

Abbey Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133280
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LA
Inspection number	316060
Inspection dates	7–8 April 2008
Reporting inspector	David Speakman

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	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs M Bithel
Headteacher	Mrs K Bromly
Date of previous school inspection	2 June 2003
School address	Abbey Road Mansfield Nottinghamshire NG18 3AF
Telephone number	01623481117
Fax number	01623 433411

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school. It serves a community with mixed social circumstances and the proportion of pupils who is eligible for free school meals is broadly average. A well below average number of pupils comes from ethnic minority backgrounds and only a very small number does not have English as a first language. The number of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is close to the national average, but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is low. The abilities of pupils starting in Reception is below that expected for children of this age. The school has accreditation in Quality in Study Support (QiSS) at the intermediate level, the Artsmark, the Healthy Schools Gold Standard and Activemark for its provision in physical education. It has Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Leadership and management ensure the school provides an excellent quality of education. Those with responsibility constantly review and improve all the school does so there is continuous improvement. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection, when the school was a good school. Standards have improved and all issues raised at that time have been resolved. In the past, there were staffing difficulties that the school has had to address. This has been done successfully and, since staffing has been more stable, standards have steadily risen throughout the school. All pupils, whatever their needs, make excellent overall progress. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average.

Not only do pupils achieve exceptionally well in their academic studies, but their personal development is also outstanding. This is because they receive excellent care, guidance and support from staff. Personal, social and health education (PSHE), citizenship sessions and school assemblies make a significant contribution to their personal development. Pupils are developing an excellent understanding and awareness of spiritual, moral, and social issues. Strong provision in these areas raise pupils' awareness of how to manage relationships with others, prevent bullying, and how to deal with their own emotions and feelings. Pupils have a good sense of their own cultural traditions and of cultural diversity. The Healthy Schools Standard and sports awards acknowledge that pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of exercise and eating the right foods to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Attendance is satisfactory, but it is no higher than this largely because of holidays taken in term time by pupils. The school has very effective systems in place to bring about improvement and make parents aware of the benefits of good attendance.

The impact of excellent teaching on pupils' learning and their achievement is outstanding. Expectations of what pupils can do are consistently very high and tasks are challenging for pupils at all levels of attainment. The quality and range of learning opportunities are outstanding and support pupils' excellent level of achievement very well. There are very good arrangements for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. There is a strong emphasis on the arts. Art and design, technology, music and drama all carry a high profile within the school. There is a strong tradition of physical education and physical activity is considered important by the school. Support and guidance for both academic and personal development is outstanding.

Excellent leadership and management, accurate school self-evaluation, actions to identify weaknesses and quickly address them, the record of improvement since the previous inspection and the high quality of education provided mean the school has an excellent capacity to improve even further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The provision in Reception is outstanding and provides an excellent start to children's education. Teaching and learning are particularly effective and as a result, children achieve very well, especially in developing their communication and language skills. Teamwork between teachers and the highly skilled assistants is strong so that all adults make a significant contribution to children's learning. Improving children's social skills and emotional development is of high priority and this is effective in helping them be confident about classroom routines and become effective learners. Curriculum planning is particularly good in meeting children's needs, and

there is a very good balance of teacher-led learning and activities children choose for themselves. The outdoor area is used effectively as a learning extension to the classroom. Children are cared for well. Assessment procedures are thorough and underpin pupils' very good progress so that most reach the nationally expected levels by the time they start in Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Reduce the number of holidays that pupils take during school terms.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils achieve exceptionally well from the time they join the school. Those who find learning more difficult or who are doing well and need extension work progress just as well to achieve their potential. In Year 2, the most recent national test results show that standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Current levels of attainment, shown by samples of pupils' work and the school's own assessment data are above average. This confirms the continued trend of improvement. There is a similar picture in Year 6. Standards in English, mathematics and science have been steadily improving since 2005. National test results for 2007 were significantly above the national average. There is further improvement this year and standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in art and music are above national expectations throughout the school. There is a good record of sporting achievement, reflecting good standards in physical education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy coming to school a great deal. They behave extremely well and have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. Pupils feel safe in school because they know that the staff will deal with the rare incidences of bullying or indeed any inappropriate behaviour properly. They know that should they have a problem there is always someone they can go to for help. Pupils have a strong understanding of community and make a significant contribution to school life. The school council is very proud of its many achievements, most recently their suggestions for rewarding good behaviour and their organisation of the highly successful 'Christmas Shoe Box Appeal'. Councillors manage a considerable budget diligently. The recently trained play leaders make a significant contribution at playtimes by organising games for younger children. Pupils link with the local and wider community by visiting local residential homes to sing carols and in raising money for a wide range of charities. Excellent social skills and above average academic attainment prepare pupils extremely well for the next stage of their education. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. A few pupils miss valuable time in school because they are away on holidays during term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers make lessons interesting and engage pupils' attention and enthusiasm to learn very well. Very good use is made of computer technology. Teachers use interactive whiteboards extremely effectively to make the introductions to lessons clear and interesting, whilst pupils use computers and other technology to support their learning. Teachers share clearly with

pupils the expected learning in lessons and advise them how they can measure their own success in achieving objectives. Teachers show a very good understanding of how to match work to pupils' needs in order to move them on rapidly. Work is challenging at all levels. Class sessions at the end of lessons are used very effectively to review learning and prepare pupils for the next stages of learning extremely well. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to supporting the progress of pupils in their focus groups. They are skilled and know their pupils well. Excellent relationships between pupils and adults underpin high quality discussion in lessons in which pupils' ideas are valued highly.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school constantly reviews its curriculum provision and it is outstanding. Curriculum planning carries a strong focus on developing core skills. A themed approach to planning the curriculum is highly effective in engaging pupils' interests and enthusiasm for learning. Older pupils choose their topics in negotiation with teachers and plan their own learning, following trails of interest to them. Recent and very successful examples include units of work on the Titanic and the Romans. There are already strong links between subjects planned in the topics at all stages of the school. Literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developed very effectively through other subjects such as history, geography and science. There is a good range of support for pupils at all levels of attainment identified as needing a little extra support to reach their potential. Curriculum enrichment is excellent. An exciting range of visits and visitors add greatly to levels of interest. These are highly relevant to learning and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding, including their awareness of other cultures.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides excellent pastoral support. Parents and pupils alike appreciate the effort that the school makes to ensure pupils feel safe, secure and valued. Procedures for health and safety and risk assessments are secure. All staff know and follow child protection procedures. The school has developed very effective, positive strategies to manage pupils' behaviour. There are robust procedures to track pupils' academic progress. Assessment information is used extremely well to set class and individual targets. Pupils have a thorough understanding of their targets, so they are clear about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The school quickly recognises any underachievement and pupils who find learning difficult. Extra help and support is put in place quickly to help those pupils who need it so that they also make excellent progress. The school has identified a number of pupils who have special gifts and talents and are beginning to provide additional opportunities for them to extend and develop their skills. There are good links with a wide range of outside agencies that provide additional support where necessary.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management at all levels are excellent. The headteacher works exceptionally well with the deputy to provide very strong leadership and clarity in the direction for school improvement. Together, they provide a high level of motivation for all staff, particularly those with responsibility, and empower them to fulfil their roles exceptionally well. There are clearly

defined roles within the management structure. Those with responsibility are all very involved in monitoring standards and evaluating the quality of provision within their areas of responsibility. All contribute to the whole school's self-evaluation and development planning, both of which are high quality. Targets set for pupils' achievement and for staff performance are challenging and contribute directly to the school's improving profile. The needs of all learners are of high importance and the school seeks to ensure that, whatever their needs, all have the best possible chances to achieve. Governors are highly effective. They are organised very well and work in close collaboration with the school, gaining an excellent knowledge of how well the school is doing. They provide high levels of support and challenge for the school.

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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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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?	1
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

9 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Abbey Primary School, Mansfield, NG18 3AF

We very much enjoyed the time we spent in your school and would like to thank you all for making us so welcome. We were very impressed by what we saw. We enjoyed meeting you and your teachers, visiting your lessons, watching you work, speaking to you about your school and finding out about how you help to make the school so successful.

You go to an excellent school. All the adults working at Abbey Primary, under the excellent leadership of your headteacher and deputy, work together extremely well to provide you with a high quality education. Teaching, the curriculum and the quality of care that adults show for you are all excellent. As a result, you all make outstanding progress in your lessons and in becoming sensible and confident young people. Standards in your work are steadily improving and are now securely above average. You are very well prepared to go on to the next stages of your education.

You make a very important contribution by behaving excellently, taking responsibility very seriously and trying hard to do your very best. We were very impressed by how you go about learning, being friends with other pupils and most of all, caring about each other, helping others feel safe in school. It is clear that you all enjoy being there and this is important. Those of you we spoke to enjoy school very much and it is clear that you get on well together and look after each other.

Staff are always reviewing what they do and are constantly improving things. As a result, there is very little that needs improving that your teachers have not already done something about. However, we are asking the school to reduce the number of holidays that pupils take during school terms.

We wish you all the best in the future.

David Speakman

Lead Inspector