

# The Abbey Primary School

Winchester Avenue, Northampton NN4 8AZ

**Inspection dates** 12–13 March 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The school is led and managed well. The headteacher provides strong leadership. She knows the school well and has a clear vision for its future development.
- Leaders, managers and governors are effective in making sure that teaching and pupils' achievement are improving.
- Governors have a good understanding of pupils' performance and the quality of teaching. They are skilful in holding leaders to account for pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent and their attendance is improving. They are polite and keen to help others. They enjoy being able to contribute to all aspects of the school's life.
- Pupils are kept exceptionally safe in school. Both pupils and their parents appreciate the care the school provides to ensure their well-being.
- Teaching is good and improving. Teachers provide helpful written feedback that supports pupils' learning and enables them to make good progress over time.
- Pupils across the school achieve well, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. They develop the skills they need to succeed in their learning.
- Children achieve well in Reception because adults use the setting well to stimulate children's curiosity and develop their personal skills.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some new subject leaders do not yet have the skills to improve teaching to secure pupils' even better progress.
- Teachers do not always make learning activities challenging for all ability groups, particularly the most able pupils.
- Pupils are not prepared as well for the next step in their education, or later life, in mathematics as they are in reading and writing.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a wide range of lessons and activities led by teachers and teaching assistants. Some observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors observed assemblies, lunchtimes and playtimes, and pupils arriving at and leaving school.
- Discussions were held with pupils, parents, teaching and other staff, school leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books, listened to pupils read and talked to them in every class about their work.
- The inspectors took account of the 55 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and the 28 responses to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors also obtained the views of a number of parents bringing their children to school.
- The inspectors observed the school at work and considered a range of documentation. This included school and other data on pupils' progress and attainment, school improvement planning and the school's work to judge its own performance. In addition, the inspectors looked at minutes of governing body meetings and documentation relating to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

St.John Burkett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jenny Digges

Additional Inspector

Darren Aisthorpe

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Abbey Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of the pupils are White British. However, at least 13 minority ethnic groups are represented and an above-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- A much higher than average proportion of pupils join or leave partway through their primary school education.
- Children start school full-time in the Reception classes.
- An average proportion of pupils are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium. This is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or in care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- A new early years leader was appointed in September 2014.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by training new subject leaders so that they quickly develop the skills they need to drive improvements in teaching and achievement.
- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring that teachers:
  - provide learning activities that challenge all groups of pupils appropriately, particularly the most able
  - give pupils more opportunities to apply their mathematical problem-solving skills in a wide range of situations and subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides a clear direction for the development of the school. She is ably supported by the assistant headteacher and governing body. Together they ensure the school is at the heart of its local community. Parents value highly all that the school does. Senior leaders have created a culture in which good teaching and good behaviour flourish.
- Leaders know pupils very well. This enables them to tailor the support they provide, especially where pupils are having trouble with their learning. Leaders' excellent understanding of the difficulties faced by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs ensures that pupils receive the support they need to learn well.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is accurate and based on an excellent understanding of what is going well and what still needs to be done. This ensures that their plans are effective in making the school better. For example, they were aware pupils' achievement in mathematics fell in 2014, and responded by making improvements to teaching and the curriculum. These changes are giving pupils the opportunity to apply their improving calculation skills and as a result standards are rising.
- The school's leaders, including the governors, analyse carefully how pupil premium funding is spent to best serve those pupils who receive additional support. This includes providing additional clubs, materials and emotional support where it is necessary. As a result, disadvantaged pupils achieve at least as well as their peers and in some instances outperform them.
- The curriculum gives pupils interesting topics to study and develops their skills well. They have a wide range of opportunities to write at length in different subjects. The school's values and pupils' well-being are promoted as part of everyday lessons. This helps pupils to work closely together and learn from each other, as well as their teacher. Consequently their attitudes to learning are excellent and they learn well. Until recently, pupils have not had such good opportunities to apply their mathematical skills across a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through, for example, art, music and a commitment to mutual respect and tolerance. They have valuable opportunities to learn about various cultures and religions and to explore the deeper meaning of life, including through well-planned opportunities in lessons. As a result, pupils have a stronger sense of identity and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Staff promote equality well across the diverse range of pupils. Good relationships between staff and pupils help to ensure that the school is calm and welcoming. It does not tolerate any form of discrimination.
- The school uses the primary sports funding well to enhance the pupils' opportunities for physical activity and sport. Specialist sports coaches are used to enhance the skills of teachers and to broaden the range of sporting activities available. The school checks to ensure the numbers of pupils participating in physical activity are increasing. As a result, pupils gain in health and physical well-being.
- Recent support from the local authority has helped the school to improve the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics. Regular visits from an improvement adviser provide an objective evaluation of the school's performance and enable it to identify any weaknesses and deal with them.
- Although subject leaders check the progress of individuals and groups, some are new to the role and do not yet have the skills to lead improvements in teaching and learning effectively.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors know the school well because they spend time getting to know how it works and are given excellent information about how well it is doing and the quality of teaching. They also understand the data on the school's performance in relation to other schools nationally and use this information to challenge and support the school well.

- Governors know exactly what the impact of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is having on their achievement because they receive regular updates to confirm how well these pupils are doing.
- Governors are fully involved in checking how well teachers are performing and in setting them targets to improve further. They know how good teaching is, and ensure that only effective teaching is rewarded. They know what is done to tackle any weaknesses in staff performance.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They get on well together, are keen to work hard and listen attentively. They attempt new tasks with enthusiasm and confidence and this has a very positive influence on the good learning and achievement seen in classrooms during the inspection.
- Pupils are extremely polite and courteous around the school, particularly to adults. They are proud of their school and like being a part of this positive learning community. They understand why it is important to be at school regularly, and attendance is rising.
- Pupils speak enthusiastically about the many clubs, activities and sports they participate in. Art and craft, badminton and gymnastics are all popular. These activities help pupils to socialise and develop wider interests. When asked how they could make their school even better, most pupils said it was already as good as it could be.
- Parents and pupils agree that behaviour is outstanding. Partly as a consequence of their good behaviour, manners and smart uniform, the school has an excellent reputation in the local community.
- Pupils who have joined the school during the year or in different year groups all commented on how good behaviour is, how quickly they made new friends and how safe they feel.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. From the time children start in the Reception class, they quickly learn that they are part of a safe, secure and happy environment. Training in all aspects of safeguarding for staff and governors ensures that all pupils are safe and well cared for. The staff use very effective systems to identify and support vulnerable pupils, and often their families too.
- Pupils are very well informed about the dangers they might face and what they can do to stay safe. They are knowledgeable about e-safety and understand the potential dangers of using the internet. They are aware of what constitutes negative or discriminatory language and are adamant this does not happen in the school.
- The school's curriculum contributes exceptionally well to the guidance and support of pupils. The content of assemblies and lessons shows that staff and pupils alike think carefully about pupils' well-being, and this helps them to feel safe and secure in school.
- Pupils say they are safe in the school all the time and that they cannot recall any instances of bullying of any kind. Pupils are very clear about the steps they should take if they have any concerns, and are aware there are supportive adults they can turn to at any time. Playtimes and lunchtimes are harmonious occasions when pupils play happily together.
- Record keeping relating to safety is efficient and meticulous. Staff carry out any necessary follow-up with parents about safety concerns swiftly and effectively.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- The work in books, pupils' confidence in developing skills in reading, writing and mathematics, and other evidence collected during the inspection show that teaching and learning are consistently good.
- Teachers explain the purpose of learning well and share with pupils how they will, together, evaluate how successfully pupils have gained the knowledge and understanding intended by the end of the lesson. Teachers keep pupils on track, pick up and clarify misunderstandings and ensure that good progress is maintained.
- Classroom displays are used extremely well to help pupils' learning and to provide examples of what excellent work looks like, showing pupils what is expected. Every classroom is well organised so that pupils are able to learn confidently.
- The relationships between adults and pupils are warm and respectful. This means that pupils are keen to work hard and do their best.
- Teachers and leaders have worked together to agree an approach to marking pupils' books. This has improved the helpfulness of teachers' comments and increased the progress pupils are making. Inspectors looked at many books and found that all showed pupils had made good progress from the guidance provided.
- The teaching of phonics (sounds and corresponding letters) has improved and is particularly good because teachers are carefully trained to consistently teach the linking of letters and the sounds they make. Along with the range of interesting books readily available, pupils' good phonic knowledge ensures that they become confident, enthusiastic readers. Competence in reading also helps pupils to develop confidence and accuracy in their spellings when they are writing.
- Teaching assistants are well informed about the needs of the pupils they are supporting. Along with other adults, they care a great deal about the pupils and listen readily to their views or worries.
- Any pupils who are making less progress than might be expected are identified quickly. The school then quickly provides a range of support, and carefully matches this to individual pupils' circumstances.
- In order to challenge each pupil to learn as much as they can, the school expects all teachers to plan their lessons in a similar way. However, sometime teachers plan occasional lessons differently, and in these cases the most able pupils are asked to carry out tasks they can already do before they are given more challenging work.
- In 2014, some pupils did not achieve well enough, particularly in mathematics. This was because teachers did not give them enough opportunities to practise their mathematical skills in different subjects. Since then teachers have changed and improved the way they teach mathematics and as a result standards are rising across the school, although achievement in mathematics is not yet as good as in reading and writing.

**The achievement of pupils is good**

- Pupils in all ability groups and from all backgrounds are achieving well. Inspectors visited every class and spoke to pupils and looked at a range of books in each. This year, in reading, writing and mathematics, pupils are reaching increasingly high standards of attainment.
- In 2014, attainment and progress by the end of Year 6 were average. Since then the school has changed the curriculum and improved the quality of teaching so that all pupils currently in the school are making good progress.
- Progress has improved across Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Although it is not yet

equally rapid in all classes, the school's current assessments show that pupils in Year 6 are on track to achieve higher levels than previous year groups in the 2015 national tests, including in mathematics.

- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 was broadly average in 2014. The school's information, supported by the work in pupils' books, indicates that the current Year 2 pupils are making faster progress and reaching higher standards.
- After a dip in the results of the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2014, the school has improved the way that sounds and letters (phonics) are taught. The school's assessment information shows that attainment is much higher this year. Pupils enjoy reading, are confident and make good use of their phonic skills to read unfamiliar words.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. In 2014, the Year 6 pupils supported by the pupil premium closed the gap in attainment with their classmates completely, and reached similar standards to other pupils nationally in mathematics, reading and writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is because their specific needs are identified and teachers and teaching assistants provide the right level of support in lessons that enables them to develop their skills and progress well.
- Pupils who are learning English as an additional language and those from the many minority ethnic groups at the school achieve as well as their classmates.
- Pupils joining the school partway through the year soon settle into the welcoming, community environment and quickly start to catch up with their classmates, making at least good and often rapid progress.
- The most able pupils make good progress in all classes. Teachers usually explain clearly what they need to do to achieve well. However, in some lessons they are not asked to learn as much as they could because they are first asked to complete the same task as all other pupils in the class before they work on more challenging activities.

### The early years provision

is good

- The school's data show that most children enter Reception working at levels below those typical for their age. They achieve well and make good progress, especially in developing their social skills and ability to speak well. Children's attainment is above average by the end of the year and they are well prepared to join Year 1.
- The new early years leader has high expectations and has raised standards in the Reception classes, so that the quality of teaching and achievement are improving. She makes sure that staff are very knowledgeable about individual children and the early years curriculum.
- Good teaching ensures that children learn in an environment that is rich in resources, both indoors and out. Consequently the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is above average, and is predicted to be even higher in 2015.
- Children's behaviour is outstanding; they listen well to adults and actively enjoy answering questions to show their understanding. The staff have a strong focus on ensuring the children are safe and learn well.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they are supported effectively. Members of staff make sure that tasks are adapted so that they are able to take part in all the activities.
- Children develop their social skills well. Most are confident in choosing their own learning activity when appropriate, and they move calmly and sensibly around the room without interrupting others in their learning or discussions with adults. They use the wide variety of equipment made available to them safely

in the classroom and outside.



## What inspection judgements mean

School	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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	121916
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	456002

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	357
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Karen Popely
<b>Headteacher</b>	Renuka Popat
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 July 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 660100
<b>Fax number</b>	Not applicable
<b>Email address</b>	bursar@abbey-pri.northants-ecl.gov.uk

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