

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **ABBOTTS ANN C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Abbotts Ann, Andover, Hampshire

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116266

Headteacher: Mrs Ann Turnbull

Reporting inspector: Mr Douglas Hayward  
21234

Dates of inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> April 2002

Inspection number: 195785

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Voluntary Controlled  
Age range of pupils: 4 – 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Abbots Ann  
Andover  
Hampshire

Postcode: SP11 7BG  
Telephone number: 01264 710244  
Fax number: 01264 710244

Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr Paul Stanton

Date of previous inspection: June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
21234	Doug Hayward	Registered inspector
9163	Geoff Humphrey	Lay inspector

The inspection contractor was:

TWA Inspections Ltd.  
5 Lakeside  
Werrington  
Peterborough  
PE4 6QZ

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>20</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Abbotts Ann is a small Church of England Voluntary Controlled school situated in the heart of the village of Abbotts Ann, about three miles from Andover. The school occupies a very cramped site. Two classes are housed in the original Victorian school building and one in an old 'temporary' classroom that was opened in 1986. Pupils walk to the nearby village hall for music and physical education lessons and use a local field for games. There are plans to replace the existing buildings with a new school in the village. The school is very popular and is regularly oversubscribed. Although most pupils live locally, some travel from Andover or villages further afield and are attracted by the school's reputation and its small size. Almost all pupils are white and all speak English as their first language.

Most of the pupils live in houses that are owner-occupied, although a significant number live in authority owned housing. Currently there are 90 pupils on roll. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (8 per cent) is below the national average. The percentage of pupils identified with special educational needs (38 per cent) is above average, although the percentage with Statements of Special Educational Need is below average. Children start school at the beginning of the year in which they are five. Some start on a part-time basis, but all of them attend full-time by the end of the autumn term. Children starting school represent a wide range of ability and background. Assessments given shortly after they start in the reception class show that attainment on entry for many children is broadly average or above.

### HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

**Abbotts Ann Primary is a very good school. It is a happy, popular, caring place where pupils feel secure and enjoy learning. Its success is due to the expertise, enthusiasm and hard work of teachers, support staff and governors. It gives pupils of all abilities a high standard of education and provides very good value for money.**

#### What the school does well

- It helps pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress and achieve high standards. It uses assessment information well to find out what pupils can do and then provide challenging work for them.
- It has an excellent ethos. It emphasises the importance of very good behaviour and caring for others and taking responsibility. Pupils say that, *'We are proud of the school. It's a friendly, happy, colourful school where you learn'*.
- Teaching is very good. Teachers work very well as a team. They are very good at planning work that is interesting and varied, and at the right level for pupils of different ages and abilities in their classes. Pupils say, *'If you are having problems with your work, or if you don't know what to do, teachers will tell you how to do it. They make learning fun'*.
- It provides a wide range of interesting subjects for pupils to learn about. There are lots of colourful displays around the school, which show the range of subjects that pupils enjoy. They say, *'Our classrooms are nice and bright with lots of work on the walls and they are always like that'*.
- It has strong links with the community. Parents think it is a very happy, successful place and like the fact that it is small, because they feel that adults know their children well.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership. Pupils say that, *'She can make us laugh. She sorts out any problems quickly and she is very reassuring'*. She provides clear educational direction and has made changes that have improved the school. Governors support her very well. Staff do a very good job in managing areas of responsibility.

#### What could be improved

- The quality of teachers' marking, to match the very good standards that already exist in some classes.
- Opportunities for pupils to use a problem solving approach in a range of subjects, to build on those that already exist.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997, when it was judged to provide good value for money. All the key issues have been successfully tackled since then. For example, the methods that the school uses to find out what pupils can do and the way in which it uses that information to plan work are much better than in the previous inspection, and are now strengths. It has worked hard and successfully to provide challenging work for more able pupils at Key Stage 1, raise standards of pupils' mental arithmetic throughout the school and improve planning for all classes. This is especially difficult in a small school with mixed-age classes, but it has done well to successfully introduce such thorough planning. Pupils' work in information and communication technology, which was good in the previous inspection, has continued to improve. Older pupils say that behaviour has improved since the last inspection and that they are now given much more responsibility than before. Although accommodation is still very cramped, the school makes good use of every available space to teach a full range of subjects effectively. The school has set challenging targets to raise pupils' attainment still further and it is well placed to continue to improve.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	C	A	A
Mathematics	B	D	C	C
Science	A	B	C	C

**Key**

well above average    A  
 above average        B  
 average                C  
 below average        D  
 well below average   E

In the most recent tests and assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 results, compared with those in all schools nationally and those in similar schools, were well above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. At the end of Key Stage 2, results compared with those in all schools and in similar schools were well above average in English, and average in mathematics and science. Results in small schools, like Abbots Ann, can vary considerably from year to year. This is often because the number of pupils in each year group is small and each one can count for about 10 per cent of the total marks. So, if there are one or two pupils in a particular group with special educational needs who do not attain Level 4<sup>1</sup>, despite working very hard and achieving the best they can, the school's results will fall. Comparisons between results in similar schools are based on the number of pupils eligible for free school meals. **OFSTED has recently started to make comparisons based on pupils' 'prior attainment'. That is, the amount of progress made by pupils when comparing their results with those they attained in Key Stage 1. At Abbots Ann last year, pupils' results, compared with those of pupils in similar schools, but based on 'prior attainment' were very high in English (in the top 5 per cent of schools), and above average in mathematics and science.** During the inspection, standards at both key stages were at least in line with those expected of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, and in some subjects they were higher than expected, for example information and communication technology, geography and music.

<sup>1</sup> Levels – by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are expected to attain Level 4 in English, mathematics and science. Those who attain Level 3 are, therefore, attaining below nationally expected levels at the age of eleven 11 years.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils really like coming to school and are very positive about how good it is. They enjoy being part of a small school and feel that it has many advantages; for example, they say, <i>'You know everyone. It's almost like being at home – you know where everything is!'</i> They work very hard in lessons and take pride in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is very good. They are polite, friendly and courteous to each other and to adults. They are very well behaved in lessons and around the school at lunchtimes and playtimes. Pupils of all ages say that bullying is not an issue at Abbots Ann.
Personal development and relationships	A strength of the school. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, to develop in maturity and to look after each other. They say, <i>'We get on well together. If someone is not very well or upset you look after them. Teachers trust us to do jobs for them. We trust each other and we show that we are responsible.'</i>
Attendance	Very good. Much better than in most primary schools.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

During the inspection 12 lessons were observed. Teaching was never less than good. In the vast majority of lessons (92 per cent) it was very good and in one lesson it was excellent. This is very high quality teaching that is not only found in all classes, but also in additional lessons that the school provides through its budget, for example in music and for able pupils. The teaching has a major impact on pupils' attitudes to their work and to their progress. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and are very aware of how to make lessons exciting and appealing. Pupils of all ages commented that teachers try to make lessons as interesting as possible. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils. In the early years this helps children to settle very quickly in school and as they get older they are happy to ask questions if they are not sure about their work. Teachers provide lots of opportunities for pupils to solve problems in mathematics and to carry out investigations in science. There is a very practical approach to many subjects, so pupils have good *'hands on'* experience of subjects, and this helps them to learn more effectively and to remember what they have learned.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school plans a wide range of subjects that pupils enjoy. There are very good opportunities for pupils to solve problems in mathematics, to carry out investigations in science and to become increasingly responsible as they get older for planning how they will carry out their work. There are very good links between subjects and literacy makes an important contribution to all of them. There is a very good range of activities for pupils who are gifted and talented. All pupils enjoy visits to places of interest and visitors to the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils' work is well planned and the school keeps careful track of the progress they make. Teaching assistants support pupils well in classes and groups.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.	Very good. The school helps to develop high levels of tolerance, understanding and respect. Everyone's talents are valued. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to learn about the wider world and different cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Pupils like, trust and admire the adults who work with them. They say, <i>'If you are worried about anything you can tell your teacher. We can trust them. They listen to us.'</i> Pupils get on well together and enjoy the school's relaxed and friendly atmosphere. It has very good systems for assessing and monitoring how well pupils do in their work.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and management and has a clear idea of how the school can improve still further. Pupils like and respect her and know that she is fair. They say, <i>'If there is a problem she'll sit you down and listen to both sides and sort things out quickly.'</i> Because there are very few teachers, they have responsibility for many different areas. They have worked extremely hard to ensure that high standards are maintained in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very supportive and well informed about the work of the school. They understand its strengths and areas for development and play their part as <i>'critical friends'</i> to the school very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is very frank and open about judging the standard of education it provides and is always looking for ways to improve. It makes very good use of data to track how much progress pupils make and plans well for future development.
The strategic use of resources	The school spends its small budget very wisely to provide a varied and interesting education; for example, it pays for high quality music tuition and has employed extra classroom assistants to help pupils' learning. It uses its own very cramped classrooms and additional space, such as the village hall, as imaginatively as possible to ensure a very good standard of education.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Sixteen parents attended a meeting before the inspection started and 31 returned their pre-inspection questionnaires.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They say that the school has high expectations and that their children make good progress.</li> <li>• They feel that behaviour is good and that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• They feel that teaching is good.</li> <li>• They feel that the school listens to them and respects their opinions and that it is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few parents do not feel that they receive enough information about their children's progress.</li> <li>• A small number of parents are not happy with the amount of homework the school sets.</li> <li>• A few parents think that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. The school provides good, regular information for parents and pupils' reports are thorough and meet requirements. There are differences of opinion about whether the school should set more or less homework. When it is set it makes a very positive contribution to the work in school. Considering its small size the school runs a wide range of clubs and pupils take part in competitive fixtures against other schools. They also enjoy trips and visits out of school as well as a range of visitors into school to talk to them about their work.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

**It helps pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress and achieve high standards. It uses assessment information well to find out what pupils can do and then provide challenging work for them.**

1. The results of the 2001 tests for 7-year-old pupils were well above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics compared with results in all schools nationally and those in similar schools. Results have never been below average in any subject, and over the past three years have generally been above or well above average. In the 2001 tests for 11-year-olds, results were well above average in English and average in mathematics and science compared with those in all schools nationally and in similar schools. However, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 was very high in science, well above average in English and above average in mathematics.
2. One problem associated with small schools like Abbotts Ann is that of small groups of pupils who often differ in ability from one year to the next. Although the school plans admirably for pupils of different abilities in lessons (**see paragraphs 17 – 22**), the impact that small cohorts of pupils have on a school's results in National Curriculum tests at the end of each key stage should not be underestimated. For example, in last year's cohort there were only 11 pupils, each of whom counted for almost 10 per cent of the school's total in test results. Of those pupils, three had special educational needs and did not find learning easy. If any pupils do not attain Level 4, the school's results can show a dramatic '*fall*' compared with results in schools nationally and those in similar schools. In fact, to the school's credit, all 11 pupils attained Level 4 in science, 10 achieved the same level in English and nine did so in mathematics. This indicates that pupils' achievement was very good. That is, despite some of them having special educational needs, they achieved the best level that they could.
3. The school's average results in mathematics and science are due to the fact that despite achieving the nationally expected Level 4, many pupils found it difficult to achieve the higher Level 5. In fact, the percentage achieving that level was well above average in English, average in science, but well below average in mathematics. Comparisons between different school's results are made on the basis of the numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals. The school area is relatively advantaged socially and only a very few pupils are eligible. However, OFSTED has recently started to make comparisons based on pupils' '*prior attainment*'. That is, the amount of progress made by pupils when comparing their results with those they attained in Key Stage 1. At Abbotts Ann last year, pupils' results, compared with those of pupils in similar schools, but based on '*prior attainment*', were very high in English (in the top 5 per cent of schools), and above average in mathematics and science. These data provide further evidence that many pupils did as well as they possibly could in last year's Key Stage 2 tests. That is, their achievement was high.
4. The school is aware from year to year what its results in key stage tests and assessments are likely to be. This is because it keeps detailed information about individual pupils from the time they enter school. This is the beginning of the school's collection of information that helps to track their progress as they move through the school. It also helps the school to predict pupils' levels in tests at the end of Key Stage 1. A range of other assessments are carried out to monitor pupils' progress as they get older and to predict test results when they are 11, identifying when they will not be as high as in previous years. Thus '*lower*' results might be a disappointment for the school, but they will certainly come as no surprise.

5. The ways in which the school collected information about pupils were criticised in the last inspection. Assessment was not used sufficiently well to help teachers plan subsequent work and this became a key issue for the school to address, which it has done extremely effectively. It has *'sharpened up'* its approach to assessment and now has extremely thorough, comprehensive procedures in place that provide detailed information for the school to use to make teaching and learning very focused and effective.
6. For example, teachers collect a wide range of pupils' work in a wide range of subjects to monitor how well they are doing. They have become much more exact about assessing the work against fixed National Curriculum criteria so that they can be absolutely precise about how well pupils are attaining, compared with other pupils nationally at the same age. The school is determined to ensure that all pupils are achieving the highest level they can. Its assessments of pupils help it to group the pupils appropriately in classes and between different classes. For example, there are Year 4 pupils in Class 2 with younger pupils as well as in Class 3 with older pupils. The placements are based on the academic assessments made as they move through the school, as well as teachers' own detailed knowledge of their levels of maturity. No parents felt that the class setting arrangements were unfair or disadvantaged their children.
7. As well as using national levels against which to track and measure pupils' progress, the school very effectively uses a system of **target setting** that is appropriate to pupils' particular levels of attainment, ability and stages of maturity and social development. Target setting starts in Class 1 to help the development of children's writing. As they become older and move through the school, their targets become more detailed and comprehensive. These **individual targets** are based specifically on the teachers' knowledge of what is particularly appropriate for each pupil to work on. For example, targets set by the teacher for pupils in Year 1 might be to, *'Use finger spaces without being reminded'*, or, *'Think carefully about keeping the letters the same size'*. The targets are reviewed frequently and pupils are aware of them. Before starting written tasks they are asked to look in the back of their books to remind themselves of their current targets.
8. By the time pupils reach Year 6, targets are much more detailed and cover a range of aspects of their written work. For example, at the end of one piece of written work the teacher wrote, *'Targets: Punctuation – use question marks for questions and capital letters for proper nouns. Style/Purpose and Organisation – plan your main event in more detail e.g. how you won the race'*. Frequently linked to these targets are examples of constructive marking, which give the pupils, and their parents, a good idea of how well they have done; for example, comments on younger pupils' work such as, *Excellent! You have used great ideas!* or, *Super work! Wonderful!* For older pupils there is, as one would expect, more detail in the marking. For example, *'A very interesting story. Well done! You have organised your ideas into paragraphs and are beginning to include tension and excitement into your writing'*. Very occasionally, marking is limited to one or two words and does not provide pupils with any real idea of the standard of their work or what they should do to improve.
9. There is very good evidence that work at Abbots Ann builds quickly, logically and progressively from year to year on what pupils know and can do. Its comprehensive systems for tracking, monitoring, predicting and target setting help the school to focus additional help if it is needed; for example, the school has decided to employ additional classroom assistants to support specific pupils, based on its thorough knowledge of their progress. Assessment information also ensures that the rate of progress for all pupils is maintained throughout the Foundation Stage and both key stages. For example, the school's planned range of writing tasks gives pupils challenging opportunities to learn how to improve and develop the quality of their written work. For instance, a child in the reception class in her first term at school wrote independently, *'I went to a halun (Halloween) partee. I had some culored sparklers'*. Within a month of the start of the

following term the same child showed substantial improvement when she wrote, *'My private place is my bath Room. Nobody can see me drawing and playing wiv my teddy bear'*. In response to the teacher's target of, *'Use exciting words in writing activities'*, another child had written, *'My private place is my cubed. It is very dark in there and feels like im in a cave. Nobody knows that I'm in there. I like being in there and I feel warm'*.

10. Very good teaching encourages the steady development of pupils' writing skills. A wide range of subjects gives pupils every opportunity to develop an individual style. By Year 2, pupils display more than a touch of humour when writing about their families. *'I feel my dad has an easy job. All he has to do is numeracy for eight hours a day. But when I see him my heart does a thousand backflips'*. By Year 6 pupils are able to write sensitive, well constructed and correctly punctuated descriptions, written in a neat hand. For example, in response to specific directions from the teacher about writing stories that portray the passing of time one pupil wrote, *'The gentle breeze flowing through my hair was making me feel chilly, even though it was a mild summer evening. As I walked up to the sparkling, clear stream I noticed that it was flowing much faster than usual and deeper also. The stream was deeper than me. I knew that I had made this jump millions of times before, so I walked back a few paces for my run up. I sped along the path and leapt into the air. As I landed my foot slipped on the mud at the far side. I froze with fear. I was falling...falling into the stream'*.
11. The school also uses test and data analysis well to identify pupils with special educational needs and those who show above average ability in one or more areas. The school has fully implemented the recently introduced revised special educational needs Code of Practice<sup>2</sup> and pupils' individual education plans clearly identify areas for improvement. Pupils receive good levels of help from classroom assistants, often in small groups. The school also organises very effective *'extension'* groups for gifted and talented pupils to set work that *'stretches'* them to the full, for example in numeracy and science, where they are able to tackle subject matter far beyond that usually taught in primary schools. Very good specialist music tuition helps those pupils with musical flair to develop their proficiency on instruments such as violins and recorders.

**It has an excellent ethos. It emphasises the importance of very good behaviour, caring for others and taking responsibility. Pupils say that, *'We are proud of the school. It's a friendly, happy, colourful school where you learn'*.**

12. In their pre-inspection questionnaires, almost all parents indicated that they felt the school helped their children to become mature and responsible. The excellent relationships that exist in the school are obvious strengths. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the school and their work. Pupils of all ages agree that it is a *'good'* school. They are proud of it and they are happy there. They have great confidence and trust in the adults who work there and feel that relationships between pupils are also strong. Older pupils are aware that a small school has some disadvantages; for example, they have only a small circle of friends and they feel that adjusting to life in a large secondary school might take them longer. However, they feel that the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. They are genuinely anxious to help whenever possible. Younger pupils know that they can rely on older ones to help them. They say, *'Big children look after us when we're unhappy, when we fall over or when we break up'*. Older pupils are aware of the responsibility that they have and say, *'Boys and girls get on really well. If you find someone who is not very well you want to help them'*.

---

<sup>2</sup> [Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities, duties and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help and support to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.](#)

13. Pupils have a real desire to do their best in lessons. Their attitudes and behaviour were never less than good in lessons. In almost all lessons they were very good and on several occasions they were excellent. Pupils' willingness to listen carefully in lessons, start work promptly, concentrate and work hard means that no time is wasted in lessons. Pupils of all ages bring positive and conscientious attitudes to their work and carry out tasks sensibly and thoughtfully. They have good opportunities to work increasingly independently of adults, thereby increasing their confidence and responsibility. The school's provision of good opportunities for investigative work and problem solving activities also helps to foster very good attitudes and co-operation between pupils. The recently formed school council gives pupils good opportunities to play an active role in decision making in school. During the inspection, elected council members met without adult supervision to discuss issues such as developing the school garden, better use of the library at lunchtime and possible changes to the school's reward system. The meeting was very constructive, well chaired and fully minuted. Pupils demonstrated their maturity and positive attitudes to the school very well and completely justified the trust placed in them to hold such a meeting without adult supervision.
14. Almost all parents felt that their children's behaviour in school was very good and this was borne out during the inspection. Pupils' behaviour in assemblies, in lessons, and at lunchtimes and playtimes was very good. Because the school has no hall or sports field pupils have to walk to the village hall or the village field. Their behaviour on these visits was outstanding. They listen carefully to what others say and do not have to be reminded about how to respond appropriately to adults and to other pupils. In discussion older pupils felt that behaviour, especially on the playground, had improved considerably in the last two years.

**Teaching is very good. Teachers work very well as a team. They are very good at planning work that is interesting and varied, and at the right level for pupils of different ages and abilities in their classes. Pupils say, 'If you are having problems with your work, or if you don't know what to do, teachers will tell you how to do it. They make learning fun'.**

15. In their pre-inspection questionnaires almost all parents said that teaching is good at Abbots Ann. Pupils clearly like and respect their teachers and appreciate the relaxed way in which they work and their helpful approach. They say, *'They'll explain again if you don't understand. They tell you how to do it, but not the answer. They try to make it fun'*.
16. Teaching was never less than good in the 12 lessons observed. It was at least very good in 10 lessons (92 per cent) and excellent in one lesson (8 per cent). This is high quality teaching that is found throughout the school. It is significantly higher than the current national quality of teaching, which indicates that 75 per cent of teaching is good or better and 17 per cent of teaching that is very good. The quality of teaching is also better than it was at the time of the previous inspection, although almost three times as many lessons were observed then. In 1997, less than 20 per cent of teaching was judged to be very good, compared with almost five times as much in the current inspection. Many of the teaching strengths identified in that inspection are still apparent, for example teachers' good use of questioning, their relationships with pupils and their planning.
17. Two features identified in good lessons during the last inspection have been improved still further and are now features of very good lessons. They are the quality of teachers' planning and the strategies they use to keep pupils interested and involved with their work. The pupils' level of interest in their work was a consistent feature of their discussions with inspectors. Pupils have very good opportunities to work individually, in pairs and in groups, which even the youngest pupils do well. For example, in a literacy lesson pupils in Year 1 worked with younger children sharing their reading with them. Older pupils had

very good opportunities to work collectively in their science and mathematics investigations.

18. Teachers are very good at planning work that is at the right level for all abilities in their classes and which will provide the pupils with an appropriate level of challenge. In a small school like this, the organisation of classes can pose considerable problems for teachers. For example, all classes contain pupils from three different age groups. Whilst planning work to match pupils' levels of abilities, teachers also have to try to ensure that it is appropriate for their ages, that it will not repeat work that they have already done and that it fits in with the school's own long and medium term plans. This they do very successfully, for example in science, as they gradually develop pupils' understanding of science by tackling the same concepts at a progressively more difficult level.
19. In Year 4, for instance, one of the practical science investigations in their work on 'forces' is to test the strength of different thickness of elastic bands. One pupil wrote, *'We gradually added weights onto the string harness to tests the strength of the elastic bands before it snapped'*. In Year 5, 'forces' is still taught, but from a slightly different and more challenging approach. In Year 5 one of the tasks is to test the efficiency of different materials to reduce friction. The same pupil wrote, *'We are going to pull the brick along a table with different materials rubbed onto it e.g. cooking oil, vaseline, flour. We will pull the brick along attached to a forcemeter to know which is the best surface'*. Finally, work on forces for pupils in Year 6 take a more complex approach, linking it to advanced work in control technology in their investigations to find the effect of friction on the speed of a moving object. The same pupil wrote, *'To test the speed of the car coming down the slope we will set up a light gate connected the computer sensing program'*.
20. It is evident from lessons observed, and from pupils' books and displays, that the investigative and problem solving aspects of pupils' work are well provided for in teachers' planning. Very good mathematics problem solving activities linked to 'real life' situations make pupils' work interesting and meaningful, for example their work on designing an activity area. Their formal letter writing exercise was linked to an actual complaint they had about the quality of games equipment that the school had bought. Their design and technology work gives them very good opportunities to use a range of materials to design and make objects, and the way in which several subjects are planned together around a central theme often provides outstanding examples of 'integrated studies', for example their work on 'Pillhill Brook'.
21. In very good lessons teachers make it clear to pupils what is expected of them by the end of the lesson. That is, what they will be able to do and what they should understand. In these lessons pupils are clear about what they have to do and how to improve their work. The quality of interaction by adults within lessons is very good. Pupils know that if they do not understand they can ask their teacher without fear of being 'told off'. Teaching assistants are well prepared and have a clear understanding of what is required of them. They support pupils very well, especially those with special educational needs, and this makes a positive contribution to their progress.
22. Lessons are well prepared, well organised and managed so that pupils persevere and are not distracted. Teachers' subject knowledge in lessons is usually very good and helps them to prompt or intervene at just the right moment to develop pupils' understanding. The school has made effective use of its budget to employ additional part-time teachers to develop particular areas; for example, there is very good music teaching and the additional classes for science and mathematics for more able pupils are very effective. Teachers use a range of resources very effectively to help pupils learn and to make lessons interesting. For example, the use of electron microscopes in a very good science lesson added to pupils' sense of 'awe and wonder' when they were able to examine a range of

insects *'at close quarters'*. The different ways in which they were used also helped the teacher to plan work very well that was challenging for pupils of different abilities.

**It provides a wide range of interesting subjects for pupils to learn about. There are lots of colourful displays around the school, which show the range of subjects that pupils enjoy. They say, *'Our classrooms are nice and bright with lots of work on the walls and they are always like that'*.**

23. In a small school like Abbots Ann, space is often at a premium. Classrooms are very small, there is very little storage space and accommodation often has to serve more than one purpose, for example classrooms *'doubling up'* as dining rooms or school assembly venues. There is no scope for the school to expand and it has to be imaginative in its use of space. For example, there is no possibility of a computer suite being built, yet the school's provision for information and communication technology is well above the standard expected nationally for pupils of all ages. Despite the limitations of space, first impressions of the school are of a bright, attractive and stimulating place in which to work and learn. Pupils are very positive about the school and what it has to offer. Not one pupil mentioned any disadvantages caused by limited accommodation. Instead, they feel that the standard and range of work on display during the inspection were typical of what is usually displayed.
24. Displays of pupils' work are colourful, imaginative and thoughtfully arranged. They reflect not only curriculum breadth, but also the time and care that teachers give to the presentation of pupils' work. The range and depth of subjects that pupils study are strengths of the school, as are the very good links between subjects and the opportunities to develop pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy. The contribution of information and communication technology to many subjects is excellent, as is the school's use of its digital camera to enhance displays. Pupils feel very pleased that the school recognises their efforts in classroom displays and on occasions such as *'best work assemblies'*.
25. There are many very good examples of a very broad curriculum throughout the school. For example, young pupils in Class 1 carried out very thorough evaluations of the winding toys they had made, which were based on different nursery rhymes. To accompany a well-made toy based on, *'Twinkle twinkle little star'* that had been colourfully decorated and finished, one pupil thoughtfully wrote, *'the stars are pritty. next time oull (I'll) make my dowl level and put stars on the back. the blow background lookt nise with the stars. A mathematics display that pupils had completed on sorting also provided good opportunities for them to use a range of descriptive language such as 'shiny', 'crinkly', 'silky' and 'bumpy'. In Class 2, pupils had carried out a very detailed scientific analysis of soil based on their visit to a nearby environmental centre. Comparing, by sieving, the soil at the top of a slope with that at the bottom they were able to describe, 'the texture is smooth and sticky and light orangey brown'. In their work on rivers they had used very sensitive words to describe how lilies, 'float on water, peaceful and calm, cooling, gently flowing by'.*
26. By the time pupils are in Year 6 their ability to use language in other subjects shows the same degree of maturity as in their stories. It is this planned use of language in other subjects that is such a strong feature of the pupils' work. For example, in a design and technology evaluation a pupil had written about her slippers, *'My actual slipper was barely like how I thought it would be and it didn't really go with my specification. It did fit me and was comfy for walking around the house, but it was not easy to slip on and off'*. The integrated study of the local *'Pillhill Brook'* carried out by pupils in Class 3 is an excellent example of a local geography project. In the school's previous inspection geography provision was criticised, but it is now a strength of the school. Within the topic there were very good opportunities for studying geographical issues, such as observing the human impact on the environment of cultivating watercress and discussing environmental issues. Additionally, there were very good opportunities to measure the speed of the flow of the



brook in mathematics, form scientific hypotheses, carry out fair testing, carry out interviews with personnel and make metal sculptures of some of the creatures observed.

27. The school's use of information and communication technology was praised in the previous inspection and since then it has gone from strength to strength. The way in which it is used in other subjects is often outstanding and pupils' skills and knowledge are comprehensively developed throughout the school. For example, children in the reception year used a radio control device to steer model cars through a maze as part of their control technology work. Pupils in Year 2 used a sophisticated electron microscope to view '*minibeasts*' and printed pictures of them taken on an image enhancer. Pupils in Year 6 used sensors to accurately measure and print in graphical form the reflective light of different flowers to determine which would attract most bees.
28. The school also makes very good provision for developing pupils' musical skills. It has chosen to use some of its budget to employ specialist music teachers to enhance its own provision. Pupils have very good opportunities to play a range of recorders in a school ensemble or learn to play the violin as a result. It also makes the most of other small schools' expertise in the local cluster of schools, joining them to develop specific interests such as puppet making.

**It has strong links with the community. Parents think it is a very happy, successful place and like the fact that it is small, because they feel that adults know their children well.**

29. The school views the parents' contribution as a very positive feature of its work. It is at the heart of the village and its involvement in village life is an important part of its work. For example, pupils from Abbots Ann recently buried a time capsule that they had assembled in the foundations of the new village post office that is being built. Older pupils organise and run stalls each year at the village fete. Most parents feel that the school works closely with them and feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or concerns. At the pre-inspection meeting parents said that there are many informal contacts between them and school and that teachers are very approachable. Parents of young pupils greatly appreciate the informal start to the morning, where they are able to '*keep an eye on*' their children as they settle at the start of the day. They commented that the induction process for children new to the school is carried out sensitively. One said that parents, '*are treated like adults and the school does not talk down to them*'. The school is regularly oversubscribed and parents from the village and from a much wider area are drawn by its reputation and small size.
30. The school works hard to provide parents with as much information as possible. A small number of them indicated in their questionnaires that they thought the school could improve the quality of information about their children's progress. However, parents at the pre-inspection meeting felt that the reports showed that teachers knew the pupils well and that any problems are sorted out very quickly. The prospectus complies with requirements but the school, quite rightly, feels that information could be presented more attractively. Regular newsletters provide parents with up-to-date information about school activities.

**The headteacher provides very good leadership. Pupils say that, '*She can make us laugh. She sorts out any problems quickly and she is very reassuring*'. She provides clear educational direction and has made changes that have improved the school. Governors support her very well. Staff do a very good job in managing areas of responsibility.**

31. The impact of the very good leadership and management of the headteacher is apparent from the standards of work the pupils achieve, the smooth day-to-day running of the school, its very strong ethos, the improvements that have been introduced and the clear direction for the school to continue to improve. Almost all parents agree that the school is well managed and led. At the meeting one parent referred to her style of leadership as

*'dynamic'*, others to the part she played in their decision to choose Abbotts Ann for their children. Since her appointment the headteacher has introduced thorough and purposeful monitoring of lessons. This has had a positive impact on improving standards of teaching and is now firmly embedded as good practice throughout the school.

32. The size of the school means that staff have a large number of additional responsibilities for subjects and other areas, for example assessment and able pupils. The headteacher has purposefully developed the role of co-ordinators, partly by providing the teachers with significant non-class teaching time. Their roles are important to the smooth running and success of the school and they carry them out very effectively. Subjects have been planned rigorously and their files provide comprehensive evidence of pupils' attainment and progress.
33. A number of new governors have been appointed in the last two years and this has meant new training. It is a mark of their enthusiasm and commitment that they are very well informed, supportive and actively involved in the running of the school. They visit the school regularly to observe lessons and work alongside teachers. The headteacher provides good quality information for them, presented in a way that they say encourages them to ask challenging questions and to fulfil their role as *'critical friend'* to the school. They are fully aware of the principles of best value and have been active and prudent in their efforts to plan the future of the proposed new school building. Their regular formal and informal contact with the headteacher enables them to have an informed overview of the way in which the school works and the reasons for its success.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**The quality of teachers' marking, to match the very good standards that already exist in some classes.**

34. There is some variation in the quality of marking between teachers and subjects. The best marking is in English, where teachers often find it easier to make positive comments about the quality of pupils' work. In many cases, this marking is clearly linked to pupils' individual targets and explains clearly how well they have done and what are particular strengths of their work and what could be developed. In some cases, teachers written comments do not match the quality of their verbal feedback to pupils and it is not specific enough to tell pupils what they could do to improve.

**Opportunities for pupils to use a problem solving approach in a range of subjects, to build on those that already exist.**

35. There are already good opportunities for pupils to use a problem solving approach in some subjects. The effectiveness of this is apparent in the quality of the work that they do and in their enthusiasm for this approach when they talk about their work. Very occasionally in one or two areas there is an over-reliance on pupils completing work sheets, which is not as effective. The school already satisfies most of the criteria that need to be met for successful problem solving and investigative work, for example excellent pupil behaviour and attitudes, so that they are capable of working in groups and not always directly supervised by adults. The school now has the ability to build on the successes it has already enjoyed.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

36. In the context of its many strengths and the very high quality of education it already provides, the school should now:
- i ensure that the school's marking policy is consistently applied;
  - ii extend existing opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for more problem solving activities.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	12
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	7

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	10	1	0	0	0	0
Percentage	8	84	8	0	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than eight percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	90
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	7
<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	34
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.5
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	5	7	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	10	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	83 (100)	92 (92)	100 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	10	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	83 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	7	4	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	10	9	11
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	91 (78)	82 (78)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	10	9	11
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	91 (89)	82 (78)	100 (89)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

**The existing guidance, which stands, is that test and examination data should be excluded from inspection reports and parents' summaries if the year group is 10 or fewer. This also applies to year groups of boys and girls separately.**

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	88
Any other minority ethnic group	2

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	30

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	97

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000 / 2001
	£
Total income	226,519
Total expenditure	221,332
Expenditure per pupil	2,515

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 34%

Number of questionnaires sent out

90

Number of questionnaires returned

31

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	35	55	10	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	49	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	33	6	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	13	71	13	3	0
The teaching is good.	61	33	0	3	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	49	13	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	39	0	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	42	0	3	0
The school works closely with parents.	29	58	10	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	42	52	3	3	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	42	0	3	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	42	19	3	13