

ABBOTSWOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL

'Helping **everyone** achieve their best'



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Headteacher: Mr G Moore

'It Really Does Matter'

28 January 2015

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you will be aware the school was inspected by Ofsted on the 8th and 9th January 2015 and we are writing to share with you the findings of the inspection team. The report will be published on the Ofsted website on Thursday 29th January; a copy is available on our school website and a paper copy accompanies this letter.

The Ofsted team were impressed with the following which are extracts from the Ofsted report:

- Pupils are extremely respectful and show courtesy towards others. They welcome the numerous changes that have been introduced over the last year and are keen to learn.
- Pupils enjoy being at the school and consistently display positive attitudes to learning which stand them in good stead for the next stage of their education. They are clearly keen to do well and take exceptional pride in their work.
- The school is a safe, pleasant and happy place for pupils. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They enjoy learning.
- The passion and commitment of the new Headteacher (since Sept 2013) is driving improvement in the school. The Headteacher leads the school with clarity of vision and a quiet but real determination that every pupil will succeed and be safe and happy at the school. He has high expectations of all staff and pupils.
- A robust approach to underperformance by leaders and governors means that the weakest teaching is tackled decisively and, as a result, pupils' progress is improving.
- The leadership is developing new ways of teaching through a broad range of subjects which engage pupils' interests as well as teaching them important skills.
- Marking and feedback given to pupils are effective. Pupils know what they have learned well and what to do next to improve.
- The quality of pupils' writing has improved markedly as a result of effective teaching.
- Pupils enjoy sport and are increasingly successful in a range of local competitions.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in order to raise standards, particularly in reading, and ensure that pupils in every class make at least good progress.
- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders have not yet made sure that all groups of pupils achieve as well as they should. However the Headteacher and new leaders are improving the quality of teaching, which is enabling pupils to make better progress.
- Improve the achievement of vulnerable pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils eligible for support from Pupil Premium (PP) funding and/or identified as having Special Educational Needs (SEN), to ensure they achieve well.

The way in which Ofsted inspect and grade schools, has changed multiple times over recent years, with standards becoming more rigorous each time. Changes to the Ofsted framework mean achievement can only be graded as 'Good' when most of the children are making progress that is greater than, rather than meeting national expectations. It should also be noted that some inspection judgments are inter-linked – meaning that if, for example, Achievement is judged to be 'Requires Improvement' then the Quality of Teaching cannot be 'Good'. This was particularly frustrating for us as the report does not reflect the improvements to the teaching in the past 15 months (which have been verified by Local Authority inspectors).

The new Ofsted framework clearly places a huge emphasis on data, attainment and progress, and although the school is improving, attainment levels are still below the national average. This has been the case for some years now and the school needs time to reverse this trend. Therefore, the historical attainment of children was a huge limiting factor during our Ofsted visit. The report, in fact, recognises that, 'although the school did not act quickly enough to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress after the last inspection (January 2013), pupils' progress is now improving.

Furthermore, it was recognised that 'leaders are passionate in securing their pupils' success.' The attainment and progress picture for the current year 6 cohort shows that, 'these pupils are making better progress throughout the school and gaps are closing'.

We were also pleased that the inspectors found evidence that 'information held by the school, scrutiny of pupils' books and observations of other work over time indicate pupils throughout the school are making faster progress than before and this is gradually eradicating a legacy of past underachievement. This improvement is recognised by pupils and their parents and carers.'

We would encourage you to read the full report which can be found on the school website. You will find many positives within the report. Rest assured, the staff and governing body are committed to ensuring the very best outcomes for all children at Abbotswood Junior School. The senior leaders have already begun work on a post-OFSTED action plan in order to continue to build on our strengths.

The governing body would like to thank everyone involved in the inspection for their contribution: the staff for their hard work and professionalism; the children who were a credit to the school in everything they did; and all the parents and carers who made their views clear through conversations with inspectors and/or the online Parent View survey.

Finally, when I started at Abbotswood in September 2013, I was very open and honest with the school community, stating that it would take 3 years in order for the school to be deemed 'Good' overall. In September 2013 the school was classified as a 'high priority' school by the local authority yet as a result of the improvements and our subsequent Ofsted, this is no longer the case. The school is improving, and I am confident that Abbotswood will be judged 'Good' at its next inspection.

If you wish to discuss any aspects of the report, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Mr Moore or Mrs Smith.

Thank you for your continued support,

Mr G Moore
Head Teacher

Mrs T Smith
Chair of Governors

Abbotswood Junior School

Ringwood Road, Totton, Southampton, SO40 8EB

Inspection dates 8–9 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- The school is not yet good because leaders, including governors, did not act quickly enough to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress after the last inspection.
- Checks on the quality of teaching have improved but are not fully effective. Some leaders do not yet have a secure grasp of standards in their areas of responsibility.
- Leaders do not check the progress of groups, especially that of the disadvantaged pupils, closely enough to ensure they achieve well.
- There has not been enough good or better teaching. Not all teachers have had high enough expectations of what pupils could achieve.
- More-able pupils are not always challenged and their learning fully extended.
- By the time pupils leave the school, their attainment is below national levels.
- Too few pupils make consistently good progress. Improvements in reading are not as rapid as in other subjects in the school.
- Gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others are not closing quickly enough.

The school has the following strengths:

- The passion and commitment of the new headteacher is driving improvement in the school.
- A robust approach to underperformance by leaders and governors means that the weakest teaching is tackled decisively and, as a result, pupils' progress is improving.
- Marking and feedback given to pupils are effective. Pupils know what they have learned well and what to do next to improve. Work is checked to see that pupils have responded to the advice given.
- Improvements in teaching mean pupils' progress in mathematics and writing is improving strongly.
- The school is a safe, pleasant and happy place for pupils. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They enjoy learning.
- Pupils' attendance has improved and is above the national average.
- Pupils enjoy sport and are increasingly successful in a range of local competitions.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes and visited 20 lessons, of which eight were seen jointly with members of the school’s leadership team.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, the headteacher, senior and subject leaders. Inspectors also spoke with representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors held meetings with three groups of pupils. They talked informally with pupils at breaks and lunchtimes. They listened to pupils read.
- The 159 responses of parents and carers to the online survey, Parent View, were considered. Inspectors also spoke with parents and carers and account was taken of their written comments. Inspectors also noted the 59 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors looked at several documents including the school’s evaluation of its own performance; plans for improvement; policies; and records of pupils’ behaviour and attendance. Safeguarding documents were reviewed.

Inspection team

Rob Ridout, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Gill Walley	Additional Inspector
Laurie Lewin	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- About one fifth of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. This is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who, in this school, are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Around one in ten pupils are disabled or have special educational needs. This is below the national average.
- Almost all the school's pupils come from a White British background. Less than one in 20 of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. A similar proportion of pupils in the school speak English as an additional language. This is well below the national average.
- A high number of staff have left and joined the school, particularly in the first year following the previous inspection.
- Many subject leaders are new to post. The leaders for teaching and achievement were appointed at the start of this academic year.
- The current headteacher is newly appointed since the last inspection in September 2013.
- A review of governance was completed by the local authority in July 2014.
- 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in order to raise standards, particularly in reading, and ensure that pupils in every class make at least good progress by ensuring:
 - all staff have the highest expectations of pupils
 - teachers use available information to plan lessons that are engaging and challenge pupils of all abilities, especially the more able, to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding
 - pupils have regular opportunities to practise and develop the good basic skills they need in literacy and mathematics by the end of the key stage
 - special attention is given to the needs of disadvantaged pupils to enable achievement gaps between them and other pupils to be closed more rapidly.
- Strengthen the impact leaders have on improving the school by ensuring:
 - leaders at all levels fully understand their responsibilities and are effective in improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement
 - all leaders have an accurate understanding of pupils' achievement in all subjects and year groups and use this to improve teaching and planning for improvement
 - governors hold senior leaders more fully to account for the school's improvement over time, particularly for the performance of disadvantaged pupils.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders have not yet made sure that all groups of pupils achieve as well as they should. However, the headteacher and new leaders are improving the quality of teaching, which is enabling current pupils to make better progress.
- The headteacher leads the school with clarity of vision and a quiet but real determination that every pupil will succeed and be safe and happy at the school. He has high expectations of all staff and pupils. Inadequate teaching is not tolerated, assessments of pupils are now accurate and good systems to support further improvements to the school's work are improving its effectiveness.
- School leaders acknowledge that standards of teaching and achievement require improvement. They check the quality of what the school provides and have identified the right priorities for the school. A high turnover of staff after the last inspection slowed the impact of actions implemented by leaders to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Clear improvement in these areas is now evident.
- Most middle leaders understand their responsibilities, but some do not check the impact of their work to ensure pupils consistently make good progress in their areas of responsibility. Standards in mathematics and writing have improved and attendance has risen. This reflects the school's capacity to improve.
- The performance management of teachers is thorough and has been effective in eradicating inadequate teaching. Teachers' targets are linked to pupils' progress and staff are provided with training to improve their skills and practice. However, the impact of this training and support has not yet been as effective as it needs to be to ensure that all teaching is good and pupils achieve well.
- The leadership is developing new ways of teaching through a broad range of subjects which engage pupils' interests as well as teaching them important skills. Themes and experiences are carefully selected to inspire both boys and girls. Within each topic there is an emphasis on values and the opportunity to develop pupils' understanding of British values and prepare them for a life in modern Britain.
- Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is promoted effectively. Pupils learn to respect and appreciate their religious and cultural differences, treat each other with respect and understand different points of view.
- The school has used additional funds to ensure that every pupil is given an equal opportunity to take part in all events and achieve success. Discrimination is not tolerated.
- Pupil premium funding is now being used effectively to provide extra teaching for those disadvantaged pupils who were not making fast enough progress to reach the same standards as other pupils in school or nationally. As a result, disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making better progress than in previous years although their attainment lags behind that of other pupils.
- The primary school sports funding is used well. The number and range of clubs offered is large and participation rates are high as pupils enjoy taking part in the available sporting activities. The school is increasingly successful in a range of local competitions. Sports coaches support pupils to successfully learn new skills and train teachers to enhance the provision for physical education.
- Leaders are passionate in securing their pupils' success and make effective use of the advice from the local authority to support further school improvements. The school's local authority advisor visits the school regularly and provides good guidance. This has helped the headteacher to tackle weaknesses in teaching and to secure improvements through some significant changes in staffing and leadership.
- Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements. Appropriate checks are carried out on all adults.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors commissioned a self-review of their work. They have submitted themselves to a rigorous programme to improve their skills and help them gain a better understanding of the school. Governors remain supportive of school leaders but now ask more probing questions about the impact of their work.
 - Governors receive regular reports on the quality of teaching from school leaders. They know that the quality of teaching is not consistently good across the school.
 - Governors are fully aware of the links between pupils' achievement and teachers' performance and pay. They support the headteacher in the full implementation of the pay policy, which is used effectively to reward good teaching and challenge underperformance to raise standards within the school.
 - Members of the governing body understand the data on the school's current performance and the progress of pupils. They are challenging school leaders to move the school forward.
 - The governing body is better informed about pupils' achievement. While governors did not ensure that all groups of pupils made good progress in the past, they now check that school leaders are making a

difference to the progress of different groups of pupils and are increasingly aware of the impact of pupil premium funding on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are typically well behaved in lessons and around the school at all times.
- Pupils are extremely respectful and show courtesy towards others. They welcome the numerous changes that have been introduced over the last year and are keen to learn. They respond well to feedback and additional challenges set by teachers when their books are marked. Pupils particularly like the chances they are given to celebrate the good work that they do.
- Pupils enjoy being at the school and consistently display positive attitudes to learning which stand them in good stead for the next stage in their education. They are clearly keen to do well and take exceptional pride in their work.
- The school's behaviour policy is operated consistently by staff and, as a result, pupils rarely waste time or behave badly during lessons or around the school. Pupils respond promptly to staff instructions. There are no instances of pupils being permanently excluded from the school for serious misbehaviour.
- Attendance has improved and is now above the national average. Pupils fully understand the importance of coming to school and work well with each other and their teachers. They enjoy all the activities the school provides, especially the after-school clubs, which now are attended by large numbers.
- Parents and carers, staff and pupils believe behaviour is good at the school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The pupils say that they feel safe at the school.
- Pupils know what bullying is and can describe the most common forms. They say, for example, that it is wrong to repeatedly make fun of someone else.
- Pupils say that bullying rarely occurs. No real concerns were raised by pupils and all were confident that they would be listened to and their worries dealt with promptly by staff.
- Pupils know how to stay safe and healthy. They are very aware of the dangers associated with using the internet and know what to do to keep themselves safe.
- Parents, carers and staff rightly believe that pupils are safe and well cared for at the school.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is improving but is not yet consistently good. Pupils, particularly those nearing the end of Key Stage 2 who have not made enough progress in the past, are not always confident in their previous learning and so do not make good progress.
- Teachers' expectations for pupils to always do their best and carefully check and develop their work before handing it in are improving but are not always high enough.
- The school has established systems for checking and increasing the rate of pupils' progress. However, some teachers do not use the available information to plan lessons that are engaging and challenge pupils of all abilities to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of their work, especially the more able.
- Classrooms are orderly places, well organised and with working displays that are used to reinforce what is being learnt. Pupils of all abilities respond positively to this and are ready and keen to learn.
- There are real strengths in the quality of teaching, such as the ways it encourages pupils to discuss ideas, question each other and work confidently in different ways.
- Policies on marking and feedback are applied consistently so enabling pupils to improve their subsequent work. Pupils are reminded to respond to this feedback and seek further help if they are not sure what they need to do to improve. Pupils learn from their errors as can be seen by the improvements seen in books.
- Pupils' mathematical skills are developing, but gaps remain in their understanding. Teachers are helping pupils to improve a broad range of mathematical skills by providing learning that deepens their thinking in asking them to apply what they have learned to complex problems. This is not consistently effective across the school.
- The quality of pupils' writing has improved markedly as a result of effective teaching. Activities are chosen that motivate both boys and girls and encourage them to use punctuation and grammar correctly and

spell accurately. Opportunities for pupils to practise these skills, although not fully embedded, are increasing, and as a result standards are rising.

- The teaching of reading is better than in the past. Reading activities are increasingly built into the lessons to encourage pupils to develop their reading skills. Pupils enjoy reading and state that the new topics make them want to read more about them.
- Teachers check and revise pupils' targets to good effect. Teachers accurately check and correct pupils' written work in books. Pupils know how they have achieved and what to do next. This has resulted in pupils being more confident in their learning and in their writing abilities.
- Targeted teaching for small groups is well used to help pupils who have particular gaps in their learning. This is helping close the gaps between current groups, which are now tracked every half term.
- Teaching assistants provide sensitive and skilled support as and when it is needed. They work closely with teachers to provide relevant help to ensure activities are fast paced, interesting and fully engaging to all pupils.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because standards in reading, writing and mathematics are below the national average at the end of Year 6 and have been for some time.
- In 2014, Year 6 pupils had not made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points when they joined the school but had improved markedly in mathematics and writing, particularly from the previous year.
- Information held by the school, scrutiny of pupils' books and observations of other work over time indicate pupils throughout the school are making faster progress than before and this is gradually eradicating a legacy of past underachievement. This improvement is recognised by pupils and their parents and carers.
- A greater number of the most able pupils in the school reached the higher levels in the national tests in mathematics and reading, but showed little change in writing in 2014. However, these pupils are not always challenged to do as well as they should.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 had not made enough progress from their starting points. Their attainment was over a year behind that of others in the school and all pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. However, current information shows that these pupils are making better progress throughout the school and gaps are closing.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is similar to that of other pupils in the school. Again evidence from the school's own data, the pupils' work and observations suggests that these pupils' progress is improving.

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	116482
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	453667

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	596
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tracy Smith
Headteacher	Glenn Moore
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 January 2013
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