

Abingdon Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131519
Local Authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	382320
Inspection dates	22–23 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Margaret Farrow HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	444
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bob Brady
Headteacher	Miss Andrea Williams
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 February 2010
School address	Abingdon Road Middlesbrough North Yorkshire TS1 3JR
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Seventeen lessons were observed and all teachers seen; a number more than once. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, middle managers, staff, the governing body's monitoring committee, the Head of Learning 0-19 from the local authority and groups of pupils. Inspectors also spoke to a number of parents. They observed the school's work, scrutinised pupils' books, pupil performance and assessment data, key documents such as safeguarding and child protection policies, school improvement plans and progress reports on the key areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection. They also analysed the results of the school's recent pupil survey.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The quality of teaching across the school and its impact on pupils' current attainment and progress in lessons.
- The impact of leadership and management on the actions identified for improvement at the time of the last inspection.

Information about the school

Abingdon is much larger than the average primary school. Eighty-five per cent of the pupils are of minority ethnic heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is more than twice the national average. An average proportion has been identified as having a special educational need or disability; although the number of these pupils with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average. A much greater number of pupils than usual join or leave the school at various times throughout the school year, with an increasing proportion who speak little or no English when they arrive.

As a result of the inspection in February 2010, the school was placed into special measures. Following the retirement of the headteacher in summer 2010 and a national advertising campaign, the governing body was unable to recruit a suitable headteacher. As a result, from September 2010 until July 2011, leadership of the school was shared between the deputy headteacher and a headteacher from a local school judged outstanding at the time of its Ofsted inspection. An experienced headteacher was appointed to the post in summer 2011 and took up her position formally in September 2011. The headteacher worked closely with the school staff and the governing body during the half-term prior to September 2011.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Abingdon is now a satisfactory school. There are some notable strengths, including the Early Years Foundation Stage and the care, guidance and support provided. An inclusive, nurturing atmosphere envelops the school, ensuring pupils feel safe and well supported. This tone promotes pupils' good behaviour, strong personal qualities and good spiritual, social and moral development. Such aspects, and an increasingly interesting curriculum, are building pupils' confidence and self-esteem and helping them to enjoy their time here, as seen in their improved attendance and in their discussions with inspectors. Parents who spoke to inspectors celebrate the improvements in their children's enjoyment, learning and progress and in the leadership of the school. One parent summarised the views of others when noting, 'There is now a passion to get the best out of the children.'

Following a slow start, leaders' focus on improving pupils' attainment and progress has gathered pace significantly over the past year, and to good effect. Current detailed assessment information about pupils' progress, lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' books show they are making at least satisfactory and often good progress in lessons. Pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, those who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress in lessons. This is due to leaders' relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching and ensuring any pupil at risk of underachieving is identified quickly so that actions can be put in place to meet their individual needs or help them catch up quickly. Pupils' attainment improved in summer 2011, both in the Early Years Foundation Stage and at the end of Key Stage 1. Although remaining below that found nationally, the gap is narrowing well. Although Year 6 results in the national tests remained well-below average, the pupils made satisfactory progress from their very low starting points in English. Improved provision has now successfully raised attainment through the school to broadly average levels.

Teaching is good. Some lessons are outstanding and satisfactory lessons are increasingly rare. Consistent strengths include good relationships between staff and pupils and pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to learning. Lessons are generally planned well. However, on the odd occasion they are not pitched precisely enough to meet the needs of all pupils. For example, the school's regular assessment information on pupils' achievements inform staff exactly how well pupils are progressing and what they need to learn next, but when teachers do not use this information well enough, pupils make satisfactory progress rather than good.

Building on improvements during the interim headteacher arrangements, the new headteacher quickly secured the confidence and trust of the governing body, staff, pupils and parents. Staff and the governing body have been energised by her infectious vision for outstanding teaching and learning and are working in this shared pursuit. The school has moved forward well over the past year and exceptionally so since June. Accurate self-evaluation involves staff and the governing body and all have a clear understanding of what is working well and what should be better. Succinct school-level and subject improvement plans have been developed and are monitored vigorously. As a result of recent improvements, the good progress pupils are now making in lessons, their improving attendance and the commitment of staff, school leaders have satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

About 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

Leaders understand what they need to do to improve further and are already taking robust actions; consequently, they require little further guidance. However,

- In order to hasten the school's pursuit of outstanding teaching and learning to improve pupils' attainment and progress further, leaders should:
 - develop the programme of professional development opportunities further to help all teachers become as skilled as the best in school
 - ensure teachers' information about pupils' progress always informs planning so that pupils' work is always matched to their specific starting points.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Improved teaching, more active and interesting lessons and the added momentum from the leadership of the new headteacher are helping to make sure most pupils are making good progress in lessons. Lesson observations, detailed tracking information on pupils' current achievements and scrutiny of pupils books evidence their good progress and indicate most are working at levels in line with those expected for their age or abilities. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 was below the governments' floor targets, mainly because of weak teaching and disruption to their learning in previous years through many changes in staff. Despite robust action, leaders did not have enough time to tackle the significant gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge by the time of the national tests in May 2011. Scrutiny of pupils' books showed their progress accelerated rapidly from September 2010, and especially so in the final four months of their time at Abingdon, but not enough to narrow the gap between their attainment and that found nationally. This was not the case in other year groups and nor is it currently, as these pupils have had less disruption to their learning and are benefiting from the significant improvements across all areas of the school's work.

All pupils who spoke to inspectors reported without hesitation that they feel safe.

Their positive views were endorsed by results from the school’s pupil survey. Pupils say behaviour is good and improving and this is supporting their better learning in lessons. Pupils’ personal development is a strength. They are considerate and caring to one another. The way they welcome and support pupils new to the school is exemplary. One child captured this when reporting, ‘I cannot think that anyone is not nice’. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They are active participants in a wide range of sporting and health-related activity with good evidence of their enjoyment. Ninety-five per cent of pupils’ report they keep fit and healthy. It was delightful to see boys thoroughly participating and challenging themselves in a modern dance class. Attendance rates are currently above average and build on the improvements from the previous year where attendance was average. This represents good improvement since the last inspection and is due to determined actions taken by the headteacher, in partnership with the parent support adviser and educational welfare officer. Pupils at risk of not attending or prone to coming late are encouraged to come to the well-attended, healthy and friendly breakfast club. This is not only improving their attendance it is also adding to their sense of belonging to the school, their self-esteem and their enjoyment.

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	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	2
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	3
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In most lessons teachers’ good subject knowledge and well-planned, interesting activities, matched to pupils individual starting points, inspire and motivate pupils. They settle down quickly and are keen to get on. Teachers’ timely questioning draws out pupils’ understanding, challenges them to think about how well they are doing and moves them on quickly. Rigorous target-setting and assessment procedures are now in place. All pupils know their targets and how well they are doing towards them

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

through regular feedback including marking. Pupils report positively on their new 'Assertive Mentoring' files where they review their work over time and track progress towards their individual targets. Timely catch-up or induction sessions are provided to pupils who have had periods of extended absence and for those joining the school partway through the year. Leaders are working to iron out the few remaining inconsistencies in teaching.

The satisfactory curriculum is improving because of the good efforts taken to make it more interesting and inspiring. A range of visits and visitors to school have recently been added. These successfully energise and motivate pupils, particularly boys. Pupils report that lessons have improved because teachers make them more fun and this is making them work harder. After-school activities are many and varied and add significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school and their work in the community. For example, the steel band is thriving and leaving its mark across the area through its successful performances. Since the last inspection the focus has been on making sure these activities support pupils' learning. Leaders have been successful in this endeavour without losing their sense of 'fun'. Pupils are cared for, guided and supported well, enabling them to gain confidence and feel valued. They are certain there is always an adult around in whom they can confide when they are troubled or just want someone to talk to. Effective partnerships with a range of agencies support potentially vulnerable children and their families well in times of most need.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

A good team spirit and a passion to do things better are contributing significantly to the improvements in teaching and pupils' progress in lessons. Middle managers judge the new headteacher to be strong, motivational and inspirational and welcome their added responsibilities and accountability. They and other teachers are now involved in observations of teaching, sharing good practice and learning from each other and from outstanding schools locally. They particularly value leaders' robust scrutiny of the impact of their work through regular pupil progress meetings. Discussions rightly focus on the progress individual pupils are making against their challenging termly targets and the actions teachers will take to tackle any underachievement.

The effectiveness of the governing body is satisfactory and improving. It took decisive action to tackle the weaknesses in safeguarding identified at the time of the last inspection. Procedures now meet statutory requirements. The governing body's monitoring group has become adept in challenging as well as supporting school leaders. The group is well informed and monitors information and data robustly to make sure the school is keeping on-track in its quest for improvement. Partnership

with parents and carers is strong and enhanced significantly by the headteacher’s approachable manner, the open-door policy and the excellent work of the parent champion who has improved communication and makes sure parents’ views are heard. Strategies to embed community cohesion are good and based on an accurate understanding of the school’s diverse context. This is an inclusive school and pupils from many countries, cultures and faiths work and play together harmoniously because of the strong actions taken to ensure equality of opportunity and to tackle discrimination of any kind. Actions taken are now ensuring most pupils make good progress from their starting points in lessons. However, because past performance has been weaker and pupils have not consistently reached their potential, this area of the school’s work is judged satisfactory.

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	2
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership and management ensure children are provided with a positive start to school. The majority enter with skills that are well below that typical for their age. A warm, welcoming and stimulating environment indoors and out and teachers’ positive relationships with parents and carers ensure children settle happily. A good balance of teacher- and child-led activities successfully supports the development of children’s independence, skills, confidence and self-esteem. Teachers’ regular assessment of children’s work, good teaching and an effective curriculum ensure they make good progress in all areas of learning, although their achievements remain below average by the time they enter Key Stage 1. Staff know and care for their children well and this helps to assure that their welfare and personal development are well promoted. Relationships between staff and children are good; this helps children develop the positive attitudes to learning that sustain them as they move through the school. Staff pay special attention to the specific needs of children who require extra help, especially those with little or no English or those with behavioural or learning difficulties. This ensures they, too, make good progress from their starting points.

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

The section 8 inspection was converted to a section 5 inspection at the end of day one, consequently, parents and carers did not receive Ofsted questionnaires. However, inspectors sought the views of parents and carers at the beginning of day two. All who spoke had very positive views about the quality of care and education provided and reported good improvements in leadership, communications, their children’s learning enjoyment and progress, and in developing their understanding of how to help their child’s learning. One parent astutely reflected his views when he said, ‘The school now feels like a school for the 21st century’. The report indicates that inspectors judge improvements since the previous inspection justify the removal of the category of special measures.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



24 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Abingdon Primary School, Middlesbrough, TS1 3JR

On behalf of the team, thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We were impressed with your good behaviour and friendliness when we spoke to you and when we came into classes to see how well you were doing. You are also friendly and caring towards each other and it was good to see you all getting on so well. You told us that lessons are improving and are more fun. As a result, you are enjoying school more and this is evident in your improving attendance. You say you feel safe and that there is always someone there to help you in times of need. You have many opportunities for extra fun and excitement through visits and after-school activities, which you value highly. The range of activities to help you keep healthy is impressive.

We judge the school no longer requires special measures. It provides a satisfactory quality of education for you and all staff work hard to keep you safe and provide good support and care. You are making better progress in lessons because teaching has improved and because of the way teachers are providing more interesting activities that are well matched to what you already know and what you need to learn next. You report positively about the how the targets you are given help to challenge you to improve; particularly those in your 'Assertive Mentoring' files. Occasionally, teachers do not make sure these are used well in lessons so we have asked the headteacher to make sure all teachers take full account of your targets and achievements when planning lessons. We have also asked her to provide more opportunities for teachers to learn from others so that every lesson is as good as the best in school.

Thank you once again for being so helpful. You can help the school become even better by continuing to attend and trying your best.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Farrow
Her Majesty's Inspector

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