



Abberley Parochial VC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116780
LEA Worcestershire
Inspection number 279897
Inspection dates 16 May 2006 to 16 May 2006
Reporting inspector Christine Field AI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Abberley
School category	Voluntary controlled		Worcester
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Worcestershire WR6 6AA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01299 896332
Number on roll	94	Fax number	01299 896332
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Heather Morgan
Date of previous inspection	15 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Jennifer Taylor

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector met with a range of staff and pupils, scrutinised the school's self-evaluation documentation and observed the school at work. All classrooms were visited and the inspector and headteacher conducted paired observations of lessons. Discussions with the Chair of governors, an informal meeting with parents and the receipt of 52 questionnaires from parents further assisted the writing of this report.

Description of the school

Abberley Parochial is a very small rural Voluntary Controlled Church of England primary school that serves its local village and wider commuting communities. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and none is learning English as a new language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is average. When pupils start in Reception their attainment is generally average although each new group of pupils reflects a wide spread of ability, from above to below average. A significant number of pupils join or leave the school at various times through the year. The school is part of a Network Learning Community with four other schools. Since the last inspection the school has been accredited with three Achievement Awards from government for its work to raise standards.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Abberley is a good school with some outstanding features. The quality of team work is excellent. Pupils receive a rounded education, achieve well academically and build high levels of confidence because of the school's very strong emphasis on them "learning by doing". Everyone at Abberley places the pupils' total wellbeing at the centre of their work, and as a result individuals feel safe and secure and able to take full advantage of the exciting experiences on offer. As one boy said, "I love coming to school - it is such a happy place to be". The great majority of parents hold the school in very high regard and rightly praise the way it "brings out the best in our children and helps them to experience success".

Pupils achieve well over their time at school. The school's data shows that pupils receive a secure start in the Foundation Stage, with virtually all reaching the levels of skills and knowledge expected for their age by the time they move into Year 1. Data presents a mixed picture of standards in the rest of the school with caution required in interpreting it due to the small number of pupils tested and/or assessed. Nevertheless, standards have been consistently better at the end of Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1. The school has recognised this and effective strategies are being used to help pupils improve their work now they are in Year 3 and this is quickening their rate of progress. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 is good and for some years standards in the end of key stage tests have been above average in all three subjects tested; English, mathematics and science. The school has rightly identified that a few more able pupils should be doing better year-on-year and is working effectively to make sure they do. A good push on writing is resulting in much improved standards and better presentation as seen in pupils' books, though spelling remains a relative weakness.

Pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a significant strength. The school's very caring Christian ethos nurtures each pupil's own unique talents and gives everyone the confidence to "have a go" without fear of failure. As a consequence, pupils blossom and readily take on roles of responsibility whether as members of the very active School Council or when captaining one of the many school sports teams. Pupils are friendly, open and welcoming. They show very caring attitudes to one another and take immense pride in looking after the school environment. Pupils have an extremely well developed appreciation of the world beyond their neighbourhood and a very good understanding of different cultures, lifestyles and beliefs. Pupils are growing into highly responsible future citizens.

Teaching and learning are good. The very youngest learners enjoy a good range of learning experiences that enable them to build key skills with confidence. Across the school, teaching is exciting and captures pupils' interest. Classes are relaxed but respectful places in which relationships are excellent and behaviour exemplary. Pupils have very good capacity to work both independently and collaboratively because of the consistent approach to providing learning experiences that enable this. Pupils told the inspector they enjoy their lessons with maths, art and DT being amongst the favourites. As one Year 6 girl said, "because the lessons are so interesting we not only learn lots but have fun too!" Teachers' planning is of good quality with close attention

paid to promoting key learning objectives. However, it does not always make clear exactly what skills and knowledge the more able pupils are expected to gain and this is a missed opportunity in supporting these pupils' consistent progress. Teachers' ongoing assessment understandably focuses on making sure that those who have experienced difficulties in a lesson receive the extra help they need to move on. There is scope for sharper assessment of the progress made by the more able learners so that more demanding work can be set for them in the next lesson.

A good curriculum and outstanding pastoral welfare systems meet pupils' personal needs extremely well. The quality of care and support is outstanding with very effective child protection arrangements in place. The curriculum is inclusive and innovative. It is extremely well enriched by a wide range of visits; for example a residential experience for Years 5 and 6 pupils in the Malvern Hills involved outdoor pursuits and was a highlight of the school year according to pupils. Pupils also recall with sheer pleasure the construction of woodland shelters during their visit to Bishopswood Environmental Centre. Very regular use is made of local resources such as Witley Court heritage site to support art, history and geography studies. A school Eco-club is involved in a range of activities that include tree planting and vegetable growing, with some of the produce being sold. Numerous visitors are invited into school to share their experiences. Pupils told the inspector how much they found out about India, Indonesia and Africa from people from these countries who joined them during International Week.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher gives very strong leadership and sets very high expectations. Her accurate self-evaluation enables the school to pinpoint areas requiring improvement, and well-focused improvement strategies help it move forward. She enables others to exercise their leadership and management roles well and this is having a positive impact on the school's good rate of improvement, though further work is required in making lesson monitoring more robust. Parents' and pupils' views are regularly sought and acted upon. Governors are very supportive of the school and have a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. New governors have undergone a very positive induction process. An excellent partnership is in place with other local schools that both adds enrichment to the curriculum and supports improvement. The school has very good capacity to continue to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

- Pupils are proud of their achievements. They gain much from projects, for example when designing and making a motorised buggy. In reflecting on the quality and standard of his finished product, one boy said he hadn't quite got the production skills to make an exact copy of his design and next time would have made the roof of his vehicle rounded to be more aerodynamic.
- Work on display such as the superb African masks, paper weaving and tie dyeing show a high standard of finish.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

- The youngest learners are very confident and keen to share their experiences. While playing outside in the wonderful large-size sailing boat, one boy invited the inspector to “join him and sail to an island to find some treasure and bring back lots of gold!”
- As they grow older, pupils build an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles, know how to stay safe, are very enterprising and are extremely well involved in the local community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

- The school’s good teaching is reflected in the pupils’ positive achievement. Boys and girls of all ages and backgrounds are fully included in all learning opportunities. Well-deployed teaching assistants work effectively in supporting pupils with learning difficulties. When talking to the inspector, one boy told her how much he valued being given such good support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

- The curriculum successfully promotes pupils’ positive enjoyment with excellent cross-curricular use of ICT and outstanding enrichment that helps heighten pupils’ physical, aesthetic and creative awareness.
- Very positive links with parents are promoting a partnership approach to education that is bringing very great benefit to lifelong learning.
- There is good attention paid to developing pupils’ artistic and musical gifts as well as sporting talents; however, work in lessons does not always meet the aspirations of the more able learners.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

- Pupils settle in the Reception class quickly because of the highly effective induction programme. This is true of new joiners to school who each experience a “taster session” with their parents before their first day.
- One parent told the inspector they regard highly the school’s caring Christian ethos that enables their children to have freedom to express themselves and to grow as strong and compassionate human beings.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

- Notable improvements since the last inspection include the super new accommodation and significantly enhanced ICT resources. To watch Year 2 and 3 pupils digitally record

and then present their work on 2 and 3D shapes to the class was a real pleasure for the inspector. • Performance management and professional development systems are viewed very positively by the staff in helping move the school forward. • Parents and governors are very involved in the life and development of the school. For example, the Chair of Governors, who is also a parent, uses her particular expertise to teach French and Italian to all year groups and German to Year 6.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school for the day. It was a real pleasure to chat with so many of you and to hear what you had to say about your super school. It was great having my photograph taken with some of you too!

There are many very positive things about Abberley that I know you appreciate. Here are some that I particularly want to celebrate:

- Your school is welcoming and friendly, with so much going on that there is never a chance to become bored - your excellent behaviour was a joy to see.
- Your teachers and the other adults in school do a really good job of looking after you as well as making sure your lessons are interesting - I was very impressed with the way you concentrate and work together to solve problems.
- You told me that you enjoy all your subjects but especially like the visits to museums, art galleries, theatre and best of all Malvern Hills outdoor centre. Year 6 explained about "sleeping in dorms" which sounds great fun, and about working in teams to build "woodland shelters" - I have mentioned this in my report and some of you might want to read this to see if you can find out where.
- Your headteacher is very good at her job and she has made sure that your school is one to be proud of. One of the reasons for its success is that everyone makes sure it gets better and better. There are one or two areas that the staff will be working to improve and I am sure you will help them - particularly those of you who like a challenge and think you could do even better if stretched a little more.