

Abbeymead Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115601
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	338617
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2010
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

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 of pupils on the school roll	402
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Dobson
Headteacher	Julian Pass
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 21 lessons involving the work of 14 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and governors. The inspectors evaluated the school's work, and looked at school self-evaluation documents, external monitoring reports and development planning. The inspection team analysed 121 parental questionnaires as well as those from school staff and the pupils.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at the following:

- how far standards in writing are rising to match those in other subjects
- the degree to which progress has been sustained at good rates in the light of the staff changes this year
- the effectiveness of the use of all areas indoors and outside in Reception
- whether school self-evaluation accurately pinpoints the outstanding features of its work.

Information about the school

Abbeymead Primary School is larger than most primary schools. Most of the pupils come from White British families. Very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average; most of these pupils have some form of learning difficulty. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the two Reception classes. Some of these children attend the 'After 3 Club'. This after-school club is managed privately and was not inspected. The school holds Artsmark Gold, Healthy School and the Activemark for sports status. There have been a number of temporary changes in staff during the current school year.

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

1

Main findings

Abbeymead Primary is a good school. It has a number of outstanding features, not least the widespread ambition and drive to work for excellence. Improvement since the previous inspection has been substantial, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, where children now learn effectively and make good progress. Pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning are other notable improvements. The school is popular with parents and carers and the pupils are enthusiasts for their school. The enjoyment of learning is clearly visible.

The school has made successful strides in raising attainment and pupils' progress in writing. Senior leaders recognise this work is not yet complete as there are a few remaining inconsistencies in the provision and the extent of progress in the subject across groups of pupils and classes. While the quality of marking of writing books is good, a few inconsistencies remain. In most, clear pointers are given for improvement but this is not as apparent in a few. However, the proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching higher levels in this subject as well as in reading and mathematics is much improved and above average. Lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work show overall attainment to be above average. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well due to the well-tailored support provided by the teaching assistants. The several staff changes during the last year have not affected the acceleration of progress.

Pupils behave well in school. They are polite, helpful and respectful of staff and other pupils. They have good understanding of how to keep healthy and their very active sporting life makes a strong contribution to this. The first-class curriculum has been developed most effectively to give pupils all the necessary skills for life outside school and the next stage of their education. Enterprise is a key part of the learning ethos. The eggs produced by the school chickens are all sold very quickly. The older pupils know much about profit-and-loss accounting and how to write a viable business plan. Their good information and communication technology skills are a great benefit in their marketing and business development activities.

Teaching quality is consistently good in all years. Planning is detailed and focused well on pupils' different abilities and needs. Assessment information is used effectively to support good learning. Pupils have many opportunities in lessons to identify what they have learned and what they must do next to move on. Just occasionally, the pace of learning in lessons slackens when pupils have to listen for too long to the teacher. At such times, they fidget because they are keen to get down to their own work.

The school's outstanding care, guidance and support ensure all pupils can succeed in learning, develop well personally and reach the ambitious targets set for them. The

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first-rate partnerships with others that enable the school to provide very rich learning experiences are a notable strength. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and to the wider community. The partnership with parents and carers is good. However, senior leaders recognise that the school does not draw sufficiently on their experiences and expertise in supporting their children's learning. Opportunities to keep them informed of their children's learning and progress are not yet comprehensive.

Leaders and governors know fully the school's strengths and their identification of outstanding features is accurate. The school's improvement areas are also pinpointed precisely. Development planning is rooted in effective systems to track pupils' progress and assess the quality of learning. Priorities for improvement are the right choices and there is rigorous monitoring of success in achieving them. The headteacher sets high expectations and is a model for all others in his quiet determination to improve. Staff are united in supporting his aspirations. The potential to maintain the significant rate of improvement is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure pupils' attainment in writing is consistent with that in reading and mathematics, by:
 - ironing out the few remaining differences in progress between groups of pupils and classes
 - extending the best quality marking of writing to all classes
 - making sure handwriting and presentation do credit to the pupils.
- Strengthen links with parents and carers, by:
 - drawing on their experiences and expertise in supporting their children's learning
 - widening the opportunities to keep them informed of their children's learning and progress.

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

Attainment has improved considerably in the last year. In part this is due to the setting of ambitious targets for individuals and groups of pupils which are then tracked carefully to ensure no-one falls behind. Most pupils' writing books show this very clearly. Year 6, for example, write expressively about characters in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', preferring however, to take a 21st century approach to scene-setting. One group talked conspiratorially about how staff, their parents and carers might view their thought-provoking interpretations. The books of pupils in some parts of the school do not show the same attention to detail, handwriting or presentation of the best.

Mathematics lessons very often show pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Another Year 6 group worked very productively to develop mathematical sequences showing the relationships between glass wall length, area and perimeter when designing a tank to

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hold a shark. By the end of this lesson, the pupils were reasoning algebraically without the complications of formulae, though that next stage was not far off. The level of the work seen was that usually found early on in a secondary school.

The school-wide focus on developing skills that will enable pupils meet future challenges is advantageous in promoting good progress. Because work is related to real experience, particularly business and enterprise, pupils seize the opportunity to show their merits. One zone of the hall is given over to pupils' small businesses. Products on display show their artistic talent very visually. They also invite reflection on the attractiveness of nature and on people's personalities. Many of their photographic images stand direct comparison with professional prints costing much more. The many 'sold' signs showed the esteem held by others of their creators' achievement. Such enterprise involves the pupils deeply in developing a school community focused on working together. It also harnesses pupils' skills in working with members of the local community in producing goods with sales appeal. Pupils have a very pronounced sense of working for the improvement of their school community and also in working with others as part of wider community partnerships.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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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How effective is the provision?

Provision has been improved well. Lessons and learning are usually marked by an intensity of pupil activity. Lesson openings led by the teacher occasionally last a little too long, but once pupils get down to work, they do so purposefully and enthusiastically. Even the younger pupils show maturity and good sense in their learning habits. Year 2 pupils polished their descriptive writing skills by reflecting on how 'the work could be better if...' Self-assessment and self-improvement were cornerstones of learning that contributed strongly to the rapid progress made in this lesson. The vibrant curriculum is enjoyed by staff and pupils alike. It gives many openings for the development of artistic, sporting, technological and personal skills. The results are shown in pupils' confidence, self-esteem and thoughtful behaviour as well as their good progress in building basic literacy and numeracy skills and extending them so they can investigate and solve realistic problems in other subjects. Coverage of many subjects is through a topic approach which is very effective in stressing the development of pupils' thinking, talking and questioning skills. In many lessons, pupils ask as many questions about their learning as they answer, such is their inquisitiveness and enthusiasm to find out more. Pupils who may be vulnerable are given sterling support by expert staff. They achieve well because of this help, and their potential, sometimes as high attainers, is realised in full. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are also supported very capably. Over the last year, the school has developed a much improved and reliable system to identify how well they are progressing, what specific support they require and to track whether such support is precisely enough focused and bearing fruit. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language are encouraged to achieve well, which they do. Their contribution to several lessons was very marked and showed their promise as high attainers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has successfully risen to the challenge of sustaining its strengths and developing others. The list of outstanding features is longer now than at the previous inspection three years ago. The quest to convert other strengths to outstanding facets is part of the school ethos. This is not seen by staff and governors as too demanding but as a fair reflection of their capabilities. Morale is high and determination strong, and are

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matched by keenly focused effort. Governance of the school is now much stronger than in 2007. Governors are searching in their approach and investigate the data that shows school performance with confidence and skill. The headteacher is the guiding force in school. His approach is sensitive and supportive but tenacious. Staff, governors, parents, carers and pupils all respect this. He has built a talented leadership team that has made a great improvement to the quality of provision, and through that, pupils' achievement. This has ensured, for example, that the equality of opportunity has been raised to good, and that intolerance is absent. That the safeguarding of pupils is effective is due to the watchful eye kept on all pupils' well-being. The double-watch at the school gates is an example of the care taken. Most training and documentary support for safeguarding is up to date, and reviewed and revised regularly. The excellence of pupils' involvement in school and local community initiatives is at the pinnacle of the effective promotion of community cohesion. Their connections with people in other parts of the United Kingdom and overseas are improving well, due to some emerging strong links with people elsewhere, particularly through international partnerships. Other partnerships are highly developed, especially with business and commerce.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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

In 2007, the inspection report judged all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage to be satisfactory. The current inspection has found that significant improvements have been made and that both provision and outcomes are good. This is due to unwavering leadership which has been focused on building the same quality in Reception as is found

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in other parts of the school. Some improvements remain to be consolidated, particularly the more adventurous use of the outside area to help children build self-reliance, confidence and effective learning skills. Plans are well advanced to complete such improvement.

The children thoroughly enjoy their time in Reception. There is much fun and laughter. Purposeful play and learning are evident. In one session, the children talked about their 'stars and wishes' to show how well they had learned and what was necessary for their next steps in writing. They then went on to choose the music to accompany their snack-time. 'Mozart' and 'The Flight of the Bumblebee' were requested and were clearly popular choices. They chatted happily, helping each other peel the fruit, listening to the music as they did so.

The happiness in learning contributes to children's good progress. Many start with below the expected levels of skills, especially in language and literacy. Over the year in Reception, skills are consolidated and extended well. By the time the children leave Reception, they are mostly attaining the expected levels across all six areas of learning. They have caught up well in language and literacy, with their phonics skills a particular strength. This stands them in good stead for their work in Year 1.

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	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers hold positive views of the school. A few parents and carers have concerns surrounding the management of behaviour and the ways in which they are kept informed of their children's progress. Inspectors judge that behaviour is good and that if there is any poor conduct, it is managed well. The inspection team assures parents and carers that the school is determined to build an even stronger partnership with parents and carers which will keep them involved in their children's learning and more regularly informed of their progress. These concerns were more than outnumbered by the positive comments written on the questionnaires. 'I cannot thank the staff enough for all the help and support they have given' sums up the general view.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Abbeymead 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 121 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 402 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	75	62	45	37	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	70	58	49	40	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	35	29	68	56	17	14	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	57	47	58	48	5	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	58	48	58	48	4	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	36	66	55	10	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	71	59	47	39	2	2	0	0
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)	47	39	62	51	8	7	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	53	44	61	50	5	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	39	60	50	11	9	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	39	64	53	7	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	67	55	48	40	4	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	62	51	55	45	3	2	0	0

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.



8 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Abbeymead Primary School, Gloucester GL4 5YS

Thank you for welcoming us to your school in such a friendly and helpful way. Next time we have eggs for breakfast or look at photographs for sale in a gallery, we will remember your school. We know you are very proud of your many different products and your marketing and sales skills. Abbeymead is clearly a brand to watch out for.

Like you and your parents and carers, we think Abbeymead is a good school. It has many strengths, including some that are outstanding.

- We found that you make good progress, particularly in your reading, mathematics and science. This was clear when we looked at your books.
- When we visited your lessons, we saw you are taught well and that you enjoy your learning.
- In Reception, we found that children work and play happily together.
- As we looked at the displays around the school, we realised you find out about all sorts of interesting and exciting things.
- When we talked together, you explained that you feel safe and well cared for in school. You also said that behaviour is good and we agree.
- Your headteacher and teachers showed us just how much they want you to do well.
- We were most impressed by the way in which you are developing your talents in working with others so you are really ready for the challenges of secondary school.

In order to help your school become an outstanding one, we have suggested two improvements to your teachers:

- help you to write even more successfully
- work with your parents and carers to make sure you make the best possible progress.

We know you will help your teachers do these things. You could start by writing about you ideas for ways in which parents and carers could be more involved in the work of your school.

Yours sincerely

David Carrington

Lead inspector

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