

Great Abington Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110611
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	310360
Inspection date	11 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Paul Cosway

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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	121
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Carter
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Hodgson
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2003
School address	High Street Great Abington Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB21 6AE
Telephone number	01223 891362
Fax number	01223 890685

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	11 March 2008
Inspection number	310360

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the pupils' achievement and their personal development, the quality of teaching and learning and the quality of the curriculum. Evidence was gathered from observation of lessons, the pupils' work, discussion with them and with staff, along with a scrutiny of school documents and parent questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Great Abington Primary School is a little below average in size. The school population represents a mix of social backgrounds, but pupils are mainly White British. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is close to the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is close to the national average, but there are fewer than average with statements of special educational need. Attainment on entry is average. The school has won many awards, including Healthy Schools, Investors in People, Activemark and the International Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with outstanding aspects. The quality of education from Reception to the end of Year 6 leads to pupils achieving well. The school has managed to combine the pursuit of high standards with enjoyment, so that children come to love learning. By the end of Year 6, pupils currently reach standards above the average nationally in mathematics and science and well above average in English. Standards are also above average in music, physical education and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils' personal development is outstanding and they develop positive attitudes and excellent behaviour from Reception onwards. They learn how to work with others, show consideration and respect, and are well on their way to becoming responsible citizens by the time they leave.

The school takes in a diverse range of pupils, some of whom are at an early stage of learning English as their second language. All pupils achieve well because the support and guidance they receive is outstanding. It is a very inclusive school, in which all are helped to achieve well, no matter what their background or abilities. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported very well and thrive as valued members of the school community. Parents praise the way that the school develops a love of learning in their children. One summed up the views of many: 'We couldn't be happier. The school's idyllic setting at the heart of the village, its friendly atmosphere and excellent staff make this a place that children want to come to.' Some parents would like the school to communicate better with them although it does more than most to take account of parents' views; the school is looking at ways to extend this further.

Pupils work hard because they want to succeed and greatly value the praise they receive. Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. This leads to pupils genuinely enjoying their lessons. When asked why they like school, several said that they 'enjoy learning things.' Relationships are excellent, as is the teachers' management of their classes. As a result, behaviour is excellent. Pupils learn to collaborate and work well as part of a group. Their understanding of how to live healthy lives is excellent, as is their concern and care for the environment. All this, along with the progress they make in literacy, numeracy and ICT, ensures that they are prepared very well indeed for their future lives.

Pupils' great enjoyment of school is reflected in their excellent attendance. They willingly take on responsibility to act as helpers and leaders, especially in the playground. The work of the school council is very productive and pupils' participation in it influences decisions that affect their daily lives. There are many examples of this that have enhanced the school community, such as improvements to the outside play areas. There are also good examples of support for the wider community, through concerts and charity events. The curriculum is outstanding and this encourages the pupils to enjoy school because they are interested and challenged. There is an excellent sporting programme. Specialist teaching helps pupils to acquire skills quickly and to a good standard. Trained coaches teach football and rugby skills. Music is taught by gifted singers and musicians. All pupils learn to play a musical instrument. French is taught to older pupils and there is very good coverage of the cultures and religions from across the world. The curriculum is enhanced by an extensive range of clubs and educational visits, along with visitors who bring special skills to science, drama and story-telling sessions, amongst others.

Care, guidance and support are excellent. Child protection and health and safety procedures are firmly in place and all the pupils spoken to agree that they feel safe and cared for in school. Teachers and support assistants know their pupils exceptionally well. Assessment information

is used very effectively indeed to pinpoint those who are falling behind and ensure they have the support they need to catch up. When teachers mark children's work, they give them excellent written and spoken advice that considerably helps them to improve their work.

Leadership and management are good overall in the school. Coordinators carry out their roles well. Governors are aware of the school's strengths and areas for development and monitor its progress thoroughly. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and management. Since her arrival there have been considerable staff changes. Her management skills have formed the staff into an effective team and under her monitoring and guidance their skills have developed to the point where teaching is never less than good throughout the school. This consistency of teaching, along with excellent tracking and support systems the headteacher has put in place, are the key factors that have brought success to the school. In addition, she has widened the curriculum, and by improvements in the methods used to teach reading and writing, raised standards significantly in English. Capacity for further improvement is excellent. In 2007 a number of Year 6 pupils with additional learning needs failed by a small number of marks to make the average progress in science. Pupils are currently achieving well in science, with over half already significantly above the expected standard for their age. Only one pupil reached the higher level in mathematics in Year 2. As part of the school's excellent self-evaluation process, the reasons for this were identified and considerably more emphasis is being placed on mental mathematics and problem-solving throughout the school. As a result, current standards in mathematics are above average and all pupils are achieving well.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children arrive in the Reception class average skills. They make good progress because of the quality of the teaching, stimulating activities and the individual care and attention they receive. Relationships are excellent, so that children feel welcome, happy and are strongly encouraged to succeed. They behave very well indeed and enjoy school. The provision for the Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection. There is a good-sized, well-equipped classroom with a new and attractive outside learning environment. The children's progress is tracked and recorded regularly. Overall, by the time children complete their year in Reception, they have exceeded the expected standards in literacy and numeracy for their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve and sustain pupils' competence and confidence in problem solving in mathematics.

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.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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
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	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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	1

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?	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.

Annex A

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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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

12 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Abington Primary School, Cambridge, CB1 6AE

Thank you for making me so welcome at your school. It was a pleasure to talk to you and I particularly enjoyed the singing in assembly. I'll always remember the lesson on water fleas that I shared with Class 4. It was fascinating and you obviously thought so too! I am very grateful to the children I met before registration, who told me what the school is like from a child's point of view.

You all told me how much you like your school, and I liked it too. It gives you a good education. You feel safe and cared for because the school looks after you extremely well. By the end of Year 6, you have made good progress. You are better at reading, writing and numeracy than most children in other schools. You behave extremely well and enjoy your learning, because so many of your lessons are interesting and fun.

The teachers in charge of the school lead it well. Your headteacher and all her staff are determined that you will have the very best education. I have asked them to make sure that you get lots of practice in solving mathematical problems so that you reach the highest standards in numeracy.

Once again thank you for a delightful day. Keep doing your best and enjoy your time in this lovely school.

Yours sincerely

Paul Cosway

Lead inspector