

# Abbey Meadows Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132127
<b>Local Authority</b>	CAMBRIDGESHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	315926
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Helen Ranger

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	311
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Miss Sue Simms
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Chris Beddow
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 March 2003
<b>School address</b>	Galfrid Road Cambridge CB5 8ND
<b>Telephone number</b>	01223 508611
<b>Fax number</b>	01223 401299

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average school. It is situated in the East Barnwell ward of the city, which has been identified as an area of considerable social and economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is over twice the national average. A high percentage of pupils have learning difficulties, disabilities or need social or emotional support, often more than half the pupils in a class. A small number of pupils are in the care of the local authority. When pupils start Reception, their attainment is low in all areas of learning. About a quarter of pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds and about a quarter of these are at an early stage of learning to speak English. These include Bengali and Malay speakers and the two per cent of the school's pupils who are recent arrivals from Eastern Europe. After an unsettled period in the senior management of the school, the current headteacher was appointed in July 2007 and a new deputy headteacher in October 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Abbey Meadows is a good school. Since its last inspection in 2003, the school has improved well and maintained its popularity with parents. They overwhelmingly say that the staff care very well for their children and enable them to achieve well. A parent who summed up the views of many wrote: 'Over the last few years, the school has had a really good feel about it. The teachers make it fun and exciting for the pupils.'

At the heart of the school's success are the outstanding care, guidance and support that staff offer pupils and their families. Working very closely with a wide range of other professionals in the area, teachers help to overcome any barriers to learning so that pupils feel secure and confident. Pupils are enthusiastic and achieve well. By Year 6, they do not quite reach average standards in English, mathematics and science but they make good progress during their time in the school. Those who need extra help with learning or who do not have English as their first language are supported effectively. Pupils of all abilities are taught well. Their progress is tracked especially carefully in literacy and numeracy. The systems for doing this have been running for several terms and have accelerated the pace of learning. The tracking information is increasingly used by teachers to plan work that matches each individual's needs. The targets set for pupils are both realistic and demanding. The school has correctly identified that it needs to improve the tracking of achievement in science. Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well and show respect for others. They know that their views are valued and they contribute well to their community.

The curriculum has recently been thoroughly reviewed and is good. Staff make effective links between subjects and ensure that learning builds systematically on what has gone before. Strong features include good provision in art and drama and the very wide range of activities that support pupils who need a particular boost to their learning. The school's successful promotion of healthy lifestyles means that pupils know what they can do to keep healthy and safe. Such factors maintain their interest and obvious enjoyment of school. Attendance rates have risen well over the past two years so that pupils are now better placed to take advantage of the good opportunities the school offers.

Leadership, management and the school's capacity for further improvement are all good. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have managed personnel changes well. There are many good examples of how the school evaluates and improves its performance, including how it acts on the views of governors, pupils, parents and external agencies. These have not yet been brought together to form the coherent strategic plan that is needed to make the most efficient use of the current levels of expertise.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage provides pupils with a good start to their education and contributes well to ensuring that they develop basic skills, although standards are still below average by the time they move into Year 1. The provision is very well managed. The curriculum is planned effectively to cover all areas of learning, with good opportunities to develop imaginative and structured play, both indoors and in the impressive outdoor area. Pupils' personal development and behaviour are good because teachers are very good role models and have high expectations of pupils. There is good emphasis on teaching language, communication, social and

problem-solving skills so that pupils achieve well and make good progress. Assessment is thorough and accurate and there are good systems for tracking pupils' progress. Relationships are excellent and pupils settle quickly and happily. Parents are rightly pleased with the provision.

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

- Make sure that assessment is equally rigorous in English, mathematics and science and that tracking systems are used to continue to improve the rate of pupils' progress.
- Agree an overall strategy for the school's further development and how this will be communicated to all interested parties.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils do well in all age groups. Their progress across the school builds up more systematically since the introduction of challenging targets in each year group for each individual. Standards in Key Stage 1 are below those expected nationally but represent good achievement in relation to pupils' starting points. Standards reached by Year 6 are below the national average. However, progress in Key Stage 2 has been better than in most schools for the past two years in the key subjects of English and mathematics. The records of current pupils demonstrate that they continue to do well, including the large number who have learning difficulties or disabilities. Pupils who receive support with learning to speak English, such as those from Eastern European or Asian backgrounds, generally make rapid progress in oral skills. The school is aware that its boys as a whole often do not do as well as girls, especially in English. Staff are monitoring this situation closely and working to remedy it. The inspection did not focus on all subjects but high quality displays of art work are evident across all age groups.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils develop their personal qualities well throughout the school because of clear guidance and support from adults. Their moral, social and cultural development is good. Spiritual development is satisfactory, although the school does not fully exploit opportunities to enhance this further. Bullying and racism are rare. Pupils get on well together, whatever their backgrounds. They take their community responsibilities seriously, for example, as school councillors. While attendance has improved to a satisfactory level, not all parents yet share the school's determination to keep absence to a minimum. Pupils make the most of opportunities to maintain good health, such as through the social and sporting links with the city's football club. Although there is still room for improvement in pupils' basic academic skills, their good social awareness and positive attitudes to learning give them a sound foundation for the next stage of education and for their later lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

A pupil wrote to the inspection team, 'The teachers don't let anyone mess about and they help us if we don't understand or if we get stuck on something.' This comment encompasses several of the main strengths in teaching. Pupils learn well because they feel secure and well supported in class. Behaviour is managed well. Lessons are generally planned to cater for the wide range

of ability in each class, although occasionally the more able pupils do not receive enough attention. Teachers work closely with teaching assistants to provide as much help as possible to individuals. Interactive whiteboards are used well in many lessons to engage and interest pupils. Teachers are becoming skilled at assessing and tracking pupils' progress. This means that they are clear about what needs to be taught next. There are frequent good examples of feedback to pupils, including in teachers' marking. However, pupils too rarely are given enough time to respond to marking, for example by a planned opportunity to reflect on their learning or to correct an error.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum rightly gives a high priority to developing basic literacy, numeracy, science and computer skills. Pupils enjoy the good 'topic' links that are made, and especially the many opportunities for practical work. The school uses specialist expertise well, most notably in music, sport and French. It has forged valuable links with the 'Voices Foundation' and with the French department of a nearby secondary school. There is an outstanding range of provision for pupils with learning or social difficulties. These include music therapy, speech therapy and anger management. The building has been developed very well for all age groups, and levels of practical resources are much better than at the time of the last inspection. The school offers quite a small range of additional clubs and visits, although its partnership with the football club has led to a popular daily breakfast club running on the site.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Pastoral care and support are outstanding and contribute strongly to the good personal development of pupils. Robust systems exist for ensuring pupils' safety in all aspects of school life so that pupils feel well looked-after and safe. Provision for the wide range of additional needs of many pupils and their families is extremely effective. It is very well managed by the special needs coordinator. Individual needs are identified early and progress is checked regularly, using the impressive range of 'intervention groups' to help pupils acquire basic skills. The school receives some additional help from the specialist support services of the local authority but supplements this as much as it possibly can from its own resources. There are very close links with agencies such as health and social services. Academic guidance is effective. Pupils are given relevant individual, group or class targets which they understand and which are used effectively by the staff to involve pupils in their learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The new headteacher has built well on the school's successes. He has led good initiatives in staff training, the increased delegation of responsibilities and effective monitoring and self-evaluation. One of his first priorities was to establish a new senior team and this has been done well. These staff communicate a shared vision and clear awareness of how the school can continue to improve. The time is now right for this to be reflected in an overall school development plan. Subject leaders are being given further training to enable them to check standards and the quality of provision even more rigorously. Following a period when governor recruitment proved difficult, there are now sufficient governors with a wide range of appropriate

expertise. The school is embarking on a training programme so that governors can take a more informed and active part in school management. There are high expectations of what staff and pupils can achieve and school targets are challenging.

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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?	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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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	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	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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

31 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Abbey Meadows Primary School, Cambridge CB5 8ND

This letter is to thank you for helping the inspection team during our recent visit. You made us feel very welcome and told us a lot about your school. Many of your parents wrote to us too, so please thank them on our behalf.

We agree with you and your parents that you go to a good school. Your teachers make sure you have interesting lessons and that you learn well. You show that you appreciate the staff by behaving well and getting on so well together. Mr Beddow, the rest of the staff and the governors make sure that everything runs smoothly. Your school is in a really lovely building which looks so attractive because of all your super art work on display.

We were very impressed with how much the adults help you if you have any problems or if you need some extra help with your work. You are also good at helping each other, such as through your school council. You enjoy school very much and are learning how to keep yourselves safe and healthy.

We have asked the staff to make sure that two important things happen in your school. First, we think you can reach even higher standards in your work in literacy, numeracy and science. Since you have had your learning targets, you have made good progress in these subjects and we are sure that you can improve even more. So please help your teachers by listening to their advice and by doing your best. Second, you have a new headteacher and deputy head and some new governors. They all have lots of good ideas for how to carry on improving your school. They need to make a plan that shows how these ideas can be made to happen. In this way all the adults will know the best way of making Abbey Meadows an even better place for you to learn.

It was a great pleasure visiting your school and meeting you.

Best wishes to you all

Mrs Helen Ranger Lead inspector