

Abbey Primary Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120063
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	291616
Inspection dates	10–11 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	429
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Tim Foster
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2002
School address	Ellis Avenue Leicester LE4 5LB
Telephone number	0116 2661809
Fax number	0116 2661809

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves an urban regeneration area where the vast majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Very few pupils come from White British backgrounds. Virtually all start school with little or no English. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average. Since the last inspection, the school has experienced major turmoil, including instability in management, resulting in the local authority setting up an Interim Executive Board to run the school. The present headteacher started in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This rapidly improving school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. Achievement is satisfactory. Recent improvements are gathering momentum because of the headteacher's drive, commitment and tackling 'head-on' the issues facing the school. The significant progress Year 6 pupils have made this year has greatly improved the school's national test results and standards are now average. There is still some way to go to achieve consistently good progress throughout the school but a good start has been made on doing this. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress because of the good provision made for them. Only a small proportion of children reach the nationally expected early learning goals in all areas of learning by the end of Reception. Senior staff lead and manage the school satisfactorily, and have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They carry out rigorous checks on teaching and learning and have successfully improved different aspects of them. However, they have not sufficiently influenced teachers' planning or the use of assessment information, including marking, to identify the next steps in learning for individual pupils. As a result, while teaching is satisfactory, few pupils know how to improve their work by themselves. This limits the effectiveness of the care, guidance and support they receive, which is satisfactory overall. Pastoral support is good and contributes greatly to the pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils enjoy school and say that teachers 'make us feel confident that we can achieve'. Parents recognise how much the school has improved in the past year and praise it highly for what it does. Plans are well under way to make the satisfactory curriculum more exciting and meaningful for the pupils. It is already successfully enhanced and enriched by a good range of additional activities within and beyond the normal school day. The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness is accurate. Most of the improvement since the last inspection has taken place in the past year and the school knows what it needs to do to improve further. It has come a long way in a short time and all staff are now strongly focused on improving pupils' achievement. All of this, combined with the good leadership provided by the headteacher, gives it good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teachers' planning and marking to help pupils make faster progress throughout the school.
- Use assessment information more rigorously to plan work and set challenging targets for individual pupils. A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Progress is good in the Foundation Stage, ensuring children are well prepared for their work in Year 1. Achievement is satisfactory in the rest of the school and is improving. Teachers worked very hard with pupils in Years 5 and 6 this year to accelerate their progress. As a result, pupils in Year 6 have done particularly well in the national tests, especially in English, and overall, standards are now average. Standards have also risen in Year 2, although they remain below average in reading and writing. Pupils made satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 but these pupils did not have the same good quality provision that is now evident in the Foundation Stage. Initiatives introduced this year are improving the quality of writing. Having started school

with little or no English, pupils make good progress in learning to speak the language. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are supported well and they too make satisfactory progress. Pupils use their speaking and listening skills well in all lessons. They use their writing and mathematical skills satisfactorily in other subjects. They are not encouraged to do this often enough.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy learning and want to do well. They participate enthusiastically in the many activities provided for them during and beyond the normal school day. They behave well, feel safe and know how to keep themselves and others safe, reporting that 'everyone gets on with everybody else'. They appreciate the blue stickers and certificates that reward their good behaviour and willingness to learn. Attendance is average. It has improved this year because, in the words of their parents, pupils 'want to come to school'. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school and wider community, for example, as school councillors helping to improve lunchtimes, or as Year 6 pupils helping younger pupils to learn. They are particularly proud of their part in the recent 'Abbey Mela', a large community event. They understand the importance of keeping fit and eating the right food to keep them healthy. All of this, together with their sound progress in basic skills, prepares them satisfactorily for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although satisfactory overall, teaching is improving. In several sessions it was good. Teaching is consistently good in the Foundation Stage. Teachers use teaching and bilingual assistants well to support pupils. They phrase questions carefully to ensure everyone has the chance to answer, and they check pupils' understanding of new words carefully. However, the pupils' lack of technical vocabulary sometimes holds up their learning. The opportunities teachers give pupils to discuss their work with each other before answering a question are helping to extend these skills. Pupils greatly appreciate these discussions. The discussions are invariably monitored well by teachers and support staff, so developing pupils' spoken language effectively. Teachers' planning is very variable and at times inadequate. It is rarely evaluated and it is not built securely enough on what pupils have learned previously. Teachers share with pupils what they describe as the target, the challenge and the super challenge, which are the learning objectives for each lesson. They also help pupils to check if they are achieving these objectives. However, they do not set individual targets for pupils and their marking rarely shows pupils how to improve their work. This limits pupils' progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A good balance of well-organised independent and adult-directed activities grabs children's interest and ensures their good progress in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum is satisfactory in the rest of the school. A good start has been made on linking subjects together in the 'Connected Curriculum', which is due to be implemented in full in September. The trial currently under way results in variable progress in different subjects, largely because opportunities for

assessing pupils' learning are not included. A wide range of visits, visitors and other activities before, during and after school contributes successfully to pupils' personal development and well-being. They also promote pupils' health and safety well and contribute effectively to their enjoyment of learning and their future lives. For example, pupils help to arrange and cost some of the visits they undertake. The school uses its information and communication technology facilities well to promote pupils' learning in different subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Adults provide pupils with good pastoral care. The weekly Balraksha project sessions, run by the NSPCC, were described by some pupils as a 'good place to go to if you have worries'. Pupils' understanding of how to improve their own emotional wellbeing and the importance of caring for others are also successfully developed through the school's 'good values' programme. All safeguarding procedures are firmly in place, including those for child protection and for promoting race equality. Pupils do not, however, receive enough academic guidance. While some assessment systems are in place, the information gained from them is not used well enough in planning or to set targets for individual pupils. Together with the weaknesses in teachers' marking, this means that too few pupils know how to improve their learning by themselves, and this limits their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher's clarity of vision has given the school strong educational direction and all staff now recognise their responsibility for what happens in Year 6. Strong in its determination to sustain the improvements seen this year, the school has set itself particularly challenging targets for the next two years. However, it has not yet considered how to break these targets down for individual pupils. Nevertheless, it has given pupils a flying start for next year by re-arranging classes and moving pupils up to their next teacher before the end of this term. Leaders and managers know what needs to be done to secure further improvement and the new senior leadership team is well focused on this. They have worked together well this year to improve teaching and learning. They have not, however, kept a close enough check on teachers' planning or their use of assessment in it. This has limited their overall effectiveness in raising achievement in all year groups. Members of the team have also worked hard on planning the new curriculum. The shadow governing body has started to work alongside senior management in checking teaching and learning. Their work so far is preparing them well for taking on their responsibilities fully.

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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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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 behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	3

The quality of provision

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

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

- 12 July 2007 Dear Pupils Inspection of Abbey Primary School, Leicester LE4 5LB Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for talking to us about your work. You told us how much you enjoy school, that your teachers make your learning fun, and that the school is much better than it was a year ago. You and your parents are right in this. Your school gives you a satisfactory education. This means it does some things well but it needs to do other things better to help you make even faster progress. It is trying very hard to do this. Here is a summary of what we found.
- Most of you make satisfactory progress because you are taught properly. Where the school has done most work, for example, in Year 6 and in Nursery and Reception, you make good progress.
- You behave well and want to do well. You care a great deal for each other and know how to keep yourself and others safe. You also know that you can always turn to an adult for help if you have any problems.
- You try hard to take a full part in everything the school offers and really appreciate it when you are told you are doing well. This makes you want to try even harder.
- Everyone is trying hard to improve what you are taught and how you learn so that each one of you can do as well as you possibly can.
- Your school is led and managed satisfactorily. However, your headteacher is especially good at helping your teachers to improve what they are doing. Here are the things we have asked the school to do to help you make even better progress.
- Make sure that all teachers plan and mark your work equally well so that you can make faster progress, whatever class you are in.
- Make sure that your teachers use everything they know about your progress when they plan your work, and that they set each one of you challenging targets and help you to understand how you can improve your work by yourselves. We hope that you will continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now, for the rest of your lives. Yours sincerely Doris Bell Lead inspector