

Abbots Green Community Primary School

Airfield Road, Bury St Edmunds, IP32 7PJ

Inspection dates 4–5 December 2012

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 get a good start to school life in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Almost all pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school.
- Teaching is consistently good in all year groups, and occasionally outstanding. Teachers ask searching questions to check pupils' understanding, maintain their interest and make them think hard.
- The subjects that pupils learn are planned around projects that are exciting, practical and enjoyable.
- Pupils behave well, feel safe and know all about how to keep themselves safe in different situations.
- The changes made by the headteacher and senior staff to the way different subjects are taught have helped pupils to make increasingly good progress.
- The headteacher and governing body have made a lot of well-considered staff appointments over recent years to make sure that all teaching is at least good.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils is a strength of the school and underpins everything it does.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a few lessons, teachers do not always set work at the right level of difficulty, so pupils do not always make as much progress as they could.
- Marking in literacy books shows pupils clearly how to move on in their work, but it is not as good in other subjects such as mathematics.
- Most of the new subject leaders have not yet had the opportunity to develop the skills they need to help the school raise standards.
- Although individual pupils' progress is carefully tracked, it is not checked often enough to quickly identify the pupils who need extra help and guidance.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 27 lessons or parts of lessons. Four of these observations were carried out together with the headteacher and assistant headteacher.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils, four governors, school staff including senior and subject leaders, and a representative of the local authority. Informal discussions were held with parents.
- The inspectors took account of the 41 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), individual communications from parents and 24 staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at: information from the school's checks on its performance; school improvement plans; analysis and tracking of pupils' progress; leaders' records of classroom observations; safeguarding arrangements; and minutes of governing body meetings. They also sampled pupils' work, listened to pupils read and checked information on pupils' attendance.

Inspection team

Susan Hughes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Debra McCarthy

Additional Inspector

Ken Parry

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This average-sized primary school caters for children from nursery age up to Year 4.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding to help particular pupils who need it) is below average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and of those who speak English as an additional language are both lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through school action is below average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs. This specialist support centre is for pupils who have complex educational needs. Eight of its 12 places were filled at the time of the inspection.
- The headteacher has been in post for three years and the assistant headteacher for a year, but most middle leaders (subject and key stage leaders) took up their posts in September 2012.
- The school has been awarded the Eco silver award, Bury in Bloom Young Green Fingers award, Outstanding Achievement award and the 'Suffolk Creating the Greenest County' award for the schools' Farmers Market, which includes food produced in the school gardens.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by making sure that:
 - work is always matched closely to pupils' abilities in all lessons
 - all marking in books shows pupils clearly how to improve their work, and they are routinely given opportunities to respond to it.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - pupils' progress is tracked in smaller steps and checked more frequently, so that any pupils in danger of falling behind in their work are quickly identified and given suitable help and guidance
 - all subject and key stage leaders develop their skills in checking progress data and making judgements about teaching and learning, so they can fully support the senior staff in raising standards.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. While some children start school with the skills expected for their age, others have less well-developed skills, especially in reading and writing. Whatever their starting point, all pupils make good progress.
- Pupils make good progress throughout the school. This is evident in the school's own tracking information and the work seen in pupils' books during the inspection. Year 4 pupils left in 2012 with standards above the average for the local authority.
- Pupils in Year 1 last year started school with literacy skills below those expected for their age. The results of the national screening check on phonics (the sounds letters make) for Year 1 were slightly below the national average. Good progress since then means that most of those pupils' reading skills are at or above typical levels for their age.
- Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least expected progress and many make good progress. Pupils in the well-run specialist support centre make good progress because of well-planned support and activities that are closely matched to their individual needs.
- Pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding make good progress. This is because most of the money has been spent on extra adults for individual or small-group teaching for these pupils. Their progress is checked regularly to make sure that the support is working well in improving their achievement.

The quality of teaching is good

- The enthusiasm of the teachers motivates pupils in their learning. Lessons are well paced and lively, and pupils have plenty of exciting, first-hand experiences. For example, Year 3 pupils were learning about owls. By dissecting owl pellets, they discovered what sort of food owls eat.
- Well-planned lessons ensure that most activities are set at the right level of difficulty for all ability groups. Occasionally, however, some pupils are given tasks that, despite them being supported by an adult, are too complex for them, while more-able pupils sometimes start with the same work as everyone else and only get harder work later in the lesson.
- The use of additional adults in the classroom means that all pupils have opportunities to work in small groups with adult guidance. All adults are well-briefed and have the same good questioning skills as the class teachers. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported, both by additional adults and well-planned activities that are carefully adapted to match their specific needs.
- Pupils are able to talk about how they can improve their learning, especially in literacy. Clear targets and teachers' comments in books help them understand the next steps they need to take. However, in some subjects, the comments relate more to correcting work already completed rather than how to make progress. In some classes, pupils are given adequate time to respond to teachers' comments, but this is not consistent across the school.
- The teaching of phonics is good. The sessions observed had a good pace so that all pupils were fully involved all the time and made rapid progress. For example, Year 2 pupils were able to read

words such as 'appointment' and were able to identify and explain punctuation such as the use of an apostrophe in a piece of writing used in the lesson.

- In all lessons, teachers insist on high standards of work and behaviour. They explain to pupils how they can work collaboratively while making sure everyone plays their part. They also promote independence well. For example, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are expected to take responsibility for getting out and clearing away equipment, while pupils in the specialist support centre are encouraged to pour their own drinks.
- Homework is set and marked regularly. Pupils say that it is always linked to their class work and they feel that they receive the right amount. They feel that the level of difficulty is about right and that it is fair. The majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire feel that their children receive appropriate homework for their age.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Pupils show respect and consideration for each other and for adults. For example, when the teacher congratulated one boy for good work, pupils spontaneously joined in and one patted him on the back.
- Pupils are very clear about what bullying is. They can talk about physical, emotional, verbal and cyber bullying, and most pupils spoken to said it rarely happens in the school. They were very clear that any trouble is sorted out quickly by the teachers.
- Pupils understand what constitutes safe and unsafe situations. They know how to stay safe on the playground, on the roads and when using the internet. The Junior Road Safety officers take their role very seriously and check for unsafe activities around the school entrance. Pupils also talked about visits from the police and fire service, giving them more safety information.
- Pupils throughout the school are encouraged to take on a role of responsibility. All classes have a gardening responsibility and are involved in preparing goods for the popular farmers' markets, where Key Stage 2 pupils organise and run the stalls.
- 'Thought clouds' hang around the school, outlining pupils' responsibilities to each other. In the Key Stage 2 area, pupils are reminded that it is everyone's job to look out for each other and keep each other safe. Pupils talk about these clouds and understand the expectation that older pupils look after younger ones.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's drive and ambition for the school are evident in the impact her changes have had over the past few years. Exciting and interesting whole-school projects and good teaching have resulted in good progress for pupils.
- The senior leaders are very clear about what the school needs to do to improve even more. As the team of middle leaders is relatively inexperienced, some of them have not yet had the opportunity to develop a good understanding of how to analyse school data or make judgements about how teachers can move their teaching from good to outstanding.
- Projects such as the circus-based 'Roll up, Roll Up' and this term's 'Hubble Bubble' provide a

wide range of activities that develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and communication skills across all subjects. While pupils of all ages investigated liquids, solids and gases in relation to the current project, an earlier fashion-based project gave older pupils the opportunity to discuss such moral dilemmas as peer-group pressure on wearing certain clothes.

- The use of additional funding such as the pupil premium is carefully checked and reported to parents through the school web site, which itemises how the money has been spent. The school tracks the progress of eligible pupils carefully and reports this to the governing body.
 - The progress of all pupils is tracked thoroughly against National Curriculum levels of attainment. However, the steps that the tracking identifies are too large for the school to show what progress has been made over a short period of time. This means that any pupils in danger of underachieving may not be identified quickly enough.
 - Teachers' performance is checked against how much progress their pupils make, and how well they fulfil their different roles in the school. Targets for teachers are used to measure whether promotion up the pay scale is justified by the results achieved. Appropriate steps have been taken by the headteacher and governing body to ensure that all the teaching is good or better.
 - A strong sense of spirituality underpins all the school does. There are good links with local churches and pupils are given opportunities to learn about different religions and beliefs. They reflect on wider issues and explore them during theme days such as religious education day, when pupils pose and discuss questions such as 'How many gods are there?'
 - The school has worked hard to build good communication links with parents. In addition to weekly newsletters, parents are invited into school to share learning with their children. Many parents provide resources, and their own skills are used to support the projects and clubs.
 - The local authority has provided good support for the school during a period when there were many changes of staff. It has helped the school to improve teaching and learning, supported the senior leadership team and given advice for the specialist support centre.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body supports the school very well while challenging the headteacher and senior leaders, holding them firmly to account for its performance against other similar schools and improvement. Governors have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, and meeting minutes demonstrate that they ask searching questions while giving credit for the improvements made over recent years. The finance committee checks expenditure closely, including the spending and impact of the pupil premium. The governing body has a realistic plan for meeting challenging financial targets and prioritises spending well. Governors have a good understanding of how managing the performance of teachers affects standards in the school, and in turn teachers' pay. They visit the school regularly to check for themselves how well it is doing, and keep themselves suitably trained to make sure that safeguarding procedures, for example, meet current national requirements.
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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

Unique reference number	134362
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	402605

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	260
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie Smith
Headteacher	Heidi Franklin
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2010
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