

# Abbey Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103930
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	308460
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Derek Watts

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	340
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Charles Haynes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Malcolm Bevan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2004
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Maurice Road Smethwick B67 5LR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01214 291689
<b>Fax number</b>	01214 291689

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<b>Age group</b>	3–7
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Abbey Infant is larger than most schools of its type. About 60% of the pupils come from a White British background. The remainder come from a range of other ethnic backgrounds, with Indian being the next largest group. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is about average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The nature of these include moderate learning difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. There is Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision for children in Nursery and Reception.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of Abbey Infants School is satisfactory. There are good features to its work. Children in Nursery and Reception get off to a good start because of good teaching and an interesting curriculum. However, this good foundation is not built on fully because of inconsistencies in teaching in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' progress in these years is satisfactory. Effective pastoral care and support and a positive school atmosphere lead to good personal development and well-being for pupils.

Most parents hold positive views about the school and are pleased with the care and education provided for their children. They particularly like the school's welcoming atmosphere. A minority have concerns about the lack of additional activities such as visits and clubs. The range of additional activities offered is satisfactory.

Leadership and management are successfully promoting good pastoral care which leads to pupils' good personal development. The impact of leadership and management on pupils' achievement and on teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. The monitoring of performance, particularly pupils' progress and the quality of teaching, is not always rigorous enough. As a result, the school believes its performance is better than it actually is in these areas. Policies and strategies to improve teaching are underdeveloped. Staff are positive and are keen to move the school further forward.

Standards by the end of Year 2 have fallen from the above average levels at the last inspection. While still broadly average, standards in 2007 and 2008 were better than those in 2006. The school has appropriate plans and is taking positive steps to raise achievement in Years 1 and 2. It has successfully done so in reading but not, so far, in writing and mathematics. Assessments in 2008 indicate that standards in reading have improved to above average levels. The school has demonstrated a satisfactory capacity to improve.

The quality of teaching and the curriculum is satisfactory. Across the school, teachers establish good relationships with their pupils and manage them well. Teaching and learning are consistently good in the EYFS because interesting and varied activities are provided. There are examples of good teaching in Years 1 to 2 and, in these lessons, pupils are challenged well and learning maintains a brisk pace. However, this good practice is not consistent enough and work is not always sufficiently well matched to needs. The use of individual learning targets to help pupils improve in literacy and numeracy is not securely established in all classes.

Pupils much enjoy school and this is reflected in their keen participation in activities. They are friendly, polite and relate well to others. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils are good at adopting healthy lifestyles and know how to keep themselves safe. They make good contributions to the school and to the wider community.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills below those expected for their age. Children settle quickly into routines and enjoy their learning because of effective induction procedures. Good leadership, effective teaching, good care and an interesting range of activities enable all children to make good progress in all areas of learning. Children enjoy the well-planned range of topics such as 'ourselves', 'shopping', 'my world' and 'fun games and stories'. Teachers and assistants provide an effective blend of adult-led tasks and opportunities for children to

explore, be creative and work independently. Language work is promoted well through all activities and so children make good gains in speaking and listening. The outdoor learning areas have been improved and there are plans to extend this provision. Outdoor activities are usually well linked to the main themes. By the end of Reception, standards are just above those expected.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise achievement in Years 1 and 2, particularly in writing and mathematics, by improving the monitoring of pupils' progress and the consistency of their teaching.
- Ensure that all lessons are suitably challenging for all pupils, by using assessment to match tasks to pupils' needs.
- Improve monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching.
- Use assessment and target setting more effectively to improve progress.

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: 2**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Children make good progress in the EYFS. However, standards steadily declined from being strongly above average in 2004 to average in 2006. Standards are still broadly average overall by the end of Year 2 but better than they were in 2006. Girls perform better than the boys, particularly in reading and writing. Standards in reading have risen following the school's initiatives to improve it, but this has not been the case so far in writing and mathematics. Pupils who need extra help, particularly with literacy and numeracy, receive appropriate support and make satisfactory progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are enthusiastic about school and have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although their knowledge and understanding of non-Western cultures is only satisfactory. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and possess a good understanding of the importance of healthy diets and taking regular exercise. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community by raising funds for well-known charities. Pupils are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education. By the time they leave the school, they have well-developed personal and social skills and have sound literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, as is shown in pupils' overall progress. Teachers establish good relationships with their pupils. Pupils are attentive and respond well to their teachers' clear instructions and explanations. Effective questioning by teachers in some classes challenges the pupils and checks their understanding. When teachers use assessment information effectively, tasks are well matched to pupils' needs. As a result, in these lessons, pupils are challenged well

and they make good gains in their learning. Teachers in the EYFS consistently extend the children. This is not happening in all classes in Years 1 and 2, where pupils quite often find the work either too hard or too easy. An over-reliance on worksheets in Year 2 hinders pupils' ability to plan and organise their own work. These worksheet tasks are not always challenging enough and restrict opportunities for extended writing.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum enables pupils to make satisfactory progress and contributes well to their personal development. The school is extending writing activities to raise achievement, since a lack of opportunities for writing have contributed to the relatively lower achievement in this area. Links between subjects are better developed in the EYFS than in Years 1 and 2. There is a sound range of additional activities to support pupils' learning. A popular residential centre at Bewdley in Worcestershire provides a good range of interesting outdoor activities and contributes well to pupils' social and team-building skills. There is scope to extend the range of these activities. Health and safety education are promoted well throughout the curriculum.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school's pastoral care system is strong and staff have been successful in creating a happy atmosphere in school which underpins pupils' good personal development. Procedures to ensure that pupils are protected, safe and secure at school are satisfactory. Parents like the school's personal and effective approach to induction. This helps children to settle quickly. There are clear procedures to monitor and promote good attendance, and the parents whose children have low attendance are targeted appropriately. Systems to assess and track pupils' attainment are developing well. However, this information is not used consistently well to plan teaching and learning. Furthermore, the use of individual learning targets to guide pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy is not consistent across the school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, with strengths in promoting the good personal development and well-being for all pupils and the good start children make in the EYFS. Leadership and management's impact on achievement and provision in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory.

Self-evaluation is satisfactory. However, staff and governors are not always sufficiently involved in the process. As a result, not all staff and governors have a clear understanding of the school's performance. The school is taking positive steps to raise achievement in Years 1 and 2 but its success in doing this in reading has not so far been matched in writing and mathematics. Current improvement planning is not supported by a strong enough emphasis on monitoring and developing teaching.

In response to parental needs, the school has clear plans to provide extended care in the future through before- and after-school provision. The school has satisfactorily promoted the cohesion of its community, as seen in the positive atmosphere that reigns throughout the school.

Governors are supportive but are not sufficiently challenging about the school's performance, particularly about pupils' achievement.

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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
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

18 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Abbey Infant School, Smethwick B67 5LR

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we have found. Yours is a satisfactory school and it has good features.

These are the main strengths of the school.

- You enjoy school a lot.
- Children in Nursery and Reception get off to a good start.
- The school is a friendly and pleasant place to be.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- Your understanding of how to keep healthy and safe is good.
- The teachers and other grown-ups take good care of you.
- Your school gets on well with your parents and your parents are pleased with the care and education provided.

Here are four things that your teachers could work on to make it even better.

- Some of you in Years 1 and 2 could make more progress particularly in writing and mathematics.
- At times, in Years 1 and 2, your teachers could challenge you more.
- Your headteacher and senior staff should check carefully how well you are being taught and take steps to bring about improvements.
- Your teachers should use your individual targets in literacy and numeracy more consistently in lessons to help you improve.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts Lead inspector