



Abbey Hulton Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123989
Local Authority Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number 292852
Inspection date 20 November 2006
Reporting inspector Barbara Crane

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Road
School category	Community		Abbey Hulton
Age range of pupils	3-11		Stoke-on-Trent ST2 8BS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01782 235551
Number on roll (school)	220	Fax number	01782 234650
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ray Casey
		Headteacher	A D Keddle
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Abbey Hulton is an average-sized primary school on the outskirts of Stoke-on-Trent. Just over half of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is much higher than in most schools. Almost half of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities, which is also much higher than average. Children's attainment when they start school is well below average and is very low in language. There is a high level of mobility among pupils, with many joining and leaving the school at different times.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Parents are right to be pleased that their children go to this school. It is a good school with some outstanding features. The school's first-rate care, guidance and support result in pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. The school is a happy place in which newcomers are made welcome and find it easy to make friends. Pupils see the difference the school makes in their lives and take full advantage of what it offers them. As one pupil put it, 'People help you to make the right decisions about behaving well, caring for each other and trying your hardest'. Good provision for the Foundation Stage children ensures a rapid start to their learning. Children make outstanding progress in their personal, social and emotional development because teaching gives them exactly what they need to gain confidence in these areas. The limited facilities for outdoor play restrict children's progress in physical development.

Good teaching, underpinned by a good curriculum, leads to pupils' good achievement. Standards are broadly average by the time they leave the school. The mutual respect between pupils and staff and excellent relationships boost pupils' enjoyment in learning. Pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties make very rapid progress in overcoming their problems because of very effective support. Teachers mostly use assessments effectively to plan the next steps in pupils' learning but there are times when tasks are not just at the right level for pupils and this prevents them from making even better progress in their work. The lack of effective guidance for teachers about developing pupils' handwriting and inconsistent expectations of presentation restrict pupils' progress in writing and mathematics.

Good leadership and management mean that the staff's talents are nurtured and they are happy in their work. The headteacher's vision and drive sets the tone in the school's desire to get the best for pupils. Careful reflection on how well it is doing, involving staff and governors, leads to the school identifying the right priorities to make things better. The way in which achievement for its youngest children has been enhanced indicates the school's good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers use assessments more consistently to adapt work to match pupils' different capabilities.
- Provide guidance for teachers on how to develop pupils' handwriting and check that expectations of presentation are consistently high.
- Improve provision for children's outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage and their achievement in physical development.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and standards are broadly average by the time the pupils leave the school. Action taken has improved children's progress in the Foundation

Stage to a good level. Children are achieving well but few reach the goals expected for their age by the time they start in Year 1. Slower progress has been identified in physical development. Children's control of fine movements such as when using small tools is good, but the lack of outdoor facilities for using large spaces in imaginative play restricts progress overall in their physical development. Their progress in personal, social and emotional development is outstanding because teaching supports this area extremely well. Pupils in other year groups make good progress and know what they are aiming for in their work. There are times when the progress of particular children is very rapid because of precise teaching at just the right level of challenge. At other times, progress is restricted because the work is too easy or too hard. Pupils' handwriting is not as good as it should be and this slows their progress as they find it hard to read through what they have written. Similarly, in mathematics, progress is slow when untidy presentation means that numbers are not recorded in the correct columns and so calculations are inaccurate.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils show a high level of respect for each other and for adults. Pupils' finely-tuned judgement of what is right and wrong and of how their actions affect others help them to make the correct choices. Consequently, relationships between boys and girls and pupils of different ages are excellent and behaviour is exemplary. These factors help boost pupils' enjoyment of school and, combined with their practice of healthy and safe living, result in pupils' outstanding sense of well-being. The oldest pupils set a fine example for the younger pupils to follow and see this as their main responsibility. The School Council carry out their work in a businesslike way and have a mission to enable all pupils to have their say in improving the school's community. Pupils' suggestions, for example, about how to make the school's anti-bullying policy even more child-friendly are currently being sought and acted upon.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching ensures that pupils air their views confidently and have the vocabulary to talk about their ideas. Teachers are very good at extending pupils' language through asking questions. Consistent expectations of politeness and consideration for others are rewarded by pupils' high standards of behaviour and engagement in learning. Teaching in the Foundation Stage quickly builds children's confidence and understanding of the benefits of working together. Expectations of pupils' presentation of work are too low and handwriting is not developed well enough through the teaching beyond the Foundation Stage. Teaching for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities takes very good account of individual needs. When pupils are taught in

small groups or as individuals, their progress at these times speeds up. When pupils are taught in class, their progress, as with all other pupils, is sometimes limited because the work set is not at quite the correct level for them. This is because teachers do not make the best use of assessments to pinpoint exactly what needs to be learned next.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is interesting. Good links are made between different subjects. In Year 2, for example, pupils' learning about writing instructions in literacy and skills in designing and making benefited jointly from a puppet-making project. All pupils have two hours of sport each week and this contributes very well to pupils' levels of fitness. A good range of popular clubs and activities contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of school. Improvements have been made to the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage so that their learning is more practical and this has boosted their achievement. The school makes the best use it can of the limited facilities for outdoor play for children in the Foundation Stage and plans are in hand to improve access and the environment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils flourish because of the school's high quality of care, support and guidance. They have several options if they want to share any concerns and know that adults will listen to them. Procedures for safeguarding children work very well. Matters of health and safety are given high priority and so pupils feel safe and secure and know how to keep fit. They welcome and follow the school's guidance to help them lead healthy lives, such as not eating sweets at break time. Parents help by providing healthy packed lunches. The staff keep a close eye on pupils to identify any who are vulnerable. Pupils who need it are given fast and effective support through nurturing groups or individual activities that boost their self-esteem and confidence. Pupils know what their targets are in their work and are confident that they will get help to reach them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very clear direction and inspires the confidence of pupils, staff and parents. The school has an accurate view of its effectiveness because of good self-evaluation. The analysis of data, observations in classrooms and other checks on pupils' performance are used well to identify where things need to improve. Teamwork in the school is very strong and all staff are highly valued. There is good capacity to improve, and action to resolve areas that need improving is carried out swiftly. This has led to improvements in children's learning in the Foundation Stage, for example in learning how to form letters correctly. The success of this initiative is weakened because teachers have too little guidance on how to develop pupils' handwriting in later years. The commitment to pupils' having

an equal opportunity to achieve their best means that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Governors receive good information from the staff and are making more frequent visits to find out for themselves how well the school is doing. The school works extremely well with parents and outside agencies such as health workers to promote pupils' well-being.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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

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?	1

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.

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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

Thank you for such a wonderful welcome when I visited recently. You were a great help to me in my work. You have a good school and play a big part in helping it to improve. You are right to be proud of how your school helps you to make the right choices.

This is what I found out about your school:

- good teaching means that you achieve well in your work and enjoy learning new things
- you create a very happy and friendly atmosphere because you all get on together and behave so well
- you put into practice what you learn about eating healthily as well as keeping fit and safe
- all of the adults take really good care of you and give you help when you face problems
- the staff work hard to get the best for you and they know what to work on next because they check on how well things are going.

I have asked your teachers to do these things to make your school even better:

- make sure that you always get work that is just at the right level for you
- help you to make your handwriting better and expect you to be neater in presenting your work
- provide more things for the Nursery and Reception children to play with outside.

You can help by trying your hardest to make your work neat. Keep on enjoying school and being with your friends. I wish you all the very best for the future.