



Abingdon Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131519
Local Authority Middlesbrough
Inspection number 293775
Inspection dates 12–13 September 2006
Reporting inspector Keith Bardon

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Abingdon Road
School category	Community		Middlesbrough
Age range of pupils	3–11		TS1 3JR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01642 210567
Number on roll (school)	470	Fax number	01642 217774
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Cllr Bob Brady
		Headteacher	Mr Bob Eastwood
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	12–13 September 2006	293775

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school which serves a disadvantaged area in the centre of Middlesbrough. Three quarters of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, predominantly Pakistani. Throughout the year the school takes in pupils of all ages from an ever increasing range of ethnic backgrounds including a small number of pupils from refugee/asylum seeker families. Many pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. When they first join the Nursery, many children have very poor communication, social and personal skills. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is a little below average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Abingdon Primary is a good school with outstanding features and it has good capacity for further improvement. It plays a central role in the local community and is very popular with parents and pupils. The school welcomes pupils from a broad range of home and cultural backgrounds and with widely differing needs. Without exception, they are included fully in the life of the school and provided with all the opportunities it has to offer. Harmonious relationships are at the heart of the school's very positive ethos and pupils feel safe and well cared for in its warm atmosphere. They are happy, sociable individuals who achieve well both personally and academically. Teaching is good and staff are quick to praise pupils' efforts, raising their self-esteem and giving them the confidence to succeed. Pupils' development is closely monitored and teachers respond well to the needs of the individual. Despite making good progress, many pupils find national standards difficult to attain and quite often do not do themselves justice in tests. The school's results are often lower than in most other schools but, while standards are below average, pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are better than test results indicate and represent good achievement over time. As a result of the well judged support and attention they receive, pupils who speak English as an additional language learn well and make substantial gains in literacy. Pupils try hard and behave well because they feel valued. The high quality and extensive range of extra curricular provision adds much to the richness of their lives, particularly when these extend into the local and wider community.

The school is led with skill and enthusiasm by the highly respected headteacher. He receives strong support from senior staff and together they provide the role model of care and commitment upon which the school's provision is based. A secure platform for development ensures that the school is constantly moving forward and striving to provide pupils with an education closely tailored to their current and future needs. Improvement in the Foundation Stage is a recognised area for development. A good start has been made in Reception, where lively provision provides pupils with a firm foundation for future learning. Learning in the Nursery, particularly in relation to the outdoor activity area, lacks a clear focus. Senior staff and governors have a clear picture of how well the school is performing. Systems for checking the quality of lessons give an accurate and detailed overview of what teachers are doing but do not provide sufficient insight into the effect this is having on pupils' learning. Governors provide strong support for the school. They visit regularly and take a keen interest in the provision it is making for pupils' learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop monitoring procedures which show clearly the effects that teaching is having on pupils' learning.
- Improve the quality of provision in the Nursery in line with the new initiatives in the Reception classes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Although standards are below average, pupils' achievement is good. From a very low starting point on entry, pupils make good sustained progress in both key stages and leave at the end of Year 6 with a broad range of knowledge and skills. Test results do not always reflect these gains. Many pupils speak English as an additional language and have difficulty working at speed in test situations. Consequently, the school often misses the challenging targets it sets itself. It is clear that pupils know more and have a better grasp of English and mathematics than results often indicate. Recently, the school has concentrated on improving writing. This is bearing fruit, particularly in the younger age classes but it will be some time before the benefits become fully apparent higher up the school. Children's progress in Nursery is satisfactory, but not as good as in the rest of the school. Although there are year-by-year differences in the performance of boys and girls and different groups of pupils, there are no consistent patterns and over time all pupils achieve equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good and they are immensely proud of being part of this school. They very clearly enjoy learning and their confidence and self-esteem is outstanding. They leave Abingdon Primary with the skills they need to take them forward in their education and to function well both in their home culture and that of the country in which they live. Behaviour is good, although a minority of pupils need skilful handling by staff to help them stay on task. Pupils clearly understand why rules are necessary in school and in society. Although attendance is below average, it is satisfactory in the context of this complex school and pupils who are in a position to attend do so willingly and regularly. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, with pupils clearly valuing each other and all the cultures around them. The contribution of pupils to the local and wider community is outstanding. A significant example of this is the variety of situations and venues in which the school steel band plays. Pupils are well aware of their own health and safety and that of others and are keen to talk about learning for the Healthy School Award.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan interesting lessons and make learning an enjoyable experience. Very good relationships and high expectations encourage pupils to behave well and to do their best. Most pupils concentrate hard and think carefully about what they are doing. Teachers regularly check pupils' work and give clear guidance on what they need to do to improve. Pupils recognise that this is

designed to help them and refer to the information regularly. Activities are well matched to pupils' interests and abilities and teachers give detailed explanations and demonstrations to maximise pupils' understanding. There are times when the lesson is too slow because the teacher allows the lesson plan to determine the pace rather than the speed at which pupils are learning. Pupils who need additional help receive well judged support from competent teaching assistants. This ensures they are fully involved in lessons and enables them to maintain the same good rate of progress as other pupils. Regular discussions help pupils to develop speaking and listening skills and probing questions challenge pupils to think and to explain their answers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with some outstanding features and the school has achieved a number of curricular awards including Activemark and Healthy Schools. Teachers produce detailed plans from national guidelines which make sure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. A broad range of activities gives the pupils a lively involvement in learning and pleasure and excitement in their work. Pupils have regular opportunities to use and practise their writing, number and computer skills in other subjects. The school is constantly seeking ways to improve provision. Recent work on the development of writing has improved standards, and the school is rightly poised to improve curriculum provision for reading. The school provides an outstanding range and variety of visits, visitors and additional activities that enrich the curriculum and enhance pupils' personal development. These include residential visits and extensive involvement in the local community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good overall. Care for pupils and the understanding of their individual needs are outstanding. The school accepts and values a number of pupils with complex needs and manages pupils with recognised behavioural difficulties well. Procedures for ensuring pupils' health, safety and well-being are thorough and child protection procedures are in place. Pupils value the relationships with the staff and the care that they give them. The school's system of rewards motivates pupils well. Fostering self-esteem and value for all underpins all that the school does and in this it is very successful. The school and the local community are very closely linked and the school is a valued and well-loved resource. Vulnerable pupils are well protected and older pupils are proud of being 'playground pals'. Pupils know where to get support if they are unhappy and they feel very safe in school. Considerable effort is made to ensure that all pupils attend school and much work takes place with families on this. Support and guidance for those pupils with learning difficulties are meticulous and the school works closely with outside professionals for the good of all. Effective assessment and recording procedures ensure that the school is well aware of the progress of each pupil and can plan intervention actions quickly, when necessary.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, provides the school with inspirational leadership, which has ensured that the school has made good progress since the last inspection. The school is managed well and procedures for measuring how effectively the school is performing are thorough. Initiatives for development are planned carefully and evaluated rigorously. Although teaching is monitored regularly, the impact it is having on pupils' learning is not always examined closely enough. Careful thought is given to the school's present and future needs when management responsibilities are delegated and the school has a well balanced management structure which functions effectively. Consequently, the school runs smoothly and copes with new situations, such as the regular arrival of additional pupils from various parts of the world, with little difficulty. The inclusive ethos of the school is a key reason for its popularity with parents and makes for a pleasant atmosphere in which children grow in confidence and self-esteem. Improvement in the Reception classes has been managed well but provision in Nursery has lacked the same development. The recently appointed Foundation Stage manager is aware of what needs to improve. The school benefits from an extremely conscientious body of governors which takes a keen interest in its sustained development and in pupils' welfare. The school's finances are managed efficiently. Links with local businesses and other organisations help to consolidate the school's place in the community and add useful additional resources from which pupils benefit substantially.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

14 September 2006

Abingdon Primary School

Abingdon Road

Middlesbrough

TS1 3JR

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. Although we were with you for only two days, we thoroughly enjoyed finding out about the work you do, and a special thanks to those who talked with us about the school. We were very impressed with the polite, pleasant and confident way you spoke to us. Abingdon Primary is a good school and we can understand why you enjoy it so much.

There were lots of things we particularly liked about the school. Everyone is friendly and it is clear that you are happy at school. You get on well with each other and with the staff and the school is a nice place to be. Nearly everyone we saw during lessons was working hard and trying their best. Almost all pupils were well behaved, both in class and around school. You make good progress because teachers make learning interesting and enjoyable. Adults look after you well and it is very good that you feel safe and cared for. We enjoyed hearing about all the things you can do after school and at other times, including the steel band which the Prime Minister clearly enjoyed. Even though it is a good school the headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to make it even better.

We also looked at what the school might do to improve. We suggested that:

- teachers need to look a little more closely at how their teaching is helping you to learn
- children in the Nursery could learn more when they first start school.

All the best.

Keith Bardon

Lead inspector