

# Abbeys Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110401
<b>Local Authority</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Inspection number</b>	288658
<b>Inspection date</b>	6 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Keith Williams

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	265
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Michelle Moore
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Christine Burnett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 October 2002
<b>School address</b>	Melrose Avenue Bletchley Milton Keynes MK3 6PS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01908 375230
<b>Fax number</b>	01908 645369

---

<b>Age group</b>	4-11
<b>Inspection date</b>	6 July 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	288658

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report 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.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This average sized school became a primary school in September 2005, having previously taken pupils to the age of 12. The school serves an area containing significant deprivation although, overall, pupils' socio-economic circumstances are broadly average, and an average proportion are eligible for free school meals. More pupils than usual join or leave the school at other than the usual point of entry. Whilst pupils are drawn from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, most are of White British heritage, and fewer than usual are at an early stage of learning English. An average proportion of pupils are identified with learning difficulties. The school has the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Activemark and the Healthy Schools Gold Standard.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Abbeys is a good school in which pupils achieve well academically and make excellent progress in their personal development. From below average starting points, pupils make good progress to reach average standards by the end of Year 6. This success is due to a combination of good leadership, management, teaching and care, and stems from the school's very strong commitment to ensuring that all pupils are valued, whatever their background, ability or gender. Most parents are very supportive of the school, one speaking for many in noting, 'My daughter has had an absolutely fantastic time. Her education and social skills have improved no end.'

The school has improved considerably since it was last inspected because the excellent headteacher, supported by a strong senior team and staff, is firmly focused on raising standards and creating an environment in which pupils can fulfil their potential. Senior staff keep a very thorough check on all aspects of the school's performance and areas identified as needing improvement are tackled determinedly. In their efforts to raise standards of writing, the staff have implemented a range of successful strategies. As a result, Year 6 national test results have risen from exceptionally low to broadly average levels in recent years. As a direct consequence of highly effective and accurate self-evaluation, and a determination to do the best for their pupils, standards, the quality of teaching and attendance levels have improved since the last report. Given this track record, the leaders have excellent capacity to continue to improve. An example of the leaders' capacity is their work to raise standards in mathematics, following a dip in results in 2006. There are already signs of success, for example a larger proportion of Year 6 pupils are on track to reach the higher Level 5 in mathematics this year. The school rightly recognises that there is still more to do, however, particularly to build on their efforts to increase pupils' confidence in mental calculation. Governors play their part in the school's development, too. They are supportive, have a good understanding of their strategic role and regularly visit classrooms, but they recognise the need to provide a more formal structure for their activities.

Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start because they are well taught. There is a strong and successful emphasis on promoting children's social development, a focus that continues right through the school. Planning takes good account of young children's differing needs and they gain confidence in the calm supportive atmosphere offered by Reception staff. By the end of Reception, about three-quarters of children reach the goals expected of them, which represents a good level of achievement from their starting points. This good progress continues across the school because teachers have high expectations of themselves and their pupils. They ensure that pupils have a very good understanding of how well they are doing and their next steps. Teachers make lessons interesting and challenging and, in return, pupils are very well motivated, eager to learn, enjoy school very much and their behaviour is excellent. They make outstanding progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development because pupils' all-round development is seen as being central to their academic achievement. A very good range of activities outside lessons contributes to their enjoyment. Pupils have excellent understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lifestyles and they contribute very strongly to the school and the wider community.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics, particularly in relation to mental calculation.
- Provide a more formal structure for governors' activities.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils join the school with a wide range of skills that, overall, are below average. They achieve well to reach average standards. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well, although about a quarter do not reach the goals expected by the end of Reception, because of their low levels of attainment on admission. National assessments in Year 2 have fluctuated in recent years. Taken overall, they have improved since 2002, when they were significantly below average. The results in 2006, and the work of pupils currently in Year 2, confirm that standards are broadly average. Standards in Year 6 have risen considerably in recent years, although they fell in mathematics and science in 2006. The school has dealt with this well so that, for example, there has been a good increase in the proportion reaching the higher Level 5 amongst current pupils. Taking account of their starting points, these pupils achieve well. The school has rightly identified the need to continue to raise standards in mathematics. Work to increase pupils' confidence in mental calculation is contributing to the rising standards, but the school recognises that some pupils do not perform as well when under the pressure of time. There is no significant difference in the performance of pupils of different background, gender or ability. The few pupils learning English as an additional language achieve well.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' outstanding personal development is a significant factor in the school's improvement in recent years. Pupils are highly motivated and enjoy school very much. This is reflected in rising levels of attendance that are now above average. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is usually excellent, a result of the school's very strong moral and social code. A few pupils occasionally present challenging behaviour, although this is well managed, so that it does not adversely affect other pupils' learning. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the smooth running of the school, willingly taking on extra responsibility, for example, by acting as 'buddies'. They are given a voice through the very effective school council, and are rightly proud of the development of quiet areas in the playgrounds. Pupils respond very well to the many opportunities to develop the spiritual dimension through art, poetry, music and in assemblies. They take delight in celebrating others' achievements and are sensitive to others' feelings and beliefs. Good progress in the basic skills means they are well prepared for their future economic well-being. Pupils' very well developed understanding of how to stay safe and healthy mean that they invariably choose healthy options at lunchtime.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning have improved since the last report and make a significant contribution to pupils' progress. Teamwork amongst teachers and support staff is good and pupils appreciate the high expectations that staff have of them, one saying, 'They don't expect you to be perfect, but they expect good standards of work and behaviour.' Pupils rise to this challenge and work hard, even when faced with difficulty. Lessons are planned well, so that those who need extra help get it and there is a good level of challenge for more able pupils. Teaching in Reception is good because the staff have a good understanding of how young children learn. They are

provided with a stimulating and supportive environment that gives them a good start to their education. The school leaders have a very accurate view of the quality of teaching across the school. Their monitoring shows that lessons are rarely less than good and are sometimes outstanding. The leaders ensure that the most effective practice is shared and they provide staff with the support they need to tackle any aspects identified as needing improvement. Lessons are typically briskly paced and questioning is used well to keep track of pupils' understanding. High quality marking adds to the quality of feedback given to pupils and ensures that they have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to work on next.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils benefit from a broad and interesting curriculum and a very good range of activities outside lessons that adds to their enjoyment and learning. Planning for literacy and numeracy is very thorough and there is a very high priority given to pupils' personal, social and health education. This makes a very strong contribution to pupils' outstanding personal development and prepares them well to be future citizens. A significant outcome is pupils' excellent understanding of how to lead a safe and healthy lifestyle. The school is currently reviewing and revising its planning to enhance the links between subjects. The leaders have recognised the need to monitor its introduction carefully to ensure that it has the intended impact. Pupils enjoy greatly the exciting range of visits, visitors and clubs that give them the opportunity to build on what they learn in lessons and develop their own interests and talents. Regular Spanish lessons are a strong feature of this provision.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are well cared for and supported and they are given very good academic guidance. A very close check is kept on pupils' progress and the resultant information is used very well to identify potential underachievement, target support where it is most needed and set challenging, but realistic, targets for improvement. Pupils are very aware of why their targets are important, as a Year 2 pupil reflected, 'to see what you are working towards and what you have achieved'. There are regular opportunities for them to assess their own work and that of others. Most pupils, accordingly, have a very well developed understanding of how well they are doing and how to reach the next level. All of the necessary health and safety checks are made and the school takes good steps to secure the welfare of vulnerable pupils. Good support for those with learning difficulties or disabilities means that they achieve as well as their classmates. A very small number of parents expressed concern about aspects of supervision. While there was no evidence to support this during the inspection, the school is not complacent and holds pupils' health, safety and welfare as paramount. Pupils themselves report that they feel safe and appreciate the security measures taken by the school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Good leadership and management are at the root of the school's improvement in recent years and there are some outstanding features. In particular, the excellent headteacher has a very firm grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses, based on extremely thorough monitoring

and evaluation systems. All staff share her vision and are challenged to reflect on their practice and secure improvement where it is felt necessary. They, and the pupils, rise to these high expectations. A strong senior team use their complementary skills to check on teaching and learning and evaluate test data and other assessments. Good leadership from the co-ordinators for literacy and numeracy has been instrumental in the rising standards and the Foundation stage is well led and managed. Governors are very supportive. They attend events and visit classrooms through their individual links with classes. They are reflective of their own contribution to the school's development and are rightly considering ways of creating a more formal structure to their work. Most parents are very supportive of the school. A small minority feel that communication between home and school could be better. While the inspection concludes that channels of communication are good, the leaders are determined that this should improve further. They have excellent capacity to do so.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

### 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>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

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

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

17 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Abbeys Primary School, Milton Keynes, MK3 6PS

I am writing to tell you what I found out when I visited the school recently. You gave me lots of helpful information when we spoke and I was pleased to visit your classrooms to see you work.

Many of you told me that you think you go to a good school and that you are doing well. I agree. Your school has improved a lot since inspectors last visited. Your excellent headteacher makes sure that everyone is working together to help you to do your best. I was pleased to see how hard you work in lessons and your behaviour in class, in the dining room and on the playgrounds was excellent. Well done. Please keep this up because it is one of the reasons why your work is improving. Another reason is that your teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and exciting. They make sure that those of you who need extra help or harder work get them. Thank you to the school council for meeting with me. You are right to be proud of what you do. I would also like to thank those who brought your books for me to see and Year 6 for your assembly about your trip to York.

Even though yours is a good school, your headteacher, staff and governors are determined that it should get even better. They know exactly what they have to do. I was very pleased to see in your books that your writing has improved so much. You and your teachers have been working to improve your work in mathematics and this is working, too. I agree with your teachers that they still need to concentrate on this, especially your mental work. I am sure you will keep on working with them to keep improving this. I have also asked the governors to create a plan that shows how they are checking on the school's work.

Once again, thank you for your help and I wish you good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Williams

Lead Inspector