

Abbey Village Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119307
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	291378
Inspection dates	31 January –1 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Onyon

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Sigrun Baier
Headteacher	Mr Stephen Knight
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2002
School address	Bolton Road Abbey Village Chorley Lancashire PR6 8DD
Telephone number	01254 830489
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small primary school, located in a rural village setting. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and none have English as an additional language. Although the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is relatively small, the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. The school has achieved Eco School accreditation and the Investors in People Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Abbey Village is a good school. Parents praise its work and are confident of its success particularly in providing excellent pastoral support. A typical comment from parents was, 'There is a real sense of belonging to the school. The children are happy, well cared for and enjoy their lessons.' The ethos of the school is lively and positive. Its small size encourages a strong, supportive family atmosphere that is successful in ensuring that pupils' personal development is good. The headteacher provides purposeful leadership and, with the close-knit staff team, a firm commitment to provide for the needs of all pupils.

Pupils achieve well because teaching is good. The small year groups mean that statistical comparison of results in national tests in Years 2 and 6 are unreliable without further information about the progress of individual pupils. The school's data shows that standards in English, mathematics and science are above the national average by Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils make consistently good progress as they move through the school. Recent improvements in assessment systems, target-setting and teaching arrangements have enabled the school to focus effectively on raising standards in writing throughout the school. Although progress is good in science, it is not as rapid as it is in English and mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and higher attaining pupils are supported well in all three classes and, consequently, make good progress.

The positive impact of the school's ethos is most evident in the outstanding care and support for pupils' welfare and the good provision for pupils' personal development. Staff know the pupils and their families very well. Pupils have lots of opportunities to take responsibility, develop independence and contribute to the life of the school and the wider community. These opportunities and the school's ethos make a big contribution to pupils' good behaviour and their development of the personal attributes that enable them to benefit fully from lessons.

The staff clearly enjoy being with the pupils and the pupils respond well, working hard in lessons. Teachers match work to the needs of all pupils in the mixed-age classes and the good curriculum is planned to ensure that pupils tackle harder work each year as they move up the school. There are well planned links between subjects that make learning interesting and fun. The delightful rural locality, visits and visitors are used well to enrich the curriculum. Staff expertise is deployed well to provide specialist teaching across age groups, for instance in French and music.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher motivates and inspires the entire team of teaching and support staff, and presides over a happy and successful school. Governors have a clear understanding of how well the school is performing and where its priorities for improvement lie. The present links between tracking the progress of pupils, setting targets and planning for improvement are not as strong as they might be. The school has successfully tackled issues from the previous inspection and offers good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start school with skills that are typical for their age. They get off to a good start in Reception where small numbers enable them to settle in quickly, make good progress and, by the end of the year, many reach standards that exceed the national expectation for children of their age. The teaching is good. The curriculum covers all the required areas and a good

range of purposeful activities is planned for the children. Children enjoy learning, often through first-hand experiences and practical work. Good teamwork between the teacher and teaching assistant ensures that children in Reception benefit from a good level of support and individual attention as well as opportunities to join pupils in Years 1 and 2 for some of their activities. They make particularly good progress in personal, social and emotional development. Children's achievements and their rate of progress are monitored carefully and the information is used well to influence the planning of lessons and activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure pupils know exactly what they have to do to improve their progress in science.
- Improve the effectiveness of the systems for tracking pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All groups of pupils achieve well. Those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities get the extra help they need and the more able are challenged in their learning. Many pupils join the school at times other than the usual starting point but the school's records show that, whatever that starting point, children make good progress. Standards reached in the national tests and assessments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 fluctuate because year groups are small and the abilities of pupils vary from year to year. Standards have generally been above the national average in both key stages over the last three years and the school is on track to reach its challenging targets in 2008. Nonetheless, despite this, the rate of progress is quicker in English and mathematics than in science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy coming. They make the most of all that it offers. By Year 6, pupils are confident, articulate and have positive attitudes to learning. Attendance is above average. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They treat other pupils and adults with respect and consideration, and say that there is always someone to listen if they have a problem. Spiritual, moral and social development is good. Cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live a healthy and safe life. The school's work towards Healthy School status enriches pupils' learning. They have many opportunities to take responsibility and they take their duties seriously. The recently reformed school council has suggested a number of improvements, such as the planting of flowers in the playground area. Older pupils act as 'playground pals' to the younger children, helping to develop social skills and understanding. The pupils' preparation for their next stage of education is good. They leave this school with positive attitudes to learning and are developing the skills necessary to become successful future learners.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching is consistently good across the school. Teachers' caring relationships with pupils generate positive attitudes to learning. Teachers' strong subject knowledge, conscientious planning and sensitive questioning ensure that pupils

clearly understand tasks. Good class management and stimulating environments contribute to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Teachers and classroom assistants work well together to support pupils in their learning. In the best lessons, work is well matched to the needs of all pupils and pupils are challenged to reach their targets. But this practice is not wholly consistent. For example, pupils do not always understand how much progress they have made in their science work. Teachers assess pupils' progress often and accurately, and generally use the information well to plan suitable work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced, and enriched well by an interesting variety of activities. Pupils particularly enjoy, for example, learning French and opportunities to learn to play musical instruments. All children in Key Stage 2 are included in the school orchestra and proudly performed at the recent Christmas concert. The curriculum provides well for pupils' personal development. They gain a good understanding of other cultures, for example, through a good range of visits and visitors. The school joins readily with other local schools and national projects to enhance opportunities in a number of subjects, for example, in physical education. The school's plans to make the curriculum more creative are well in hand but need more time to be wholly effective.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The excellent pastoral care throughout the school helps pupils to feel protected and valued, and to learn with confidence. Staff are good role models which assists pupils' personal development. Effective systems for child protection and other safeguarding requirements are in place and used promptly where necessary. The school is very supportive to pupils on a personal level and goes to considerable trouble to check their safety and well-being. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Improvements in systems for tracking progress and supporting pupils have led to the good involvement of all staff in promoting their good progress. Clear records are kept of pupils' assessment data year on year, providing a clear picture of where extra help or challenge is needed. Pupils are well informed of their strengths in English and mathematics and where they need to improve. They enjoy their growing involvement in promoting their own learning. There is more work to be done to extend the effectiveness of the system across all subjects, especially in science.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and manages the uncertainty of pupil numbers entering each year well, providing stability and continuity for pupils and staff and maintaining the school's ethos. He has a good grasp of the school's effectiveness and recognises where improvements can be made. As the result of recent changes in staffing, he works alongside the coordinator to lead the Foundation Stage well. At present, the links between setting targets, tracking pupils' progress towards them, identifying barriers to better achievement and planning for improvement are not as strong as they might be. However, the school's self-evaluation is generally accurate in evaluating its strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher is supported well by a cohesive and committed staff team who work closely together and contribute fully

to identifying areas for development. Governors are well informed and involved in school life and planning for the future. The school is well placed to continue to improve.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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

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

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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

4 February 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Abbey Village Primary School, Lancashire, PR6 8DD

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit and am very grateful for your willingness to chat to me. This has helped me to write this report. Your parents are right in saying that you go to a good school. Your teachers make lessons interesting and you make good progress. You contribute to this by your good attendance and your enthusiasm for learning. Your manners and politeness are good and you look after visitors well. Your good behaviour helps everybody to learn in lessons. I am pleased that you know how to keep safe and healthy, and are confident that staff will help you if you have a problem.

I expect your teachers sometimes say, 'You have done well but you can do even better.' This is what I am telling your school. To be even better, it needs to help everybody understand how well they are doing in their science work and what they need to do to improve. It will also help if the school can use the information it has about your progress to strengthen your learning and plan ways of helping you make even better progress. I know you like to have targets to try and achieve them. You may have some ideas of your own on how best targets can be shared and used with you in your science work.

Finally, I would like to thank you again and wish you and your teachers every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Onyon

Lead Inspector