

Abbey Meads Community Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	131573
Local Authority	Swindon
Inspection number	293782
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Alison Grainger

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	117
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shaun Wilkinson
Headteacher	M Brown
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2001
School address	Hugo Drive Abbey Meads Swindon SN25 4GY
Telephone number	01793 723239
Fax number	01793 723201

Age group	4-11
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to administration error

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school draws the vast majority of its pupils from the estate of mixed housing to the north of Swindon in which it is situated. Most pupils are of White British heritage and 12% are from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds. No pupil is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little below average. When children enter the Reception Year, their attainment is broadly at the level expected.

Owing to some recent changes on the governing body, the school is temporarily without a chair of governors.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. Strengths in the satisfactory care, guidance and support contribute much to pupils' good personal development and well-being. The school provides a calm and orderly environment and is successful in helping pupils to gain a good awareness of how to keep fit and healthy. Pupils' behaviour, attitudes to work and relationships are good. They grow into mature and sensible young people who readily accept responsibility. Many are confident and articulate by the end of Year 6.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average overall. Children in the Reception Year settle in well. They get off to a secure start in their learning because the provision for them is satisfactory. This beginning is built on securely in Years 1 and 2. Progress is currently satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 because reasonable action has been taken to rectify a fall in standards and achievement in mathematics.

Pupils make adequate progress in each year because teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. There is a good range of activities additional to daily lessons, such as visits, visitors and special themed days and weeks. These opportunities contribute significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school and pupils also appreciate the range of clubs available to them in Years 1 to 6.

There are some strengths in the satisfactory teaching, most notably in the good teamwork of teachers and teaching assistants. The main factor preventing teaching from being more effective is that it is not sharply enough matched to all pupils' needs. As a result, the more capable pupils in particular are not consistently challenged. Marking is undertaken conscientiously and pupils have targets for improvement. However, marking does not clearly tell pupils what they need to work on most in order to improve their performance, nor does it make references to their targets. As a result, pupils are not always as sure as they should be about what they could do better.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the changes necessary to keep the school improving steadily. Staff work together willingly as a team to move the school on. The school recognises that, in order to prevent underachievement in the future and to increase pupils' progress now, there has to be sharper analysis of how teaching and the curriculum contribute to pupils' progress and standards. Governors do not have a clear enough understanding of how well the school is performing and, as a result, are not sufficiently involved in helping the school to be more effective. Even so, the school's recent success in improving pupils' progress in mathematics and its track record of adequate development since the last inspection show that it has the necessary capacity to develop further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that teaching is always matched closely to pupils' needs and that it challenges the more capable pupils.
- Give all pupils clear guidance through marking and the use of targets so that they know how to improve their performance.
- Sharpen the analysis of how teaching and the curriculum contribute to pupils' progress and standards, and take swift action to prevent underachievement.
- Ensure that governors have a secure understanding of how the school is performing and that they are actively involved in helping the school to improve.

A small proportion of the 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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. Children make steady progress in all areas of their learning in the Reception Year. The vast majority reach the goals expected and a few exceed these standards. Further secure gains are made in Years 1 and 2, although pupils move on relatively more quickly in Year 2 than in Year 1. Standards at the end of Year 2 are average.

Progress is now satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 in English, mathematics and science. The standards of pupils presently in Year 6 are close to average, based on the quality of their school work. These standards are better than shown by the test results in 2006, when pupils' performance was not good enough in mathematics and there were also some weaknesses in science. Although the effective action taken has ensured that pupils' progress has picked up this year, the more capable pupils are not consistently challenged. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress at a similar rate to other pupils in their classes.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The strongest progress is made in moral and social development, as seen in pupils' good attitudes, relationships and behaviour. Almost all enjoy school a lot and this is reflected in the above-average attendance rate. A relatively weaker area is pupils' understanding of modern multi-ethnic society.

Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of keeping fit and healthy. They make sensible choices about what they eat and they enjoy physical activity, such as skipping, at playtimes. Pupils say that they feel safe at school. They observe safe practices and play sensibly in the limited space of the playground. They make a good contribution to the school community, for example, diligently carrying out responsibilities as 'peer mediators' and playground buddies. In these roles, and through the school council, they help the school to run smoothly. Pupils also contribute appropriately to the wider community, for instance, by raising funds for charities. Pupils' satisfactory progress in developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy means that they are reasonably prepared for the next stage.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Strengths in the satisfactory teaching include the good organisation of lessons and the management of pupils and activities. Instructions and explanations are clear. Pupils are told what they will be doing but they are not always told clearly enough why they will be doing it. A particular strength is the effective teamwork of teachers and teaching assistants. Teaching assistants are well deployed in all parts of lessons to make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. Instances of good teaching occur in the Reception Year and Year 2.

The main reason why teaching does not move learning on at a more than adequate pace is that it is not closely enough matched to all pupils' needs. Too often, the more capable pupils are not fully challenged. This is the case even when the lesson plans show that activities are planned at different levels for different groups. Sometimes, for example, whole-class introductions are long and the content of these is pitched at the same level for all. In the Reception Year, however, there is good use of assessment to ensure that teaching challenges the most able in mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum covers all the recommended areas of learning for children in the Reception Year and the required subjects for pupils in Years 1 to 6. In Reception, there is an appropriate balance of activities that are led by adults and those that children select from a range provided. Role-play activities are designed well. The school recognises that the use of the outdoor area requires further development.

Some good opportunities are provided for writing across the subjects, for example, in science in Years 1 and 2 and in history in Year 3, although there are also some missed opportunities for writing. Mathematics and information and communication technology skills are not promoted fully across the curriculum. There is good enrichment of the curriculum through visiting speakers and visits, including two opportunities for pupils to go on residential visits. There is also a satisfactory range of clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is good. Pupils like their teachers and the other adults who help them and say that they feel safe at school. The vast majority are sure that they have an adult to whom they can turn should the need arise. Bullying is taken seriously and pupils report that incidents of unkindness are dealt with well. The site is clean and well maintained. Healthy eating and keeping fit, such as by walking to school, are actively encouraged.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils know what their targets are but not all understand them fully and they are not reviewed frequently enough. In general, pupils are able to speak more confidently about their English targets than about their mathematics targets. Marking is also more effective in English than in mathematics. When marking work, teachers provide pupils with feedback about what they are doing well but they do not always tell them what they could do better. However, this is done very well in Year 2 in English. There are missed opportunities to use marking to refer to and reinforce pupils' targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and senior staff provide a clear educational direction for the school based on satisfactory self-evaluation. There is a real commitment to improving the school. Staff successfully take on board new initiatives designed to increase pupils' progress. The school has welcomed the support of a local authority numeracy consultant to improve provision for mathematics. There is also an enthusiasm for the work staff are doing with an external literacy consultant to develop writing. The impact of this is becoming evident, for example, in story writing in Years 1 and 2 and in some older pupils' poetry.

The school recognises that its analysis of how teaching and the curriculum contribute to pupils' progress and standards needs to be sharper. It knows that this is necessary if weaknesses are to be identified and rectified swiftly and if pupils' progress is to be not only maintained but also accelerated. Governance is inadequate because governors do not have a clear enough understanding of the school's effectiveness and the reasons why it is as it is. As a result, although there are some supportive governors, the governing body is not actively involved in driving school improvement. Day-by-day management is smooth and efficient.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	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	4
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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Abbey Meads Community Primary School, Swindon, Wiltshire SN25 4GY

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you. We found that your school is providing you with a satisfactory education.

You are sensible young people. You behave well, have good attitudes to learning and get on well with others. You take your responsibilities in school seriously and make a good contribution to the school community. You help other people, for example, by raising funds for charities. You know why it is important to keep fit and healthy.

The adults look after you well. You told us that you like the adults and that you can tell an adult if you are worried. You also told us that the school does not put up with bullying and some of your parents said how much they appreciate this as well.

You are making satisfactory progress in your work. This is because the teaching and curriculum are satisfactory. You have some really interesting activities in addition to your ordinary lessons, such as visits and special weeks. You are lucky to have two opportunities to go on residential visits!

We have asked the adults to do some things to help the school to become better. They were not surprised by what we have asked them to do because they have already been thinking about how to improve your school. This is what we have said are the most important things to do now:

- Make sure that you all have teaching and activities that are at just the right level;
- Give you clear guidance to help you to improve your work;
- Look even more carefully at how the school helps you to make progress; and
- Involve the governors more in helping the school to improve.

You can help by continuing to do as well as you can.

Best wishes

Alison Grainger Lead Inspector