

# Abbotsbury Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102649
<b>Local Authority</b>	Merton
<b>Inspection number</b>	308078
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Grace Marriott

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	412
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs M Short
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs R Maybury
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 September 2004
<b>School address</b>	Abbotsbury Road Morden SM4 5JS
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8640 1010
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8646 4265

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Abbotsbury Primary is much larger than most primary schools. It serves a very diverse area and over half the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. More pupils are at an early stage of learning English than in most schools. A high number of pupils leave and join the school at different times of the year. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is slightly higher than is the case nationally. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average. The main needs are with speech and language. The headteacher has been in post since September 2007 having been acting head for the previous year. The school has achieved the following awards: Healthy Schools Award, London Eco Schools Award, Activemark and the Sustainable Travel Bronze Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Abbotsbury is a good school. It is lively and welcoming and, from a very early age, pupils make good progress and enjoy coming to school. Pupils and their parents appreciate all the school has to offer. One parent wrote, 'Abbotsbury is a great school' and another wrote, 'I would recommend the school highly.' The headteacher and deputy provide strong leadership. They have dealt well with the aftermath of several tragic events, including the unexpected death of the previous headteacher, and this has had the effect of strengthening the school's commitment to the pupils. Staff morale is good; they work as a team and are determined to provide their pupils with a high quality all-round education. They work hard to help pupils overcome some significant barriers to learning.

Pupils' achievement is good. Many children join the school with a very limited range of experiences and are often at an early stage of learning English. They get off to a good start and make especially good progress in learning to talk confidently to each other and adults. Despite children's good progress from their generally low starting points, standards at the end of Reception and Year 2 are below average. Their continuing good progress means that by the end of Year 6 standards are broadly average. Achievement in writing, particularly in Years 1 and 2, is lower than in reading or mathematics. The school is very aware of this and the focus on improving literacy skills is having an impact so that pupils are now making better progress.

The school promotes personal, social, health and citizenship education very strongly and pupils regularly discuss important and very relevant topics. As a result they understand how to stay safe and can make healthy choices. Pupils show a strong sense of responsibility for themselves and others and their ability to work well independently and in groups was very evident in lessons and other activities. They are being well prepared for their future education and employment. Throughout the school year, a varied programme of enrichment activities and special projects enable pupils to pursue their interests and enjoy new experiences. During the inspection week pupils were enjoying, and learning from, activities as varied as multicultural mathematics and a 'bhangra' workshop.

Teaching is good although not always consistently so. Pupils generally make good progress because the feedback on their work helps them to improve and their targets are manageable. Sometimes though, progress is slower and teachers' planning of the next steps is less effective. The leadership and management at all levels are providing a clear direction for development. Effective self-evaluation enables governors and staff to focus clearly on what is needed to raise standards. Action plans are carefully monitored and the school is well placed to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage provides an attractive and stimulating environment into which children settle quickly and happily. One parent commented that her daughter always smiled when she knew it was a school day. From the start, children learn to make choices and this encourages independence. The good range of play-based activities helps develop an enthusiasm for learning and capitalises on children's natural curiosity. Children learn to share, take turns and play together well. By the end of their Reception year, children have made good progress in language and literacy, though standards in these areas are still below average. They are very close to expectations for their age in mathematical development and their physical development is

better than average. Teaching is good and the focus for learning is always clear. The indoor and outdoor areas are well organised and resourced. Staff use assessment well and identify individual needs at an early stage. They place considerable emphasis on developing speech, language and social skills and on encouraging children, particularly the boys, to take an interest in play activities that promote literacy. The Foundation Stage has been re-organised this year from separate Nursery and Reception classes into two parallel classes each with both Nursery and Reception children. This arrangement is working well but there has not been time to evaluate the long-term impact. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed and its effectiveness is recognised by the Local Authority, which uses it as an example for other schools.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise pupils' achievement in writing across the school but particularly in Years 1 and 2.
- Ensure more consistent target setting and marking to help pupils make faster progress and teachers to plan the next steps in learning.

### **Achievement and standards**

#### **Grade: 2**

From a very low starting point, pupils make good progress overall and by Year 6 standards are average. A larger proportion of pupils are now currently working at above average levels. The rate of progress is however, not consistent across the school. It is good in the Foundation Stage, slows down in Years 1 and 2 and improves again in Years 3 to 6. Progress and standards in literacy have improved but not as much in writing as in reading. From the Foundation Stage onwards, more systematic teaching of phonics, with pupils learning to link sounds with letters, is helping to improve literacy skills. The focus on writing, not just in English but in other subjects is also helping to raise standards. Effective support enables pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities to join fully in class activities and make good progress, particularly in speech and language. By the end of Year 6 pupils with English as an additional language are often achieving better than other groups in the school.

### **Personal development and well-being**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils grow in confidence and develop positive attitudes. Spiritual development is good and cultural development is particularly strong. Through lessons, visits to religious centres and many activities in school pupils gain a wide understanding of different cultures and faiths. They also gain clear moral and social understanding and know how their actions affect others. They understand how to deal with any bullying and are confident that they will be supported by adults. Pupils behave well around the school and in lessons. One pupil said 'Behaviour is good, it gets better and better'. Around school pupils are friendly and welcoming and in lessons they are generally keen to learn. Only when the teaching is less effective, do they lose concentration. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously through the school council and other duties. They support the wider community through charity fundraising, work with a nearby special school and entertaining senior citizens at their performances. Attendance is satisfactory. Most pupils attend regularly but some pupils' attendance figures are affected by holidays taken during term time.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teachers create a purposeful working atmosphere in lessons and make clear to pupils what they are expected to achieve. Interesting activities engage pupils so that they work hard and enjoy their learning. For example, the strategy game in mathematics was really challenging pupils in Year 5 to use their knowledge and skills and it also stimulated a lot of discussion. Good quality resources, including interactive whiteboards, are used well to help to motivate pupils. Teachers strongly encourage their pupils in lessons and by marking their work regularly. The praise motivates pupils to try hard. Teachers mostly use assessment well to plan the next steps, but sometimes the marking and targets are not precise enough. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively in partnership to ensure that all pupils who need extra help receive good support. Teaching assistants are well-briefed and make a very positive contribution to learning.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The very well planned and enriched curriculum inspires and challenges pupils. The emphasis on creativity supports the development of basic skills and the provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT) is good, though with some variation in quality between the classes. Very good use of resources helps to create learning opportunities that are well matched to their needs and interests. For example, at the time of the inspection, the multicultural week gave pupils the opportunity to learn Polish dances, Russian music and the number system of Kenya. High quality displays in and around the classrooms show the range of pupils' work. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide variety of visitors as well as visits to places of local interest. Pupils enjoy the extra curricular activities such as netball, cricket, gardening and board games as well as the opportunity to take part in school productions such as *The Wizard of Oz*.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Staff strive to ensure that all pupils are safe, happy and progress well. They know their pupils very well and relationships are good. Arrangements to safeguard pupils are well established and rigorous. The school ensures that pupils understand how to stay safe and healthy. Pupils benefit from the school's good links with other agencies, including neighbouring schools. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored and as a result teaching is well informed. The use of assessment to monitor progress and set targets is much improved and clear targets enable most pupils to understand how to do better. This is not, however, consistent enough across all classes and so some opportunities to help pupils to improve are missed. The school is making substantial efforts to improve attendance.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher and senior management team have formed a strong working partnership that provides the drive and vision to create a school at the heart of the community. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses and have identified appropriate priorities for improvement. Several developments have not been in place long. For example, rigorously analysing data and using it to track pupils' progress and identify any underachievement, is relatively new. There are already signs that this is having a positive impact on pupils' progress, but its full impact is not yet evident. Inclusion is central to the values that the school promotes and staff make sure that all pupils have access to the range of activities offered by the school. Resources are carefully planned for, and well used, to ensure that the school gets value for money. Links with external agencies and the local community are good and these are used effectively to develop pupils' understanding of their role within the school and the wider community. Parents are strongly supportive of the school and the school enjoys a good reputation in the local community. Governors also have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they provide a good balance of support and challenge to the headteacher.

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## Annex A

## 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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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	2
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

05 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Abbotsbury Primary School, Morden, SM4 5JS

You may remember that a team of inspectors came to visit your school recently. We very much enjoyed our time with you and I am writing to thank you for your help. We were pleased to be able to talk to so many of you and we agree that you go to a good school. You are right to be proud of it. These are some of the best things about the school:

- you make good progress because you are well taught and given interesting work which helps you to want to learn
- the youngest children get a good start in Nursery and Reception
- you behave well and get on well with each other
- you know how to stay safe and that being healthy is important; several of you told us that the school lunches are good and lots of you were eating fruit
- you have lots of interesting visitors and clubs and other activities; we really enjoyed the Samba Band and the other activities in the multicultural week
- the adults are good at looking after for you and you know there are people to turn to if you need help.

Even a good school could be better, and your headteacher and teachers know that you could be making even faster progress and reaching higher standards. We agree with them that they need to carry on working to make sure that:

- you improve your writing skills, particularly in Years 1 and 2
- the way your work is marked and the targets you are set, help you to know how to do better, and help teachers plan the next steps in your learning.

You can do your part by making sure that you take notice of the advice your teachers give you.

Keep up the good work,

Yours sincerely

Grace Marriott

Lead Inspector