

Abbey Primary School

Glastonbury Crescent, Walsall, WS3 2RP

Inspection dates 5–6 March 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress from their varied starting points to achieve average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result of good teaching and an inspiring range of subjects and topics, their achievement is good.
- Teachers match tasks well to pupils' abilities. They use questioning to make pupils think hard and give many opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills by telling stories and discussing ideas and new concepts with their classmates.
- The varied and carefully chosen support, put in place for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, is effective, so they make good progress.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school and pupils feel safe. Pupils are quick to get to their lessons after playtime because they are keen to learn. They think that the staff are good at solving any problems they have.
- Leaders and managers have been successful in improving achievement and teaching and learning since the previous inspection. Writing has improved the most.
- Regular checking of teaching and the use of effective methods to check up on how well pupils, including groups of pupils, are doing have given senior staff and governors a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, the learning intention in a lesson is too broad and pupils are not clear exactly what they need to focus on to achieve well.
- For some younger pupils, opportunities to practise their reading to speed up their progress are limited.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 13 lessons including four joint observations with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. They also made a number of shorter visits to classrooms and to group teaching sessions.
- Discussions were held with pupils, members of staff, including senior leaders, the Chair and other representatives of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Information from the school's website and 11 questionnaires from the staff were also evaluated. No responses from the online questionnaire (Parent View) could be taken into account as there were too few, but surveys of the views of parents and carers undertaken by the school were considered.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documents. In particular they heard pupils read, evaluated pupils' books, teachers' planning and records, safeguarding information and the school's systems for improving teaching and learning.

Inspection team

Angela Kirk, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Allan Barfoot

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Abbey is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage with a few from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, the additional funds provided for those known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and service family children, is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average. Their needs include social, communication and moderate learning difficulties.
- Children can start at the school part time in the Nursery. Some children wait to join the school in Reception rather than in the Nursery.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching so that more is outstanding through:
 - improving the sharpness of learning through presenting a clear focus to pupils
 - making sure that pupils know exactly what they need to do to be successful in each lesson.
- Make sure that individual reading for some younger pupils is checked more closely to speed up their progress and that pupils who do not read at home are given more opportunities to read to an adult in school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The achievement of pupils is good in all subjects. Pupils enjoy school and make good progress in lessons because they are attentive and because work is well matched to their abilities.
- Children join the Nursery with skills and understanding that are usually low compared to those expected for their age. In Nursery and Reception, teachers plan activities carefully to make sure that there are lots of opportunities for the children to talk about their work, to explore through a wide range of enjoyable practical activities and to learn to share and to take turns. Progress has improved year on year. It is now good although by the time they start in Year 1 many children are still below average overall.
- Pupils' achievement through the rest of the school is also good and there is a strong trend of improvement. Although average points scores (based on national test results) in English and mathematics are sometimes lower for pupils who are known to be entitled to the pupil premium than for other pupils, they make similar good progress from their typically lower starting points to other pupils in the school because their needs are analysed well. The school uses the funding to successfully close gaps in attainment and to provide pupils with a wide range of trips and enjoyable activities before, during and after school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given good support in class, often from an additional adult, as well as the class teacher. They also benefit from small-group or one-to-one teaching when needed, to secure good progress. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as other groups of pupils in the school.
- As pupils become independent readers; they are given good guidance to ensure that they read widely and often. All the younger children read daily during their phonics lessons (the sounds that letters make) but the progress for some is at times limited. This is because their home-reading books are not always changed often enough and the school does not always provide sufficient additional opportunities for those pupils who do not read at home to read in school to an adult.
- Pupils' writing skills across the school have improved, partly because the school has focused on improving pupils' ideas for writing through talking and discussion, and also because teachers now give pupils better comments about how to improve their writing. Pupils usually read these carefully and try to act upon them. Handwriting has also improved and pupils show care and pride in producing their neatest (and usually joined) handwriting.
- Pupils' mathematical skills are good and the teachers make sure that their lessons are carefully planned starting from what pupils already know. As they progress through the school pupils become increasingly better at their recall of number and mental calculation facts.
- Teachers give pupils plenty of opportunities to apply their reading, writing, communication and mathematics skills to other subjects because they are careful to make links between subjects. Pupils of all ages are confident in using computers to help in their learning.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and at times outstanding. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They concentrate hard and always try their best.
- Pupils are taught phonics very well. The younger pupils are taught in small groups according to ability, enabling teachers and teaching assistants to see that in each lesson, pupils read, answer questions about their reading and spell words and write answers to questions that are at just the right level to make sure that they learn well.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's independent learning activities are very well connected to the topic theme to help children make links between the different areas of learning. Particular emphasis is given to developing children's communication and language skills. For example, children in Reception rehearsed the telling of a pirate story together. Some

independently used their knowledge of letters and sounds to write what the pirates said in speech bubbles, while others dressed up as pirates and invented their own pirate stories together, using the varied props such as swords and treasure that were provided.

- Improved training for staff in mathematics has resulted in teachers having much higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. For example, in Year 1 pupils in some groups were independently solving number problems, carefully identifying the numbers and the 'calculation language' in the problems in order to write an appropriate sum. They achieved this successfully because the teacher had explained very clearly how to do this.
- Occasionally, teachers do not make sure that their learning intention for the lesson is precise, so their teaching is too generalised and lacks a sharpness to focus pupils on exactly what they are learning and exactly how to be successful.
- Teaching assistants usually teach pupils one to one and in small groups. Some of these are very competent in their delivery, making sure that when necessary, skills are taught through short, sharp activities in order to maintain the concentration of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Following training after the previous inspection, teachers' assessments are now accurate and agreed across the school. Pupils' learning and progress are regularly checked and individual targets are used well by staff to help pupils to know their next steps for learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are keen to do well. They share and readily cooperate with each other in lessons and in the playground. The school is orderly and friendly.
- Behaviour is well managed by staff. The pupils are clear about the rewards and consequences, which they think are fair. As a result poor behaviour, especially in lessons, is uncommon and there have been no exclusions.
- Pupils say that bullying is very rare and regular parent and carer surveys undertaken by the school support this. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and many aspects of safety, such as internet safety, are taught regularly. They say they feel safe in school.
- The school has staggered the times when pupils of different ages have playtime and lunchtime so there is lots of space for pupils to play. Pupils say they enjoy being able to choose to take part in organised sport and say they have plenty of opportunities to play on the outdoor equipment, as it is not too crowded.
- Pupils show a respect for people from all backgrounds because different religions and cultures are promoted in a positive way, including in assemblies. Pupils have good opportunities to explore right from wrong and teachers see social and cooperative skills as important aspects within lessons. For example, in the Nursery it was explained to the children that the child chosen by the teacher to give out the fruit was chosen because he had been particularly kind to someone and had shared his toys well. Pupils understand that discrimination is not tolerated.
- Attendance has improved significantly and is now average and still improving. The school has raised pupils' and parents' and carers' understanding of the importance of regular attendance at school through a system of rewards and by making sure that parents and carers whose children did not attend regularly enough were held to account, but supported through meetings and with practical help.

The leadership and management are good

- The senior leadership team has improved the whole way that the school is led and managed. In particular, it has improved its monitoring and evaluation to check the effectiveness of teaching and its system for tracking the progress of all pupils, including all groups of pupils in the school. This has resulted in all leaders and managers, including the governing body, knowing the

strengths and areas for improvement well.

- All staff and governors are clear about the vision for the school and what is expected of them. Careful checking of the quality of all aspects of teaching, together with useful feedback to teachers, makes it clear where improvement is required. Teachers are held to account through the targets that are set for them to improve and meetings about the progress and achievements of the pupils they teach.
 - Stimulating themes and topics enable teachers to make good links between subjects. Pupils find many aspects of learning exciting, including the 'Forest School' situated in the school's own grounds and the many opportunities to take part in trips and out-of-school activities. The school is inclusive and promotes equal opportunities for all through its strong sense of community. Tackling discrimination is given a high priority.
 - The school works closely with parents and carers and keeps them well informed. It regularly surveys their opinions about the school and acts on feedback. Parents and carers have become increasingly involved in their children's learning through the development of joint homework tasks and projects.
 - The safeguarding of pupils meets the government's current requirements. The school carries out the required checks on adults working with pupils and all staff have received appropriate training to help to keep pupils safe. Significant additional support is put into place by the school for those pupils who are considered to be vulnerable.
 - The local authority has supported the school in some of the improvements in English and mathematics, which have helped some leaders and managers to check how good the teaching is more effectively. The school has also received support from other educational consultants.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors receive useful and informative reports and presentations to help them know how well the school is doing when compared to other schools nationally. They also make regular visits to the school to watch lessons, discuss improvements with subject leaders and talk to pupils. They make sure that teaching is good enough by asking questions about the information given to them about the progress of different groups of pupils and by receiving regular overviews from the headteacher about the lesson observations undertaken by staff. This information helps the governing body to challenge and support the school in equal measure. They make sure that decisions about how to use the funds available, such as the pupil premium, are based on the needs of all the pupils and keep a tight check on spending once the budget has been set. The performance of the headteacher and staff is well managed. Governors know how the school rewards good teaching and what it is doing to tackle any underperformance. Governors make sure that statutory duties are fulfilled, including those relating to safeguarding, which they monitor regularly.
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What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| Grade | Judgement | Description |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 104168 |
| Local authority | Walsall |
| Inspection number | 404928 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 199 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Chris Birkett |
| Headteacher | Lynn Smith |
| Date of previous school inspection | 26 January 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01922 710753 |
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