

# Abbey Meads Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131573
<b>Local Authority</b>	Swindon
<b>Inspection number</b>	341165
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 June –1 July 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Chris Kessell

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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	308
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Claire Randall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Bob Buckley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Hugo Drive Swindon SN25 4GY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01793 723239
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<b>Email address</b>	head@abbeymeads.swindon.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons and seven part-lessons. They scrutinised pupils' work and saw 11 teachers and a number of teaching assistants. Meetings were also held with governors, staff and pupils. Inspectors analysed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including policies for safeguarding and health and safety, the school improvement plan, governors' minutes and records of pupils' progress. They considered the 89 responses from questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- current learning and progress but especially for the boys
- the extent to which aspects of the pupils' personal development might be outstanding
- the effectiveness of school strategies to improve the quality of teachingthe impact of improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage on attainment at the end of Key Stage 1.

## Information about the school

Abbey Meads is an above-average-sized school. Although most pupils come from White British backgrounds, 14 minority ethnic groups are also represented at the school. A very small minority of pupils use English as an additional language and a few are at the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly below average. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average overall but above average in Years 5 and 6. Their needs include moderate learning and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and physical disabilities. The school has awards for promoting healthy living and the International School award.

The current headteacher has been in post since September 2009.

**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**

**2**

### Main findings

This is a good school. It is led by a very good headteacher who, in a relatively short period of time, has developed an effective leadership and staff team. Together, they have created an exciting and positive learning environment for pupils. This is also the view of many parents who praised the impact of the headteacher and the changes that have taken place at the school over the last year.

As a result of good teaching and a rigorous focus on the needs of individuals, all pupils make good progress. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and attainment across the school is steadily improving. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average. This represents an improving picture, with underachievement being successfully reduced. The gap between boys' and girls' achievement has been substantially closed. Strong classroom relationships and the pupils' outstanding behaviour make effective contributions to pupils' learning. Pupils' individual needs are catered for well. Well-planned lessons ensure that pupils are given work that is appropriate to their abilities and understanding. Withdrawal activities for individuals and groups are well focused and effective. The use of assessment to inform learning is good but the use of personalised targets with pupils and the quality of teachers' marking are inconsistent and do not contribute to learning as effectively as they could. The good curriculum is enhanced well by a very good range of enrichment activities such as after-school clubs, residential visits and theme weeks. Although pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology (ICT), opportunities are missed to use ICT in other subjects. There is good quality support provided for all groups, but particularly for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, those at the early stages of learning English and pupils who find school difficult. Transition and induction arrangements are good, as are the levels of care offered to families who face challenging circumstances. Pupils feel safe at school and are confident of effective support if they should need it. They enjoy taking on responsibilities such as work on the school council, peer mediators and play leaders. During the inspection, Reception children did a fine job as buddies for new children coming to see the school from local nurseries.

Staff morale is high. There is a clear commitment from staff to improving pupils' outcomes further and continuing to raise standards. This is the result of good leadership and management and a clear strategic view of the future. Governance has improved significantly since the last inspection. Both staff and governors have an accurate understanding of what the school does well and areas that require development. Improvements in teaching pupils' progress and governance demonstrate that the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils' personalised targets and teachers' marking make a greater contribution to pupils' learning by:
  - providing targets that pupils fully understand
  - making reference to pupils' targets in marking
  - identifying how pupils can improve their work.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Pupils are enthusiastic learners and show obvious enjoyment in all of their activities. They work well by themselves or in pairs and groups. Year 2 pupils, for example, used talk partners to think of time connectives they could use linked to a recent trip to Weston-super-Mare. Year 1 pupils sensibly offered good ideas to classmates on how to improve their poetry reading, while pupils in Year 6 provided original, mature and intelligent ideas about the imagery of Anthony Browne's work. Teachers make learning intentions clear so that all pupils have a good understanding of what to do. Expectations are high and regular reviews of pupils' learning have ensured that the great majority of pupils now make good progress. There is still some catching up from previous underachievement but the school is moving rapidly in the right direction. Initiatives such as those for reading and a focus on boys' progress have been successful. The good support offered to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at the early stages of learning English ensures that they make the same levels of progress as their classmates.

□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ Pupils are welcoming and friendly. They value their school community and raise money for a range of charities. Pupils have a good understanding of the important factors which affect the different aspects of their health. They are especially enthusiastic about after-school activities that can improve their levels of activity. Pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education and make financial decisions; for example, the school council has its own budget. Pupils are punctual and attendance levels are above average. Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds get on with each other extremely well. They are considerate of each other's feelings and respect different cultures and beliefs

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

### How effective is the provision?

Teachers are well organised and ensure that their pupils enjoy learning. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers present interesting activities that engage pupils of all abilities well. Good use is made of time so that lessons move along at a rapid pace. Pupils of different abilities are constantly challenged. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning through their effective interactions with small groups and individuals. Although there are good examples of teachers' marking, practice is not consistent through the school or across subjects. Although work is marked regularly and often with supportive comments, pupils are not always given enough information on how to improve their work. Teachers' marking does not make enough reference to pupils' targets.

The curriculum is well planned and there is good attention to cross-curricular links especially with literacy. ICT is not used enough to support learning in other subjects. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the many extra-curricular activities such as chess, music and sports clubs. They talk positively about theme weeks such as those on Africa and light. Homework is used successfully to encourage investigative work and projects and there is good provision for gifted and talented pupils through master classes. Good standards of care are provided by the school and this is appreciated by the parents. Parents commented on the positive way in which new pupils are helped to settle in. One comment reflects the views of many, 'The support my child receives from teachers, support staff and members of the school enables them to be confident, happy and secure.' Effective links with a range of outside agencies, such as Traveller support, contribute well to the good care and guidance that is provided for pupils and parents.

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Well-organised before-and after-school provision enhance school provision even further.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy, has established distributive leadership and management. Subject leaders have been enabled to be fully involved in self-evaluation and have a rigorous focus on the learning and progress of pupils. Teaching is monitored carefully through a range of activities, including direct observations and an analysis of work and planning. This has led to consistency in the quality of teaching and, consequently, pupils' progress. Senior staff and subject leaders monitor data carefully to ensure that all individuals and groups of pupils are making sufficient progress. Improvement in boys' learning and progress indicates the success of the school's drive to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination.

□ Governors are well informed and regularly challenge the school. For example, the performance of boys has been a regular area for discussion. Governors contribute well to the school's strategic development and undertake classroom observations. Systems for safeguarding pupils follow good practice. They are reviewed regularly by school and governors. There are excellent links with parents and the school does much to encourage and support their involvement in their children's learning. They are given many opportunities to air their views through questionnaires and parent forums. Pupils from all backgrounds get on well with each other and the school is a very cohesive community. Good plans have been established to provide pupils with an opportunity to engage with others through national and international links.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Reception classes with skills and abilities that are at the expected levels for their age. There are occasional weaknesses in children's language and literacy skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world. A few children are at the early stages of learning English. Children make good progress so that they exceed the goals expected on entry to Year 1. Improving standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage have yet to impact on standards at the end of Key Stage 1 because the previous year group joined the school with lower than expected skills and knowledge. Children take responsibility for small tasks and for choosing what activities they want to engage in. They have good relationships with the adults they work with and are motivated and interested in a broad range of activities. Their very positive behaviour and attitudes contribute well to their good progress and staying safe.

□ Teaching is effective because good attention is paid to the assessment information collected by staff. Staff are sensitive to individual needs and the management of the children. The indoor learning environment is interesting and welcoming. The outdoor area is not as stimulating. Indoor and outdoor activities are not always linked to encourage independent learning. Strong relationships are in place with parents and outside agencies. Good leadership and management have led to ongoing improvement of provision. Self-evaluation is accurate and this information is used well to introduce systems and strategies to improve provision further. Children's well-being is enhanced by good organisation, risk assessments and an ethos that promotes safety on a daily basis. Children are aware of how to stay safe at a very early age.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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



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Responses to parent questionnaires show that the great majority of parents and carers are happy with the school and what it provides. All agree that their children enjoy school, are kept safe and teaching is good. Parents and carers are happy with their children's experiences at Abbey Meads. The inspection team would endorse these views. The largest percentage of disagreement was whether the school meets children's particular needs. Inspection evidence indicates that the school pays very close attention to the needs of individual pupils.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The inspection team received 89 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 308 pupils registered at the school.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Abbey Meads Community 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.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	60	36	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	65	73	24	27	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	42	47	45	51	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	47	45	51	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	49	55	40	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	53	38	43	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	49	43	48	1	1	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)	45	51	41	46	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	42	48	54	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	42	46	52	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	40	50	56	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	46	52	41	46	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	57	38	43	0	0	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](http://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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



2 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Abbey Mead Community Primary School, Swindon, SN25 4GY

Thank you for helping us with the inspection. We enjoyed our visit to your school and found you very friendly and polite. You clearly all enjoy school because of the many smiling faces that we came across and your enthusiasm for learning. It will not be a surprise to you or your parents that we judge that your school is giving you a good education.

You make good progress in your learning because of the good teaching that you receive. We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to make sure that you all understand your targets in English and mathematics and that teachers' marking provides you with more information on how to improve your work. Your behaviour is outstanding and you all get on with each other extremely well. You are offered plenty of extra activities such as after-school clubs and residential visits. These encourage you to live healthy lifestyles and work together in teams and groups. We have asked the school to provide you with more opportunities to use computers in other subjects. All of the staff are keen for the school to improve even further. It is doing well at the moment because it is well led and managed by the headteacher and other staff.

You can help the school become even better by carrying on working hard and doing good work. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Chris Kessell Lead Inspector

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