



# Abbot's Hall Community Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 124631  
**LEA** SUFFOLK LEA  
**Inspection number** 281769  
**Inspection dates** 21 September 2005 to 22 September 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. Robert McKeown LI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Danescourt Avenue
<b>School category</b>	Community		IP14 1QF
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 9		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01449612818
<b>Number on roll</b>	247	<b>Fax number</b>	01449673513
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr.A Holding
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18 October 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs. Debbie Knight

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 9	<b>Inspection dates</b> 21 September 2005 - 22 September 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 281769
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two contracted inspectors.

## Description of the school

Abbot's Hall is a community primary school in Stowmarket. It has 247 boys and girls on roll, aged from four to nine years. Almost all children are from white British backgrounds. There are very few children from minority ethnic families. Two children are at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. The number of children entitled to free school meals is low. The number of children who have special educational needs is about average for this size of school. Children start school with standards which are in line with those expected for their age. Abbot's Hall is part of a local learning network which aims to improve standards in English and mathematics through involving children more in physical education (PE) and school sport. The current headteacher was appointed in 2001.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

Abbot's Hall is an improving school which provides children with a satisfactory education. In its self evaluation, the school judged itself to be better than this but it needs to improve standards to justify its view. It achieves satisfactory value for money. Parents and pupils think the school is doing well and this reflects the positive outcomes of children's personal development. Staff work hard to make every child feel valued and parents' and children's views are listened to and acted on. Achievement is satisfactory, although standards are below average at the end of Key Stage 1, where too many pupils are still not reaching the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards meet expected levels at the end of the Foundation Stage and at the end of Year 4. Progress through the school is uneven because the quality of teaching is uneven. There are children in some year groups who have fallen behind and need to catch up quickly. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although inspectors saw good teaching in some classes. When teaching was less effective children's work was not always matched closely enough to what they needed to learn. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The leadership team properly focuses its efforts on making sure that pupils do as well as they can. Since the last inspection standards in English and mathematics dipped appreciably, especially for younger children. The headteacher is aware of this and has taken effective action to tackle it, an indication of the school's capacity to secure further improvements.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics to ensure that more children meet the expected levels in all year groups. - Improve the quality of teaching to a consistently high level in all classes. - Improve the systems for checking how well children are doing as they move through the school and ensure that children who fall behind catch up quickly.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Overall, standards and achievement are satisfactory. Results at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2004 were significantly below national levels in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2005, following action taken by the school, results improved but a sizeable minority of children still failed to reach the expected level for their age. Girls did better than boys, particularly in writing. Results indicate that most children make better progress in Key Stage 2. Consequently, standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 4 match the levels expected. When children enter the Reception classes, the school's data indicate that standards are about average. By the time they enter Year 1, most are achieving the level expected for their age. Some good improvements were recorded in children's progress last year, in particular for boys, and this has ensured that they get a good start in Year 1. In Key Stage 1, progress varies and some children do not learn as quickly as they should. In Years 3 and 4 most catch up before they go

to middle school. Children usually make better progress in reading and mathematics than they do in writing. Most children with additional needs are making satisfactory progress, including the two who do not speak English as a first language. In the last four years, standards have fluctuated from year to year, often because the quality of teaching was not consistently good. Children in some year groups have fallen behind and need to catch up quickly. There are now sensible and well-considered measures such as target setting, new approaches to teaching and learning and regular checks on attainment to help ensure more consistent progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Children enjoy coming to school. They have positive attitudes and behave well in lessons and around the school. Attendance is good and children arrive at school on time. They know they are treated fairly and they are polite and courteous. They feel safe because adults will help them if they have a problem. A particular strength is the way that children contribute to the local community. For example, the school has recently received the High Sheriff's Award for requesting warning signs to protect the local ducks on the road. Older children take their 'buddying' responsibilities seriously and parents appreciate the way that buddies help younger children settle into school. An active school council represents the children's views well. They say that they know their ideas are taken seriously because their request for playground markings has already happened. They understand the need to live healthily, choosing fruit when possible at lunch time and drinking water during the day. Both boys and girls have good opportunities for exercise and sport. The school knows it needs to develop further children's skills in information and communication technology (ICT) to prepare them for the future. As a result of the good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, children respect the views, values and beliefs of others. They treat sensitively children who find it hard to learn. For example, one class waited patiently while a boy hesitantly read out his work. Children's knowledge of other cultures is not as strong and the school has identified this requires improvement.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Some teaching is good. Most teachers use interactive whiteboards well to support their teaching. In the better lessons, teachers plan work that is matched precisely to the level of children's learning. Teaching assistants provide good support particularly when children are working independently and in groups. Recent changes have enabled teachers to look more carefully at learning and to make improvements to their teaching. Lesson planning is more detailed and focused on the different ways children learn. As a result, children in most classes are interested in lessons and behave well. Another positive feature is the way children write their own learning log, which gives them the chance to reflect on their

achievements. When teaching is less effective children's work is not always matched closely enough to what they need to learn. The use of targets to challenge children and give feedback on how well they are doing varies too much across the school. When comments in teachers' marking link closely to the children's individual targets, children know precisely what to do to improve. This was shown when one child said, 'We need to check this through first before moving on'. However, targets in some classes do not identify the small steps children need to take to learn effectively. Children with special educational needs and those who speak English in addition to another language have effective support and activities to help their learning. There are some groups who receive extra help to enable them to catch up. These sessions are usually planned and managed well by the staff who teach them but on occasions the learning activities do not match what some children need to learn next.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. For children in the Foundation Stage it is good. The outdoor area is used very effectively to excite children and help them to enjoy their learning. The school is successful in developing the children's awareness of safe and healthy living. A particularly strong feature of the curriculum is the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, which helps develop pupils' personal and social skills. Learning is enriched well by a variety of means, including a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, special interest days such as the recent science day and visitors who come into school to talk about their work. The school has made a good start at finding ways to motivate children, especially boys, to write although there is still some work to do. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are used satisfactorily in other subjects, although the school recognises, and inspectors agree, that more work needs to be done, especially in writing. Computers and other ICT equipment are not used effectively enough to support learning. There are exceptions, for example in history, where children look for information on the Internet and in science, when the digital microscope is used to show the children graphic details of what bacteria look like. As part of a local learning network the school is aiming to improve children's writing and problem solving in mathematics by involving them more in physical activities and school sport.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school has good arrangements for ensuring pupils' safety and health. Child protection and health and safety procedures are clear and well known by staff. Playground buddies help younger children to join in with games and playtime fun. Parents value the way the school helps the youngest children settle quickly when they start school. Children are given good support for their personal development and have good opportunities to take responsibility and make a contribution to the local community. Guidance to help them learn is satisfactory. Pupils who need help are given suitable support in lessons and when they work in small groups outside the

classroom. In those lessons where the children are encouraged to evaluate how well they have done and what they need to do to improve, progress and learning are particularly good. Comments in teachers' marking do not always link closely enough to the children's individual targets and so do not give enough guidance on what they need to do to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is committed to raising standards and to ensuring children's personal development and well being. Other members of the leadership team give her good support with helping to identify priorities and drawing up plans for improvement. The views of parents, staff, governors and children contribute well to this process. The leadership of other staff is satisfactory overall, and better in mathematics and the Foundation Stage, where recent improvements have led to higher standards. Subject leadership in English has been less effective, with limited impact on improving standards, particularly in writing. A new subject leader is now in post and there are suitable plans for improvement. The headteacher realises that standards are not high enough. She has established a programme of regular checking to improve the consistency in the quality of teaching and has introduced some changes to involve children more in assessing and reflecting on their own learning. Teaching still needs to be more effective in some classes. Target setting and the tracking of children's progress have improved but not sufficiently to ensure that children are making good progress as they move through the school. Programmes have been introduced to help those children who fall behind to catch up. Some but not all have been successful. The school's accommodation is good and recently improved with a computer suite, astro-turf play area and better outdoor facilities for Foundation Stage children. The installation of interactive whiteboards has helped make teaching more effective. Governors give the headteacher their full support and take an interest in the work of subject leaders.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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 for being so helpful and polite when we visited your school. We enjoyed the two days we spent with you. You are working hard to improve your reading, writing and numeracy. We have urged your teachers to help you to learn more quickly and to give you as much help as they can, especially with your writing. We like the idea of having targets to help you improve your work and want your teachers to check the targets are the right ones for you. We have asked your teachers to make sure all your lessons are taught well. We enjoyed talking to you about the things you do at Abbot's Hall. There are lots of good things going on. We were impressed with your behaviour and the way you care for each other. We like the way the buddies are asked to look after the youngest children when they start school. We also think you have some great after school clubs organised for you. Your school council has some very good ideas which help to improve the school environment. The work you do to help your local area is very important. The High Sheriff's Award you received for putting up warning signs to protect the ducks from being run over was well deserved. You are lucky to have the astro-turf pitch on your playground and a very smart computer suite. We would like you to try and use the computers as much as you can in the future to help you with your work. You have a lot to look forward to in the rest of this year, make sure you work really hard and do the best you can.