

Inspection of a good school: Abbeys Primary School

Melrose Avenue, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK3 6PS

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 July 2024

Outcome

Abbeys Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils understand and proudly show their school values of 'Aim, Aspire and Achieve'. They know that these values are important as they help them to do the best that they can. The school has high expectations for how pupils will behave and learn. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), strive to meet those expectations. They do this well and trust that staff set these high standards because they want what is best for pupils. Overall, pupils achieve well through the curriculum.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in the school, online and in their community. They talk about trusted adults they can go to if they have any worries. Pupils are happy and positive learners. They care about their school community and support each other with respect, kindness and inclusivity. Social times are joyous periods of the school day. Pupils play well with each other and have positive and warm relationships with staff.

Pupils benefit from the range of leadership opportunities they are given. These roles include school councillors, mental health ambassadors, playground leaders and classroom monitors. From these roles, pupils learn the importance of making a positive contribution to their community.

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

The school has created an ambitious curriculum. It is broad, well sequenced and sets out what pupils will learn in every subject. This knowledge is broken down into small steps and builds from Reception onwards. This is clear to see in both the reading and mathematics curriculum. Subsequently, children in Reception gain the early mathematics and phonics knowledge needed to be ready for learning in Year 1.

There are a small number of published outcomes from 2023 which were significantly below national averages. This includes the number of pupils in Year 6 reaching their age-related expectation in mathematics. The school has taken rapid and effective action to

improve the entire curriculum as a result. All pupils, including those with SEND, now recall and build on their knowledge with confidence.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and understand the needs of all pupils. Pupils with SEND are supported effectively and achieve well, especially in core subjects. Most lesson activities are designed thoughtfully to help all pupils to build knowledge, which they do well. The school is making refinements to some non-core subjects. While these subject lessons are ambitious, changes have not had the full impact intended. Sometimes, pupils do not learn as well as they might in these areas.

Teachers use information from assessments carefully to spot pupils' gaps in knowledge. This is most effective in the teaching of early reading. When staff spot that a pupil is falling behind with their reading, they put in place extra activities. These activities help pupils to close gaps in phonics knowledge. The teaching of phonics is expert, and pupils learn to read very well.

The school has prioritised pupils' attendance. Impactful strategies and support for pupils and families have been put in place. Therefore, the level of whole-school absence has reduced, and attendance overall is now in line with national levels. However, persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils remains too high. When at school, all pupils show highly positive attitudes to their learning and behave exceptionally well. They are motivated and resilient. Lessons are calm and productive. Low-level disruption is extremely rare and does not impact on how well pupils learn. Staff are consistent and fair in how they implement the school's behaviour and ethos policy.

The personal development provision in the school is excellent. The school has carefully considered the experiences and awareness pupils need to have to be ready for their next stage. Planned spiritual, moral, social and cultural development activities are built into the school day. During these high-quality sessions, pupils learn about themselves and the world around them. They develop an awareness of the consequences of their behaviour and actions. 'Big question' activities give pupils a chance to listen to and understand the views of others. They also learn how to share their own opinions respectfully. Pupils learn about and celebrate the cultural influences in their community.

Staff are highly valued and well supported. Effective decisions are made to reduce the impact that workload has on the well-being of staff. The views of all staff are listened to, and they play a vital role in contributing to decisions that are made about the provision for pupils. Governors and school leaders work together well to make sure that all pupils achieve well and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils remains too high. These pupils are not fully benefiting from all that school has to offer. The school should now carefully consider what additional strategies and support, both within and external to the school, that the most vulnerable families need to further improve attendance.
- The school is making refinements to the implementation of the non-core curriculum. Currently, adaptations to activities do not always enable all pupils to achieve as well as they could. The school needs to ensure that staff have the knowledge they need to plan precise and purposeful activities that will help all pupils to build knowledge constantly well.

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 January 2019.

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 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	110401
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10341292
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	268
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Carol Burns
Headteacher	Jessica Fellowes
Website	www.abbeyprimary.org
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other members of the leadership team. They also met with the chair and three other members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the 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 observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons. They also spoke to pupils in lessons and during play and lunchtimes.
- The inspector considered a range of documents, including leaders' evaluations of the school, their school improvement plan, and minutes from governors' meetings.
- The inspector spoke to parents and carers and considered their responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector took account of the views of staff through conversations and the responses to the online staff survey.
- 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.

Inspection team

Nina Marabese, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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