

Abbeys Primary School

Melrose Avenue, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK3 6PS

Inspection dates

29–30 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leadership is effective. Leaders have guided the school well through a period of staffing turbulence. Their actions to improve provision have been effective. Morale is high and standards are rising.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Additional funding for these pupils is used effectively to ensure that they are supported well and thrive.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are vulnerable are supported to a high standard. Their emotional well-being needs are cared for particularly well by the school's support team.
- Pupils model the school's values to a high standard. Everyone is included and valued. A range of effective strategies enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to ensure that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- A wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities enrich pupils' learning. Pupils value these opportunities highly and participate enthusiastically.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers use their subject knowledge to structure learning well and help pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They enjoy learning, listen attentively in class and are keen to participate in lessons. Pupils get along well with each other, working and playing together happily.
- The early years setting is good. Children make rapid progress from their typically low starting points and are ready to achieve well when they start Year 1.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities and experiences. However, these are not always sequenced effectively to build on pupils' skills and knowledge.
- The most able pupils are not yet achieving well enough. Sometimes teaching lacks challenge for these pupils. Leaders, including governors, do not monitor the progress of this group of pupils closely enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise levels of attainment, particularly for the most able pupils, by:
 - ensuring that teaching provides sufficient challenge
 - further developing systems for analysing pupils' outcomes to help inform teachers and leaders.
- Expand sequences of learning across the wider curriculum so that pupils systematically build their knowledge and subject skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, with effective support from the deputy headteacher, leads the school well. They have ensured that the school remains unified and focused on improvement despite a considerable and wide-ranging period of staffing turbulence. As a result of this effective leadership, the school is a purposeful, good-humoured and harmonious environment in which pupils thrive.
- Leaders have ensured that the school's values help pupils become effective learners and good citizens. British values are woven carefully through this work, which encompasses, for example, a range of assemblies and additional community links. Consequently, pupils are inclusive and respectful of one another's differences and are supported well to be ready for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders provide staff with high-quality professional development. For instance, training in the teaching of phonics has contributed to effective teaching that is well matched to pupils' needs. The induction of new teachers is thorough and detailed. As a result, staff demonstrate a clear commitment to improving their practice. Morale is high, and standards of teaching and learning are rising.
- Leaders show determination to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve successfully. They evaluate carefully individual pupils' needs and use the pupil premium grant well to provide a range of extra help to improve outcomes. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in a range of subjects because of the appropriately tailored support they receive.
- Leadership for pupils with SEND is effective. Learning for this group of pupils is meticulously planned and informs the skilled support provided by well-trained teaching assistants. The special educational needs coordinator ensures that these pupils receive the right support so that they make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders' work in developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is strong. Pupils are respectful and tolerant and demonstrate a keenness to be supportive and kind to each other. The firm emphasis that leaders place on promoting the school's values, alongside the rich opportunities to learn about different cultures and religions, ensures that pupils develop broad, positive outlooks.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Curriculum leaders have ensured that learning engages pupils and sparks their interest. Leaders enrich learning successfully, for instance by providing a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and educational visits. Nevertheless, further work is needed to connect sequences of learning so that pupils' skills and knowledge are built on systematically. Some successful models of this, in subjects such as science, are already in place.
- Leaders track the progress of pupils carefully to ensure that they are making progress. They use this information well to target interventions for disadvantaged pupils and those who need to catch up. However, for some other groups of pupils, often the most able pupils, more analysis is needed so that leaders can be sure that these pupils are making sufficiently rapid progress from their starting points.

Governance of the school

- Governors have ensured that between them they have a wide range of skills to help them fulfil their responsibilities. They have wisely strengthened this further by recent recruitment. Governors visit the school regularly in a range of roles. They use these visits alongside detailed reports from the headteacher to understand what the school does well and what needs to further improve.
- Governors oversee the school's financial management well. For instance, they know that the additional money the school receives for the pupil premium has a positive impact on improving outcomes for pupils. This scrutiny ensures that governors fulfil their financial obligations appropriately.
- Governors have high aspirations for disadvantaged pupils. They track this group of pupils carefully and have a good understanding of the range of challenges this group faces. Rightly, governors are sharpening their analysis further to understand better the progress made by most-able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, throughout the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have created a strong safeguarding culture that permeates all levels of school life. When recruiting new staff, all appropriate background checks are made. This information is logged accurately on the school's single central record. Staff are inducted thoroughly and well trained in the signs to look out for to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Systems and procedures are well known, regularly updated and compliant with up-to-date guidance.
- Leaders work with a range of agencies to ensure that families get the support they need to help keep pupils safe. Reviews are regular and referrals are timely. Associated information such as pupil attendance is carefully monitored and regularly reviewed.
- Almost all of the parents and carers and all staff who completed the Ofsted surveys or spoke to inspectors felt that pupils are safe at school. Pupils feel safe. The curriculum ensures that they learn how to keep themselves safe, including when learning and playing online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good throughout the school. Current pupils learn well across a range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which has been further developed effectively through training in key improvement areas such as writing and phonics. They use this knowledge well to structure learning appropriately in these areas. As a result, teaching helps pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding successfully.
- The teaching of phonics is well matched to pupils' needs. For instance, in one small group, the teacher asked pupils to find sounds hidden around the room. The pupils were

excited and engaged by this task, which supported their learning needs well. In another group, an adult worked with an activity which required more recording, writing groups of words containing the 'ear' pattern. This too was well matched to the pupils' needs.

- The teaching of mathematics provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities to develop their numerical skills. Teaching also ensures that pupils have regular opportunities to apply these in practical contexts and through problem solving. For instance, during the inspection pupils were using bus timetables to develop their understanding of time and solve increasingly complex time-related challenges.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' writing. Pupils have learned a range of grammatical conventions, mostly remembering to punctuate their work accurately and present their writing carefully.
- High-quality support is provided by teaching assistants. Teaching assistants have strong subject knowledge and are trained well to support pupils to make rapid progress. Skilfully, the one-to-one support they provide is balanced appropriately, with a focus on including pupils in class activity wherever possible. Consequently, the pupils they support thrive alongside their classmates.
- Teaching is adapted well for pupils with SEND. Careful planning and preparations ensure that these pupils receive learning support that is appropriate to their needs and level of ability. As a result, pupils with SEND are making good progress from their starting points.
- The teaching of reading is currently being reviewed. Where teaching is at its strongest, pupils have regular opportunities to read from a range of texts which develop their vocabulary and awareness of a range of genres well. Where teaching is less focused pupils, particularly the most able, do not develop this range of skills as effectively.
- Occasionally, teaching is not well matched to pupils' needs. Learning is sometimes too easy for the most able pupils, when questions and activities do not challenge pupils sufficiently or engage their interest. Consequently, pupils' progress slows.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is a happy and harmonious environment because pupils are polite, respectful and friendly to each other. They take pride in their school and embody its values through their behaviour in and around the school.
- Opportunities to take part in the wider life of the school through, for example, the play leader programme are valued highly by pupils. These opportunities are open to all, reflecting the inclusive nature of the school.
- Effective teaching prompts better opportunities for pupils to learn independently. For instance, a pupil proudly told inspectors how he had used this support to help with his sentences and spelling while writing.
- Pupils state confidently that they feel safe at school. They receive a well-planned programme of additional personal development learning that, for example, deepens

their understanding of bullying and how to keep safe. Despite a few concerns raised by a small number of parents, inspectors could find no evidence of bullying in school. School leaders investigate thoroughly any concerns received, taking appropriate and timely actions to resolve any issues.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils upholding the school's behaviour policy fairly and appropriately to support the wide-ranging needs of pupils. Pupils respond well to this and model good behaviour, both in class and at play.
- Pupils enjoy learning. They listen attentively to their teachers and to their peers. They are keen to share their thoughts and ideas together in lessons. They work well both individually and in pairs and groups.
- The few pupils who have additional behaviour needs are supported skilfully and kindly by the staff team. This is then modelled by other pupils, who are tolerant and inclusive of everyone. As a result, there is a sense of belonging and unity that supports enjoyment and learning well across the school. For instance, during assembly the whole school enjoyed dancing and singing together in an exuberant but well-managed celebration.
- Pupils attend school regularly. The attendance officer works diligently to help families to understand the importance of regular school attendance and to support them in this appropriately. Effective strategies are in place that encourage pupils not to miss school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Effective leadership and teaching have led to a rise in the outcomes pupils achieve. Current pupils are attaining well in a range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children make rapid progress in the early years. Many children join the setting with low starting points. However, effective teaching ensures that most catch up quickly. The majority of children, including those who are disadvantaged, reach a good level of development.
- Following a dip in attainment in the 2018 national assessment outcomes in key stage 1, effective teaching has ensured that most current pupils are making good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have successfully raised standards in writing across the school. Most pupils make good progress from their starting points. They write accurately for a wide range of purposes, taking care with their punctuation and sentence construction. Where writing is particularly well developed, for instance in Year 5/6, pupils' writing is enhanced well across the wider curriculum.
- Current pupils in Year 1 are making good progress in developing their phonetic awareness. This is because effective training has ensured that all adults are teaching phonics systematically. Teachers match the learning well to pupils' needs.

- Across the school, most pupils are currently making good progress in mathematics. Work in books demonstrates that pupils work hard and show determination to complete tasks carefully and accurately.
- Some aspects of the wider curriculum, for example science, have been carefully structured to ensure that pupils build well on their skills and knowledge. However, in other aspects, while pupils are provided with exciting and engaging activity, refinement of planning is needed to structure learning more effectively and improve outcomes.
- The most able pupils are not yet achieving as well as they should. Monitoring of these pupils' progress is not yet sufficiently detailed to support teachers in providing them with sufficient challenge.

Early years provision

Good

- Children, including those who are disadvantaged, flourish in the Reception Year. Activities provide a good range of opportunities for children to explore and learn across the early years curriculum. Staff manage children's learning well and help them develop the necessary skills to be ready for the next stage in their education.
- The early years leader provides effective leadership. She supports staff in making accurate assessments of children's abilities. This information is used to devise activities that engage children and develop children's emerging skills well. As a result, children, including those who need to catch up from lower starting points, make strong progress.
- Staff are skilled at supporting children's learning. When appropriate, adults participate in play, deepening children's knowledge and understanding with effective questioning or providing resources that extend thinking. For example, during the inspection, a group of children had used bricks to build a tower. The adult provided them with tape measures to see how high it was. In this way, their learning was developed in a meaningful context.
- At other times, staff stand back appropriately and ensure that children learn independently, for example by playing together in the role-play area or reading a favourite book. This careful balance nurtures successfully children's curiosity and growing independence.
- Children's emerging writing skills are developed effectively. A suitable range of activities encourage children's communication skills and provide opportunities to practise mark-making and writing. For instance, during the inspection, children were enjoying making notes in spiral-bound notebooks. Staff were on hand to provide extra guidance, for example in helping children write their names and form letters. The environment contains a wide range of learning prompts to support children further.
- Parents appreciate the way in which the careful transition into school supports their children through an effective exchange of information between school and home. Leaders aspire to develop this effective partnership more fully throughout children's learning journeys.

School details

Unique reference number	110401
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10084362

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	282
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Preston
Headteacher	Sophie Good
Telephone number	01908 375230
Website	www.abbeyprimary.org
Email address	office@abbeyprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	4– 5 March 2015

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of disadvantaged pupils are slightly above average.
- The school has pupils from 12 out of 17 ethnic groups. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- A higher proportion of pupils than the national average have special educational needs support, although fewer pupils than average have an education, health and care plan.
- There have been some changes to the leadership team and teaching staff since the school's previous inspection.
- The school is part of the Bletchley Partnership of Schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors, sometimes accompanied by the headteacher, visited lessons across the school. Pupils were observed around the school, including during play and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons and checked pupils' books with subject leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, governors and senior leaders. An inspector also met with a group of staff, including the newly qualified teachers.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke formally to two groups of pupils and heard them read, and spoke informally to other pupils during lessons and on a tour of the school. Pupils' views were also considered through 14 completed pupil surveys.
- A wide range of documentation was considered, including the school self-evaluation, the development plan, governors' minutes, reports from the headteacher, information on pupils' progress and attainment, and records of behaviour and attendance. The inspectors scrutinised records concerning safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views through the 23 responses to Parent View, including 14 free-text responses, as well as informal discussions. Staff views were also considered through the 28 completed staff surveys.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ross Macdonald	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Burrell	Ofsted Inspector

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