

Abbeydale Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 106983 |
| Local Authority | Sheffield |
| Inspection number | 309280 |
| Inspection dates | 17–18 October 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Andrew Clark |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 246 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Ms Kath Rangeley |
| Headteacher | Ms Mary Lynes |
| Date of previous school inspection | 3 November 2003 |
| School address | Glen Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S7 1RB |
| Telephone number | 0114 2550926 |
| Fax number | 0114 2507387 |

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|--------------------------|--------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Abbeydale Primary is an average sized school. The vast majority of pupils are of Pakistani heritage and speak Punjabi as their first language. Almost all pupils start school with little or no English. A small proportion of pupils are from Africa or Eastern Europe. An above average percentage of pupils are eligible for a free school meal. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Abbeydale primary is a good school. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons because the outstanding curriculum is well matched to their needs. The quality of teaching and learning is good and the school is held in high regard by parents and the local community. The headteacher, well supported by senior staff, provides a very clear sense of direction for the future and the school's capacity to improve is good.

Pupils of all ethnicities make good progress from low starting points and achieve well, although by the time they leave Year 6, standards remain below average. Achievement in mathematics and science is particularly strong. Pupils' progress in English is accelerating throughout the school, although standards are not yet as high as in mathematics and science. There has been a good trend of improvement in the standards reached by the most able pupils by Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Pupils largely meet the challenging targets the school sets for them.

Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils are well behaved and considerate towards each other. They learn to appreciate the wonder and beauty in their everyday life and have a good understanding of their own and others' faiths and cultures. They become increasingly independent and responsible for their own learning, which is a good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils have a good understanding of living healthily and this is recognised in the Healthy Schools Award. They make a good commitment to improving their own community through the effective school council.

There are several examples of outstanding teaching where the pace of learning is very fast because lessons are well planned and imaginative with good use made of new technologies. A small minority of lessons lack this sense of urgency and engagement of pupils and as a result, progress slows to satisfactory. A particularly good aid to pupils' progress is the way they are involved in improving their own work and encouraged to make full use of earlier learning. The curriculum is outstanding because of the skilful way staff make learning relevant and exciting to pupils. Teachers weave in plenty of first-hand and practical experiences for pupils in most lessons and make strong links between subjects so pupils broaden and build on their experiences. There is a very good range of out of school, including holiday, clubs and experiences. Exciting work with visiting artists makes the school bright and cheerful. The 'stay and play' initiative makes a sterling contribution to young children's, and their parents, readiness for school life. The care and guidance pupils receive is good. Pastoral care is very strong and the monitoring and tracking of pupils' learning contributes well to their achievement in many areas.

The headteacher has created an effective senior leadership team with a very clear focus on improving achievement. Good systems to monitor and promote the best practice in all aspects of the school's work mean that staff are highly motivated and take full advantage of training opportunities. The governing body provides good support and challenge to help the school develop. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well, although it is sometimes too modest in the judgements made in its self-evaluation. Finances are managed well and the school gives good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start Nursery with very low standards in several areas of learning and almost all have little or no English. They make great strides in their learning through Nursery and Reception and, although standards are still significantly below national expectations at the end of Reception, they achieve well and are well prepared for future learning. The curriculum is imaginative and very relevant to the particular language needs of the pupils. Activities are bright, vibrant and well resourced so that children are keen to learn and quickly become independent and confident. Resources are frequently based on real life experiences and objects. Good outdoor provision creates an exciting setting for children to develop their physical abilities and curiosity about the world. The quality of teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers and support staff promote early reading, writing and number skills well through tightly planned schemes. All staff skilfully question children in their imaginative play and other activities and model good speaking and listening techniques. However, a few opportunities are missed to relate work closely to individual rather than group needs in teacher led sessions. Frequent observations of children's achievements in all areas of learning, which are clearly recorded, ensure that all children make good progress. Good relationships with parents are quickly established through sensitive induction procedures and good information provided. This ensures the children get off to a good start.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English to the level of those in mathematics and science.
- Improve the small minority of less effective teaching to the level of the best.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

A real strength of the pupils' achievement is in mathematics and science, where practical first-hand experience leads to good investigative skills, especially at Key Stage 2. Standards are broadly average in these subjects by Year 6. The skilful teaching of the early stages of English means pupils make rapid progress in this through the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, although standards reached by Year 2 are still significantly below average in reading and writing. A well planned focus on speaking and listening skills is beginning to accelerate progress in English further through the school. However, this has yet to have a full impact and standards in English are significantly below average by Year 6. The school's and local authority's tracking and analysis show the good progress the majority of pupils make to achieve broadly average levels in mathematics and science. This information is used well to set challenging yet realistic targets for all age groups. This is largely achieved because of the good teaching and effective individual and group activities often used to boost learning. Particular success is seen in an increase in more able pupils achieving higher levels at Year 6. This is beginning to be seen at Year 2. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' understanding of living a healthy lifestyle is good. They make healthy selections at lunchtimes and take part in a wide range of sporting activities. They have a good understanding of their personal and emotional development which leaves them well prepared for the future.

Pupils behave well and take responsibility for their own actions from a young age. They are friendly and curious in response to the exciting curriculum. Attendance is satisfactory and the school has achieved its targets in relation to this. Most pupils are punctual and several take advantage of the breakfast club. The pupils' commitment to the school community is high as their views are regularly sought and acted upon by the successful school council. They have had a voice in issues as diverse as staff appointments, planning the curriculum and the astonishingly beautiful art work in the dining room.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers are skilful at involving pupils in their own learning by sharing the purpose of lessons with them and giving them good strategies for measuring how well they have done. Pupils become better learners because they are involved in assessing their own progress and improving their work. In many lessons the pupils are taught how to become better learners. For example, in Year 4, pupils learn techniques to organise their ideas in mathematics systematically and to test their own calculations. The pace of learning is often fast because activities are practical and closely matched to their needs. Teachers often make very good use of interactive whiteboards by involving pupils in puzzles and games, displaying information in exciting ways and grabbing their attention through exciting pictures and text. Teachers questioning skills are well used to promote speaking and listening and to deepen understanding. Behaviour is well managed. Very occasionally, pupils' progress is relatively slow because the activities are too repetitive and limit the opportunity for more able pupils to extend their learning. Teaching assistants frequently make a good contribution to learning because they are well prepared and very sensitive to the pupils' needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is rich and varied and meets statutory requirements. Its key strength is in the way in which subjects are interlinked with a strong emphasis on the key skills of literacy, numeracy, problem-solving and information and communication technology. The activities are very well planned so that they provide challenge and interest to all abilities. For example, in Year 1, writing and mathematical tasks are built around designing and making a fruit salad in design and technology. Visits and visitors are well planned to act as a springboard for many subjects. The effective use of bilingual support staff in all subjects allows all pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language to benefit from the whole curriculum. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and other vulnerable learners is good as they are identified early and individual education plans are central to all their learning and shared with parents. Teaching programmes to boost learning where necessary are well planned and closely monitored. Personal and social education is promoted very well throughout the curriculum and is supported by a good range of out of school activities. The consultation with pupils over the organisation of the curriculum adds to its relevance and interest.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils feel safe, enjoy their education, and know who to turn to if they need help. Bullying and racism are rare, and are quickly dealt with. There is a wide range of successful strategies in place to support vulnerable pupils and those at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Parents are also given good support. Activities such as holiday clubs and breakfast clubs provide extensive extended care for its pupils. Initiatives such as the 'stay and play' programme in the Foundation Stage ensure that children and carers have an opportunity to get to know the school, even before the children start. Pupils' academic progress is closely monitored to identify the next steps in learning, and these are shared well with pupils and their parents. Teachers' marking is frequently good, providing praise and new challenge to pupils, although occasionally, comments are not precise enough and young pupils are not clear enough about their targets. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are quickly identified and given a range of help, and their progress is closely monitored. The school council plays a proactive role in school. Child safeguarding procedures are rigorous, and health and safety measures are well embedded and understood by all staff. Pupils' responsibility and social skills are well promoted through the school council and 'Job Squad'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Over the last two years, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have built on previous success by sharpening the focus on raising achievement. The imaginative curriculum development organisation, managed through creative, investigative and humanities teams, means that there is a good mixing of ideas and support for all staff. As a result, all staff have a good understanding of what they are working towards and how to achieve it. School improvement planning is succinct and clearly prioritised, although a few opportunities are missed to ensure governors have a precise role in its implementation and monitoring. The monitoring of teaching and learning is incisive and challenging and leads directly to good levels of consistency in the quality of teaching. There is a very good commitment towards equality and addressing the specific needs of the community. For example, the 'World of Work' whole-school topic aimed at raising the aspirations of girls in particular. Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate the efforts the staff take to involve them in their children's learning. 'More people need to know about this wonderful school,' wrote a parent.

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

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| 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

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|---|-----|
| 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

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| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 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

| | |
|--|---|
| 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? | 1 |
| 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

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| 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

Thank you for being so polite and helpful when we came to inspect your school recently.

You go to a good school where lots of exciting things happen. You behave well and told us that you enjoy your work. You are right to feel proud of the many things you do through the school council and the difference you have made to the school building.

You do well in all your work. The youngest children make a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Your work with in mathematics and science is especially good and your exciting artwork helps to make the school a bright and cheerful place to be. Your parents are very pleased with the things you learn at school. We agree with them and think your headteacher and all her staff lead the school well and take good care of you.

We feel the school could be even better if you did as well in English as you do in mathematics and science. The school also needs to make sure that teachers know how to make all lessons as good as the very best ones.

You can help by continuing to work hard, be happy and following the guidance that the teachers give you in lessons and when they mark your work.