour, attendance and governance.
- The inspector listened to a sample of pupils in Year 3 read. The inspector met with groups of pupils from across the school.
- The inspector met with the chair of the academy scrutiny committee and the vice chair of the trust board. The inspector also met with the senior regional director of the primary education team at The David Ross Education Trust.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of the Ofsted staff survey.

Inspection team

Shaun Carter, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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