

Abbots Green Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134362
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	341465
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Judi Bedawi

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	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Frank Warby
Headteacher	Mrs Nicola Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed nine teachers in 18 lessons or parts of lessons. Meetings were held with pupils, governors, staff and the teacher in charge of the specialist support centre. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books and project work, a range of school documentation, policies, monitoring records and data on pupils' attainment. The inspectors received and analysed 65 parental questionnaires.

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

- standards and achievement in writing, reading and mathematics
- the work of the specialist support centre
- initiatives introduced by the new headteacher
- the effectiveness of the recently established nursery class.

Information about the school

Abbots Green is slightly smaller than most other primary schools. Pupils come mainly from the local semi-urban area. A few, who attend the specialist support centre for autistic spectrum disorders, Down's syndrome and other complex special needs, come from further afield. There is a well above average proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs and an above average proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average, with an above average proportion at the early stages of learning English. Pupil numbers are rising with the establishment of a nursery class in January 2010. Since the last inspection there has been considerable turbulence in leadership, governance and staffing, including high levels of staff long term absence. Following the departure of the previous post holder in April 2009, a new headteacher was appointed from September 2009 who is now on maternity leave from March 2010. A part-time interim headteacher is currently in charge. There is now a full governing body. Healthy Schools status was gained in January 2010.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Abbots Green provides its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education. The calm learning environment aids the firm focus on raising standards. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. Their attendance and behaviour are good. Parents make positive comments about improvements typically saying, 'The headteacher has great vision and keeps us well informed,' and 'My child absolutely loves the school!'

The headteacher has made a good start in implementing a firm structure to learning, introducing assessment procedures and revising the curriculum, although it is mostly too early to measure long term impact. These initiatives are soundly maintained by the part-time headteacher during the permanent headteacher's unavoidable absence. The new governing body is very supportive of the school and of its local community, but have yet to develop their role and accountability in monitoring and evaluating the schools' performance in order to contribute to driving up standards.

Attainment on entry to the new nursery class and for children joining the Reception class is well below age-related expectations in social development, emergent writing and number work. The whole school focus to improve speaking, listening and writing through well-planned letter and sounds work has a good impact on language and early writing, so that most pupils are close to expected levels as they move into Key Stage 1. Progress in other areas of learning is satisfactory through Key Stage 1. It is best in writing, even so some pupils do not reach the expected levels in mathematics and reading. In Years 3 and 4, performance accelerates so that most pupils are on track to be at or just above the levels expected for their age by the end of Year 4. Those at an early stage of learning English receive good support, enabling them to make similar progress to other pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those attending the specialist support centre with complex needs, make good progress from their very low starting points, due to effective individual attention. Teaching is satisfactory with increasing elements of good practice. The use of assessment to plan lessons, including marking to help pupils progress, is at an early stage, but staff are working soundly to monitor pupils' learning. Setting individual targets for pupils is not yet fully established, but is identified as a priority.

Pupils enjoy the new focus on project work which has secured full subject coverage. Boys and girls have a good work ethic. Behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding, in the way pupils follow teachers' directions and respect each other, even when learning activities sometimes offer limited challenge. They feel safe, easily asking for help when needed. The 'Talk Team' pupil council express clear views of their school, but there are few opportunities for them to understand British society and global communities. Senior leaders have an accurate view of self-evaluation and are clearly focused on raising

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standards, so that capacity to improve is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and achievement across the school in writing, reading, and mathematics, particularly in Years 1 and 2 by:
 - developing pupils' skills in producing extended writing in subjects other than English subjects and presenting their work neatly
 - providing wider opportunities for reading in different situations so pupils gain confidence and better understanding of what they are reading
 - ensuring that mathematical concepts in calculation, shape and measure are securely embedded, so that pupils can transfer the skills learnt to other areas.
 - developing governing body accountability in monitoring and evaluation of academic standards and achievement.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - fully embedding new assessment procedures and practice to provide a clear overview of learning and to accelerate individual pupils' progress
 - using assessment information to provide challenging work for pupils capable of attaining higher levels
 - introducing learning targets for pupils and ensuring that marking consistently helps pupils to know how well they are doing and what they need to do next.
- Develop community cohesion by establishing national and international aspects of learning to broaden pupils' understanding of societies, faiths and cultures beyond their immediate knowledge and locality.
- Around 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils are inquisitive and enjoy making new discoveries, preferring practical activities but working steadily to develop academic skills. This was observed when nursery children worked hard at sounding out letters and then practised writing words for a recipe. Older pupils enjoyed a mathematics lesson on measuring and recording data while pupils in the specialist support centre were all able to identify, name and select three dimensional shapes including prisms, spheres and find the correct word card, glowing with pleasure at their achievements. Pupils respond well to questions. Behaviour is always good and occasionally outstanding even when learning occasionally slows due to lengthy explanations. Pupils feel safe and unkind behaviour is rare. Pupils' basic skills are satisfactory but they are not yet adept at using them in other settings. Pupils with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in developing their communication skills including speech, signing and symbols.

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Pupils make satisfactory progress through the school and writing is improving well, although there is less extended creative writing and work is not always well presented. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 find reading and mathematics challenging and some lack confidence in their skills. Across the school not all pupils have fully grasped mathematical concepts, particularly in calculation and shape and measures

Pupils enjoy sports and make healthy food choices. They contribute well to school life and the oldest pupils run a healthy tuck-shop. However, pupils have limited opportunities to learn about other lifestyles, faiths and cultural heritages, so their overall spiritual, moral social and cultural development is satisfactory.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
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	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Staff work together closely providing effective support for pupils with specific needs, those learning English and those with complex additional learning needs. Learning support assistants regularly note individual pupils' achievements. Staff are developing their skills in using assessment to move pupils on at a faster rate; but not all teachers have completed recording their data on pupils. Teaching is satisfactory. Planning is

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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thorough but work set for potentially higher attaining pupils in some lessons is not sufficiently challenging. Even so, the best lessons are characterised by questioning that extends pupils' ideas, a lively pace, regular reinforcement of learning objectives and high expectations of learning. The setting of individual pupil targets is not established. Marking of pupils work is variable with some rarely marked or just ticked with a lesser proportion providing pupils with the information needed for them to improve their own work.

The curriculum has recently improved and meets statutory requirements. It is very well adapted and resourced to meet the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those who are learning English. Whole school project work grabs pupils' imagination and encourages good independent learning and research, currently about castles. The youngest children are enchanted when they find a fairy nestling outside in a wicker casket and decide to write a thank you letter for the cake that the fairies made for them. Cross-curricular links are good and continue to develop in information and communication technology as staff begin to learn how to operate previously purchased plasma screens. Good use is made of visits and visitors to enrich learning and there is a good uptake of school clubs, including archery and gardening.

Pastoral care is good. The quality of support for pupils and families whose circumstances make them more vulnerable is of high calibre and utilises the right sort of external help to enhance learning. Multi-agency meetings and reviews are held in school. Staff know their pupils very well, so that any worries, however minor, are resolved so pupils are enabled to learn. Good monitoring of attendance has sustained improvement and there are positive reward systems regarded as fair by pupils who enjoy earning raffle tickets to spend free time at the end of week in 'The Den'. Effective transition arrangements ensure that Year 4 pupils are looking forward to their move to middle school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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?

The new headteacher has a clear vision for improvement, shared with staff to raise standards and to move forward from the many recent changes in leadership, staffing and governance. Her open approach is appreciated by staff, parents and the governing body. The staff, including learning support assistants, are making satisfactory progress in developing their skills in using assessment and tracking data to gauge the rate of

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pupils' progress. Many middle managers have sound action plans for their subject and other responsibilities. The governing body challenges senior leaders appropriately and is aware that it has yet to develop its role in monitoring, evaluating and regular review of the schools' performance. The interim headteacher ensures that the school functions smoothly during the headteacher's temporary absence.

Safeguarding is good and exceeds government requirements. Strengths include the quality of support for pupils and families whose circumstances make them more vulnerable and the recent 'no photograph' rule, to enhance pupils' safety and privacy. Parental partnerships are good with parents increasingly involved in and informed about their children's learning. There is close liaison with parents whose children attend the specialist support centre. Although links with a wide range of welfare related agencies are good, there are fewer links with local schools and other partners to enrich pupils' learning in areas such as sport. Community cohesion is satisfactory with a recent audit of provision in place, largely focused on the local community. Pupils' value and respect each others' backgrounds, needs and beliefs. The school has yet to develop its provision for national and international aspects. Promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory, meeting the needs of all groups of pupils appropriately. Astute strategies help to ensure that the schools finances are managed soundly.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The recently opened nursery class has got off to a positive start with rising numbers of children attending. Children are settled and happy, enjoying the soundly planned play

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through learning activities shared with the Reception class. Children find learning fun and benefit from easy access to the outdoor learning area. Their skills in speaking, listening and emergent writing are developing well due to the good focus on sound and letter work, so that by the end of the Reception year writing, reading and language skills are close to age related-expectations. Progress from children's starting points in other areas of learning is satisfactory with a current focus on developing children's knowledge of the world around them.

Learning through themes, currently fairies, encourages imagination and leads to good questions and answers with an increasing proportion of teaching that is good. There is an appropriate balance of adult-directed and child initiated learning. Children's behaviour and relationships are good. Although independence is encouraged a few children lack confidence in doing things for themselves. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are sensitively supported by staff. Although there is currently no identified leader, responsibilities are shared by staff working as a close team, and attention to welfare and day-to-day organisation are strong features.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire, the vast majority agree that their children enjoy school. A very large majority say their children are safe and know how to be healthy, their needs are met and that teaching is good. Parents also say that their children make enough progress and that they are kept well informed. A few parents feel that their children could make more progress and inspection findings support this view. The large majority believe arrangements for moving on to the next stage of education are good and this is the case. A small minority of parents have reservations about behaviour. Pupil behaviour observed by inspectors was consistently good and occasionally outstanding. Parents expressed reservations about the way their suggestions are addressed, and about the leadership and management of the school. Evidence of inspection found teaching, leadership and management to be satisfactory but with room for improvement. There is no evidence to suggest that parental views are not heard. The very large majority of parents are happy with their children's education.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Abbots Green 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. The inspection team received 65 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 213 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	68	20	31	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	58	24	37	2	3	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	32	33	51	9	14	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	28	40	62	5	8	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	25	38	33	51	5	8	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	28	34	52	9	14	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	40	33	51	5	8	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)	16	25	32	49	8	12	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	31	35	54	5	8	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	22	30	46	12	18	4	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	12	32	49	18	28	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	10	15	27	42	12	18	13	20
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	35	34	52	7	11	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.



14 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Abbots Green Community Primary School, Bury St Edmunds, IP32 7PJ

Thank you for giving us such a friendly welcome when we visited your happy school recently. You go to a satisfactory school and you told us why you like it. You enjoy whole school projects, using computers, reading to your teachers and mathematics. You said you would like the multi-skills club to start again. You feel really safe and have many friends. You settle to work quickly.

You make steady progress because your teachers and teaching assistants do a satisfactory job in explaining what you have to learn and they always help if you get 'stuck'. Your attitudes, behaviour, attendance and the way you help each other is good. Well done! I was pleased to see how learning about letters and sounds is helping you to get better at writing.

Your headteacher and the staff want to make your school even better. We have asked them to:

- help you to write more in all lessons and present your work neatly
- think of more ways to use reading and check you understand what you read
- help you solve mathematical problems so you can use your skills in other lessons.
- provide harder work for those of you who find it too easy
- start setting individual learning targets so that you make faster progress and always use helpful marking so you know how to improve your work
- find exciting ways for you to learn about life in Britain and abroad.

I hope you will help your teachers by doing neater writing and continue to enjoy the rest of your time at Abbots Green.

Yours sincerely

Judi Bedawi

Lead inspector

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