

Abbots Ripton CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110850
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	337589
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Colin Henderson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	109
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Ray
Headteacher	Helen Wilman
Date of previous school inspection	22 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed nine lessons involving 10 teachers and teaching assistants. Meetings were held with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school development plan, self-evaluation form and local authority monitoring reports. They also analysed 45 parent questionnaires, 57 pupil and 14 staff questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the achievement of pupils in Key Stage 2, particularly boys' writing
- how well teachers use tracking procedures to raise pupils' attainment
- how the school's Christian ethos encourages pupils' personal development and well-being and promotes a desire to learn
- how the school encourages parents to contribute to their children's learning.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than average. Most of its pupils come from the nearby villages. The number of pupils is smaller than at the last inspection and an increasing proportion, nearly 45 per cent, come from outside the immediate local area. They come from a broad range of backgrounds and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Almost all of the pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school has achieved National Healthy Schools status and Activemark. Since the last inspection, the school has experienced a high level of staff change, particularly at senior staff level.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Abbots Ripton continues to provide a good education for its pupils, which is valued by pupils and most of their parents. It is a friendly school where pupils enjoy their learning and respond well in a safe, caring and supportive learning environment. One parent commented, for example, 'We are delighted with the quality of education and our children are thriving.' The school has a strong sense of community in which pupils are valued and given good support to enable them to settle quickly and achieve well. An effective governing body, working closely with the local authority and an acting headteacher, successfully managed a difficult period of considerable staff changes. A small number of parents expressed concern at the high level of staff turnover, although many valued the efforts made to minimise any significant disruption to their children's learning. A more stable situation with a cohesive and focused staff team is providing consistently good teaching and raising standards, particularly in English.

Pupils enjoy the interesting curriculum themes and good range of learning activities. Such initiatives as the reward tokens are encouraging their positive approach to learning and a desire to achieve their best. Pupils benefit from good pastoral care to ensure that their personal needs are met. Those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who are not making as much progress as they should benefit from the good support given by a very effective team of experienced and well-qualified teaching assistants. They work in a close partnership with class teachers to focus on individual pupils' particular needs and help them to make good progress.

Most Early Years Foundation Stage children join the Robins class with skills and abilities that are broadly similar to those expected for their age, although these can vary significantly due to the small numbers in each year group. Children benefit from the well organised and stimulating provision and make good progress. They continue to make good progress overall throughout the school. Staff changes, particularly in Years 5 and 6, resulted in some pupils making slower than expected progress. Current data shows that good teaching has put these pupils back on track and they are on target to achieve standards that are above average, particularly in English. Improved resources and good teaching are encouraging pupils, especially boys, to raise the standard of their writing. Standards in mathematics are also rising, although more slowly, as some older pupils have weaknesses in their mental number recall skills.

Teaching is consistently good, with some elements of outstanding practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Good class management, a stimulating range of learning activities and the effective use of interesting resources ensure that pupils remain attentive and focused on their learning. Many pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. However, pupils' understanding of assessment procedures and the

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use of marking and improvement targets is not secure in every class, mainly as a result of teacher changes. This does not ensure that pupils know in detail how they can raise the standard of their work.

The school has established a good partnership with most parents and many contribute well to their children's learning in the different curriculum themes. Improved home-school communication keeps them well-informed, for example during the period of staff change. A re-structured staff team, with the increasingly effective support of the governors, is pulling together well and improving pupils' attainment. More cohesive management is proving effective and providing a satisfactory capacity to improve. Improvements in the school's self-evaluation, for example through better tracking of pupils' progress, are targeting areas that need improvement. However, these procedures, together with aspects of subject leadership, are not established consistently to monitor the school's overall effectiveness rigorously.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics by using assessments to target and improve pupils' number recall skills.
- Embed procedures in each class to:
 - - help pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work
 - - check carefully that they use their understanding to raise the standard
 - of work.
- Develop the roles of subject leaders and other key staff to enable them to check the quality of teaching and evaluate its impact on learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils achieve well in lessons because they find the lessons interesting and are keen to take part. For example, the good use of a short film clip captured the imagination of pupils in Years 3 and 4 and led to some lively writing. Good support from teachers and teaching assistants has helped them to extend their writing skills. The school is improving its use of assessment to track pupils' achievements and provide extra support for those who are not making expected progress. This contributes well to higher standards, although using assessments to target more able or gifted pupils is not so well developed. Attainment is rising at both key stages to above average after a recent dip in national test results to average levels. Boys are achieving better than before, particularly in writing. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress towards their learning targets, although this is not always carefully tracked and recorded on their individual education plans.

Pupils enjoy their learning and most attend well. They are attentive in lessons and

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are planned carefully and well organised. Teachers manage their classes well to ensure that pupils stay focused on their learning. Most teachers use interesting resources and maintain a good pace to lessons. Teachers use questions successfully to encourage pupils to share their ideas, although they do not consistently use more challenging questions to extend more able pupils. Discussions with Year 6 pupils show that they find teachers' marking of their work helps them improve, although this has not been consistent throughout the year.

The curriculum offers a good range of interesting activities and is enhanced well by extra-curricular clubs, visits and visitors. For example, a theatre group provided a lively insight into Victorian life for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Good use is made of whole school themes, such as Hollywood, to extend pupils' learning and encourage an enthusiastic involvement in their work. They are planned carefully to meet different learning needs, although pupils with a particular talent are not always extended fully. Good links with local high schools provide good opportunities for pupils to extend their sporting skills.

The good care and support are key factors in helping pupils enjoy school and encouraging them to try hard. Pupils benefit from good support in classroom activities and through effective induction processes when they join the school and when they move to their next school. The Young Leaders help pupils to make friends and feel safe. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable benefit particularly from close

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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individual attention and the school's effective links with external agencies and parents.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the last inspection, the school has successfully managed a difficult period in which pupil numbers have dropped and there have been high levels of staff turnover and absence. Governors continue to be supportive and increasingly involved in improving the school. Since the return of the full-time headteacher, they have worked closely together to encourage a supportive and cohesive staff team that is increasingly focused on improvement. Procedures to check the school's effectiveness, for example the evaluation of teaching, are helping to raise standards but are not rigorous enough to ensure consistent improvement.

The school is effective in promoting equal opportunities, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and tackling discrimination. The school has improved the engagement of parents since the last inspection, for example through improved communication and open mornings. It promotes cohesion within its own community successfully. It actively promotes cohesion within the local community, for example by links with the church and other village organisations such as the Parish Council, although it does not evaluate its effectiveness carefully. The school links with a contrasting school community in Huntingdon. It plans to link, through the church, to a school in Hong Kong, although there are too few opportunities overall for pupils to gain an understanding of life in a different kind of community.

All safeguarding procedures are carried out effectively to provide a secure and safe learning environment. The headteacher and governors place high priority on pupils' safety and procedures are managed well. Regular training for staff, particularly in child protection issues, ensures that they are constantly vigilant and provide good support.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate	
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The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Reception Year children make good progress because, under the direction of an excellent Early Years Foundation leader, they benefit from a very well planned and organised programme of activities. The school provides a good balance between activities which are led by adults and those that the children choose to do themselves. Relationships are good. Staff know the children well, and have a good

- understanding of their different interests and how they learn. Teaching is good with some excellent features. Adults provide consistently good support to each child and promote their learning successfully, although opportunities to extend language are not always used fully. Parents are pleased with the way in which their children settle and how they are kept informed and involved. Excellent leadership and management have maintained a strong focus on checking carefully on how each child is doing.

Detailed planning ensures that the range of activities covers all required areas of learning. For example, the outdoor area is used fully to include a wide variety of activities, although a lack of space restricts children's access and their range of play activities. Staff make good use of detailed assessment information to ensure that individual needs are met. As a result, children make good progress in all areas of learning. By the time they move into Year 1, most attain above average levels.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

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Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were positive about the school. Many value its friendly, caring and Christian approach, which helps their children to feel safe and enjoy school. Most parents are pleased with the quality of teaching and the progress being made by their children. They feel that the school meets their children's particular needs. Some parents are concerned about the behaviour of a small number of pupils, but most felt that the school had effective procedures for dealing with this. Inspectors confirmed the view of most parents that staff tackled the occasional incidents of unacceptable behaviour successfully and minimised any disruption caused. A small number of parents were concerned about the effect which the high level of staff turnover and leadership changes had upon their children's learning. Inspectors judged that the school had managed a difficult situation well and there was a smooth transition for the return of the full-time headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Abbots Ripton CofE Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 109 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	9	21	31	72	3	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	10	23	25	58	4	9	3	7
The school informs me about my child's progress	15	35	24	56	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	37	20	47	7	16	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	49	17	40	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	35	21	49	3	7	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	33	21	49	5	12	2	5
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	7	16	26	60	4	9	6	14
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	19	27	63	2	5	5	12
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	12	24	56	9	21	5	12
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	44	18	42	6	14	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	21	31	72	3	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	23	25	58	4	9	3	7

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



26 May 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Abbots Ripton CofE Primary School, Cambridgeshire, PE28 2LT

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. After spending two days in your school, talking with you about what you do in school, looking at your work, watching you learn and talking to your teachers, we have judged that your school is good.

You clearly enjoy school and we were pleased to see how well you get on together. Your behaviour is good and this means that teachers can get on with the job of helping you learn. It was interesting to talk to school councillors about how they contribute to your school and local communities, for example when working with the Parish Council to try to reduce the traffic danger outside your school. Some Year 6 pupils told me that they had had several different teachers in the last eighteen months and I was pleased to hear that you continued to try hard with your work. You told us that you enjoy the different themes and the good range of activities. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 clearly enjoyed their Victorian Day! Some of you told us that you find mathematics hard. We have asked your headteacher and the staff to try to improve your number recall skills so that you can tackle your work with more confidence.

You are keen to improve your achievement. For some of you, teachers are using ways to help you improve your work, such as individual pupil targets. We have asked your teachers to provide you with more consistent ways of helping you to know how well you are doing, and how to improve your work. We would encourage you to use these ways and try hard to make your work even better. We have also asked your school to provide more opportunities for teachers who are responsible for particular subjects to see where they can help you achieve even better.

Thank you again for helping us to find out about your school and we hope that you will continue to be happy and to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Colin Henderson

Lead inspector

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