

Abbotswood Junior School

Ringwood Road, Totton, Southampton, Hampshire SO40 8EB

Inspection dates

28–29 June 2017

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has nurtured a team of dedicated, highly skilled teachers and leaders who share an ambitious vision for pupils at the school. As a result, increasing numbers of pupils enter their secondary education well placed to succeed.
- There is a strong culture of professional development in the school. Staff feel valued and are highly skilled because of the effective coaching that they receive from leaders.
- Close, regular evaluation ensures that pupils at risk of falling behind are given the help that they need to improve quickly. Leaders, including governors, have made a significant difference to teaching and pupils' outcomes since the last inspection.
- Teachers use engaging topics, high-quality texts and intriguing 'hooks' to make learning enjoyable. Pupils' interest and success in learning is shared with parents at well-attended events throughout the year.
- Pupils are animated when talking about improvements in their work. They use their 'gap targets' purposefully to focus on the skills that they need to develop next.
- The majority of parents at the school feel that their children are happy, safe and well looked after. Parents of pupils with additional needs feel that leaders go 'above and beyond' to ensure that their children can learn confidently with their peers.
- Pupils behave well during lesson time and respond quickly to adult reminders during playtimes. They show pride in opportunities that they have to represent the school or make decisions on behalf of others.
- In the past, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have not made the progress they should, particularly in reading. While this is improving quickly, some of these pupils miss school too often, limiting their progress.
- Although the most able pupils attain well, opportunities to deepen and extend pupils' learning are not provided early enough in learning activities across the wider curriculum.
- Leaders of other curriculum subjects, such as science and religious education, are not yet impacting as strongly on pupils' attainment as those of English and mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen work with parents to reduce the number of disadvantaged pupils who miss school regularly so that their progress is not affected by low attendance.
- Ensure that teachers provide appropriate challenge for pupils at the earliest point in their learning across the wider range of curriculum subjects.
- Develop leadership monitoring and evaluation rigour across a broader range of curriculum subjects, drawing on the already-established high-quality practice in English and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher leads with clarity and purpose. An excellent culture of professional learning, grounded in improvements to teaching, has led to teachers transforming opportunities for pupils in the school. Since the last inspection, leaders have tackled successfully the areas identified as needing improvement, and have energised their young staff team to deliver quality learning for every pupil in the school. Parental comments such as, 'children learn a lot, love going to school and have positive attitudes' are most typical.
- Staff across the school share clear goals, systems and accountability for improvement. Leaders know their school well and can evidence sustained improvement and rising outcomes for pupils in each year group.
- New leaders and teachers in the school are exceptionally well supported by senior staff. Staff value and appreciate the many opportunities leaders provide for them to learn from more experienced colleagues. There is a robust system of monitoring and evaluation in English and mathematics which impacts strongly on teaching quality and outcomes. However, this is yet to be established fully across the wider curriculum.
- Leaders acted decisively after the last inspection to address shortcomings in the school's use of additional funding. All staff now champion the right of disadvantaged pupils to achieve as well as their peers nationally. Leaders ensure that provision is regularly checked, and changed promptly where it is not working as well as it should, so that differences in attainment diminish in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been strengthened under new leadership and additional funding is used effectively. Learning support assistants are astutely deployed and receive regular, high-quality training so that they can meet pupils' needs skilfully. Pupils show maturity in their support of their peers with additional needs because the school's culture positively promotes the inclusion of pupils with a range of abilities and needs.
- An exciting curriculum uses first-hand experiences and high-quality texts to inspire learning. There are growing numbers of extra-curricular activities, which develop pupils' talents and interests very well. Pupils say that they find it helpful to attend the homework and reading club, for example, where they receive help with work they are unable to complete at home. A few pupils and parents said that they would like to see more time allocated to subjects such as science. Work is already underway to respond to these views, including a partnership with the University of Southampton entitled 'thinking, talking, doing science'.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is supported through curriculum areas such as religious education and physical education. In addition, a well-planned assembly programme supports pupils to develop positive attitudes to setbacks, focusing instead on opportunities to 'climb the mountain', 'be positive' and 'practise and persevere'.
- Pupils' understanding of British values is developed through leadership roles such as 'ambassadors' and peer mentors. They contribute to decision-making purposefully

through their participation in the school council. Throughout the school, displays promote a range of role models for pupils to emulate from across a broad range of traditions and cultures.

- Leaders make adept use of the additional funding for physical education and sport. Sports teams demonstrate regular success in local and area competitive sports events. Pupils access high-quality coaching, beyond the scope of many primary schools, and are therefore very well prepared for sporting opportunities on transition to secondary education.

Governance of the school

- There is a skilled, committed governing body which is able to hold leaders to account effectively. New appointments and a commitment to regular training and self-review have been instrumental factors in moving governance forward. Governors know the key priorities for improvement and the difference that leaders' actions make. They check that information they receive from leaders is accurate through a cycle of their own visits, and they challenge leaders appropriately to improve further. Members of the governing body have the right skills to support leaders in developing the curriculum further, and their expertise is already being put to good use. One example is the way that they have forged links with the university to support investigative science.
- Governors fulfil their statutory duties effectively. They responded quickly to the review of additional funding, ensuring that the approaches used make the most difference to pupils. Staff at all levels are clear about how they are held to account. This is because systems to check and reward staff performance are well understood and implemented fairly. The school is a safe and welcoming place for pupils and staff to work and learn in because governors commit to equalities practices which protect pupils and staff from any form of discrimination.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong commitment to implementing very thorough safeguarding procedures to keep pupils safe. The designated safeguarding lead, supported by three other accredited senior staff, maintains a comprehensive overview of actions taken to reduce the risk of harm. Records are well maintained, organised chronologically and show clearly how and when the school has provided support, sought advice or worked with parents and external agencies on behalf of families and children.
- All staff and governors access thorough training so that they know and fully understand the school's procedures. Staff receive regular and detailed updates from the designated safeguarding leader about how to respond appropriately to a wide range of risks. Induction processes are especially well managed to ensure that new staff are fully briefed and confident about what they need to do if they are concerned about a child.
- Pupils know how to keep safe, on the roads and in the event of an emergency. They show detailed and confident knowledge of how to protect themselves when carrying out activities online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is impacting strongly on the progress that pupils are making. This is particularly true for disadvantaged pupils, whose progress is accelerating. Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are strengthening in their learning across a range of subjects.
- An exceptional staff coaching programme is in place throughout the school. Teachers who are new to the profession receive expert mentoring and professional development opportunities so that the quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school.
- Teachers have high expectations in all subjects but most notably in English, mathematics and physical education. Activities are planned with opportunities for challenge, such as 'no fear' mathematics. However, pupils, including the most able, sometimes complete work across the curriculum that is less challenging before they work at full stretch.
- Learning is carefully and precisely planned. Teachers use regular assessment to select the right activities, questions and resources to help pupils improve their skills. Teachers respond quickly to pupils when they are working, making appropriate arrangements to accommodate pupils' different needs, and building pupils' confidence to find solutions independently.
- The lowest achieving pupils receive systematic support to improve their basic skills. Pupils are particularly proud of their improving reading skills, for example. The most able pupils can compare authors' presentations of characters and themes confidently across texts. They are supported in their 'close reading' by texts which teachers have chosen carefully to promote the enjoyment of reading successfully to both boys and girls.
- Pupils told inspectors that they liked the 'written conversations' they had in their books with teachers, and said that these helped them to get better at their writing. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' books confirmed that these 'conversations' helped pupils to develop increasing accuracy, improve use of grammatical structures and grow stamina in writing. Pupils make good progress in writing as a result of teachers' strong subject knowledge and expertise. The school's new approach to literacy, focusing on developing pupils' reading, writing and grammar skills, is further enhancing pupils' progress across all three elements.
- In mathematics, pupils independently select appropriate resources and strategies to solve problems. Teachers provide carefully selected models and images to help pupils secure concepts such as place value. Pupils show they can 'prove it' and explain their thinking for a range of mathematical investigations. This is helping them to refine their approaches and work more efficiently.
- Skilled adults support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities very well, providing support which is precise and helps pupils make good progress. Adults keep careful records of the support pupils receive and check to make sure that pupils' skills are improving as a result.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils work cooperatively together during learning times and support each other to learn and play with positive attitudes.
- Pupils contribute actively to making the school a better place to learn. They know that it is important to make every minute count in their lesson time. This is because teachers' high expectations of them motivate their learning. Pupils know that 'practice makes perfect' and that they can overcome barriers in their learning through hard work and effort.
- When moving about the school, pupils demonstrate consideration of others. Pupils with additional physical needs are supported to move safely around the school site by their peers. During playtimes, pupils respond quickly to the support they receive from adults in the school to resolve small disagreements. However, some pupils find it difficult to use strategies such as discussion, listening to others' point of view and calming down to avoid conflict.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe from a range of hazards. They are astutely aware of risks posed online. They are able to give examples of how they can manage their feelings when they face setbacks or difficulties because the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum supports them well to do so.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils focus well, listen and persevere in their learning across the school. They tackle new challenges with resilience. Pupils share their learning with confidence, identifying for themselves the progress they are making in a number of subjects. In conversation with inspectors, they expressed pride in their school and appreciate the way that adults help them to behave well when learning.
- Leaders ensure that there is carefully sourced, sensitive support for pupils who have additional behaviour needs. Effective partnerships with external partners, including the Primary Behaviour Support Service, ensure the school lives up to its commitment of being a fully inclusive school. Incidents of poor behaviour are managed well overall, ensuring that the vast majority of pupils, parents and staff feel the school is a happy, safe place to learn.
- Across the wider range of subjects, pupils take great care with the quality of presentation of their work. They enjoy receiving their 'pen licence' when the standard of their handwriting is fluent and joined.
- Many pupils come to school regularly and on time, benefiting from the effective teaching, engaging curriculum and wider curricular opportunities that the school provides to help them make good progress. However, despite leaders' best efforts, too many vulnerable pupils miss school more often than they should.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' progress has risen rapidly in the last academic year. Leaders' actions ensured that in 2016 progress in writing was above the national average. Their continuing drive this academic year has ensured that pupils' progress towards the expected standards has accelerated in reading and mathematics also, so that it is closer to the progress made by other pupils nationally. The school's performance information, supported by evidence in pupils' work seen during the inspection, shows that outcomes are set to rise significantly for the current Year 6 cohort.
- Leaders took swift action following disappointing reading outcomes in 2016. Changes to the reading curriculum, including systematic reading alongside pupils, have ensured that pupils in Year 3, whose phonics skills were below average, now accurately pronounce unfamiliar words at an age-appropriate level and are able to confidently read from a variety of different texts. Regular 'close reading' sessions focused on high-quality texts have ensured that more pupils across all year groups, including those who are disadvantaged, are now working at or beyond the expected standard.
- All groups of pupils made strong progress in their writing in 2016. This continues across all year groups for all pupil groups. Writing across the school strengthens quickly from pupils' initial starting points because pupils receive precise information from their teachers about how to improve. There was clear evidence of ongoing improvement and increasing accuracy in samples of pupils' writing from across each year group. In some year groups, progress for disadvantaged pupils is now more rapid than for other pupils.
- In 2016, fewer middle-ability pupils made the progress they should in mathematics. This was in direct contrast to most-able pupils whose outcomes were above those found nationally. Leaders have used careful analysis of pupils' arithmetic skills to focus their work, providing wider opportunities for pupils of all abilities to gain fluency and reason mathematically using the four basic rules of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Pupils' current mathematics work shows that more pupils this year, in all year groups, are currently working within or towards the standards expected for their age.
- In 2016, the most able pupils secured the highest standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders continue to raise expectations for the most able pupils in the school, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. Current performance information shows improvement in all year groups for the proportion of pupils working at greater depth.
- From each starting point, pupils' current work in reading, writing and mathematics shows that disadvantaged pupils are making strong gains towards the expected standards for their age. Although there is continuing work to do to ensure that these pupils attain as well as other pupils nationally, carefully focused programmes of support are diminishing remaining differences at a quicker pace than in the past.
- Current pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, given their starting points. Interventions are planned precisely and led by skilled adults. Careful evaluation ensures that these successfully meet pupils' needs.

School details

Unique reference number	116482
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10024533

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	572
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bob Carson
Headteacher	Glenn Moore
Telephone number	02380 863159
Website	www.abbotswood.hants.sch.uk
Email address	admin.office@abbsch.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 January 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- About one quarter of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. This is close to the national average.
- A lower-than-average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Most pupils in the school are from a White British background. A much-lower-than-average proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. A similar proportion of pupils in the school speak English as an additional language.
- A quarter of the teaching staff are new to the profession or in school-centred initial teacher training. Core subject leaders and year leaders are new to post. The special

educational needs coordinator is newly appointed since the last inspection in January 2015.

- Reviews of governance and of leaders' use of the pupil premium grant have been completed since the last inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school does not meet the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups across the curriculum, mostly alongside a senior leader. Inspectors also undertook two focused learning walks with leaders to pursue enquiries about the progress of and provision for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school, during break and lunchtimes, assemblies and extra-curricular activities. They also scrutinised records of behaviour and bullying incidents, and looked at documentation relating to leaders' responses to parental concerns.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, assistant headteacher, year, phase and subject leaders. They also spoke to a group of newly qualified and trainee teachers in the school.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair. She also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the school's published information for 2015 and 2016 and the information on its website. They examined a wide range of school documents, including information relating to safeguarding, attendance, funding for disadvantaged pupils, the school improvement evaluation, and documentation relating to the work of the governing body. Inspectors reviewed pupil-level information and school assessment information. They scrutinised samples of pupils' books in English and mathematics, and examined samples of pupils' work in other subjects.
- Inspectors heard pupils read in Year 3 and Year 6, discussing their reading with them and the support they receive from staff.
- To gain their views of the school, inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons and at playtime, and met groups of pupils from all year groups outside of the classroom.
- In addition to speaking to parents at the start of each day, inspectors considered written comments from 196 parents, and 201 responses to the 'Parent View' questionnaire. Individual letters addressed to the lead inspector, and correspondence from external partners working with the school were also scrutinised. Inspectors also considered 61 staff responses to Ofsted's survey.

Inspection team

Abbie Wilkinson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Redman	Ofsted Inspector
Jo McSherrie	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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