

Abbots Ripton CofE Primary School

Wennington Road, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon, PE28 2LT

Inspection dates 10–11 July 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not take full account of the differences in pupils' abilities when setting work and deciding what pupils should achieve during lessons. Time is not always used well and some teachers take too long when introducing or explaining a learning point.
- Teachers do not always check that pupils understand the methods they use in mathematics or that they confidently understand what they read.
- The school lacks a consistent approach to handwriting. Opportunities for pupils to write extensively are limited.
- The reinforcement of pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects is not sufficiently well-planned.
- Leaders do not use information on pupils' progress sufficiently well to quickly help pupils who fall behind.
- Governors' skills in checking on the school's work are not sufficiently developed

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders are committed to improvement. The headteacher and the dedicated staff are determinedly raising achievement and improving teaching.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils say they feel safe and value their friendly, small-school community.
- Children make a good start in the Reception class.
- Pupils in Year 1 do well in learning about letters and sounds (phonics).
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons, of which three were joint observations with the headteacher, and observed one session of collective worship. Five members of staff were seen teaching.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, school leaders and staff. Discussion was held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector spoke to pupils during lessons about their work, looked at their books and listened to them read.
- The inspector took account of written responses from parents and 59 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The inspector spoke to parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspector analysed responses from 14 questionnaires completed by school staff.
- The inspector observed the school's work, looked at information about pupils' achievement, school improvement plans, systems to check the quality of teaching and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Vivienne McTiffen, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British and other White backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is average. No pupils are at the early stages of learning to speak English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives additional income, (the pupil premium), is below average. In this school this funding is also provided for a very small number of pupils who are looked after by the local authority.
- 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.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. Currently, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a mixed-age Reception and Year 1 class.
- Since the previous inspection the school has experienced significant staffing and leadership changes. The school's senior teacher was appointed to the post of acting headteacher in May 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by making sure:
 - teachers make best use of time in every lesson and that introductions and explanations of key learning points are not too long or prevent pupils settling quickly to their work
 - work is well matched to all pupils, whatever their ability, in every class
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils should achieve by the end of the lesson.
- Raise achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - making the teaching of reading more consistent across the school so that all pupils develop the necessary skills to become able readers
 - adopting a whole-school approach to handwriting and making sure pupils are motivated to write at length
 - checking pupils' understanding of the methods they use in mathematics and giving them more opportunities for problem-solving and practical tasks in a range of subjects that require them to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - devising sharper systems for analysing the information collected on pupils' progress so all leaders quickly identify and address any underachievement
 - sharpening the monitoring role and skills of governors so that they can be more effective in holding the school to account.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are generally average but, over time, not enough pupils make good progress from their starting points and reach their full potential.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length. The quality of handwriting is variable. However, progress in writing is getting better because leaders have introduced a whole-school drive to improve it. Some writing is of good quality, particularly lessons where pupils have been really motivated by good teaching. For example, a recent topic on 'Space' fired pupils' imaginations, resulting in some high quality and extensive writing.
- Progress in mathematics sometimes slows because pupils do not fully understand the methods they are using. There is too little use of practical and problem-solving tasks in other subjects for pupils to develop these aspects of their mathematical skills sufficiently. However, there are examples where mathematics is linked to real-life situations. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 5 and 6 used a traffic survey to calculate time, distance and frequency.
- The focus to improve reading is paying off although there is some way to go to make sure all pupils are confident and able readers. The school's information shows that standards in reading are now average after a dip to below average in the 2012 Year 6 tests. A greater proportion of pupils are now making good progress than was the case in previous years.
- Children do well in the Reception class, especially in their personal development. They happily engage in a range of interesting tasks. They respond positively to teachers' guidance and follow the school's routines carefully; consequently, they are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same progress as their classmates. The school's information shows that some make good progress towards their own goals. Those who find it difficult to behave well or conform to classroom routines make marked improvement over time.
- The pupil premium is spent on extra staffing and resources to meet the needs of individuals. The school's information shows that the extra provision for eligible pupils leads to good gains in personal development. Rates of progress are improving in both English and mathematics in line with other pupils in the school. There were not enough pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in 2012 to comment in detail on their attainment without identifying them.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups do as well as their classmates. The consistency of progress for all groups of pupils shows the school's commitment to provide equal opportunities for all pupils to learn without discrimination.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good enough to make sure all pupils make the best possible progress.
- In some lessons, the pace is too slow and teachers spend too long talking to the whole class. This means pupils have less time to use and develop their skills by working things out for themselves. Teachers do not always pay enough attention to what pupils of different ability

levels should achieve by the end of lessons.

- Teachers do not always make sure that pupils make good progress because work is not always sufficiently well matched to the range of ability in the class. In some cases, all pupils do the same task. As a result, for some pupils, the work is too hard and for others, it is too easy.
- There are clear signs of recent improvements in teaching and several examples of good teaching were seen during the inspection. Teachers correct misunderstandings and extend pupils' thinking through well-aimed questions. They set targets for pupils to work towards and make sure marking in books indicates how to improve.
- Teachers encourage pupils to use the correct vocabulary in English and mathematics. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 3 and 4 used the terms 'metaphor' and 'simile' to describe aspects of their writing. Good teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) makes sure pupils in Year 1 do well in the national screening test.
- Teaching assistants help pupils of all abilities to understand their learning. They provide the right level of support and resources for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs so they become successful learners.
- For Reception-aged children, staff provide a good balance between tasks children choose for themselves and those that are adult-led. Good teaching concentrates on children's all-round development and makes sure children do well in acquiring literacy and numeracy skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils say they enjoy their learning and value their school. One commented, 'We're like a big family. We all get on well together.' Pupils have good relationships with staff and are supportive of each other. Older pupils very willingly help younger ones.
- Behaviour is generally good. Pupils say they feel safe and talk sensibly about how to stay safe. Most pupils are attentive in lessons and try their best. They like taking on a challenge and celebrating their achievements as 'Leading Learners'.
- Pupils know about different forms of bullying and what they should do if they have any concerns. They appreciate the guidance they get during collective worship, personal and social education lessons and anti-bullying weeks.
- A very small minority of parents expressed concerns over the school's promotion of good behaviour and handling of bullying. The inspection found that good behaviour is consistently promoted by all staff and pupils understand the school's rules and sanctions. Any isolated incidents of bullying that do arise are fully recorded and followed up.
- Pupils happily take on jobs around school. They organise fund raising, often for communities abroad. They participate on the school and eco councils. They say they enjoy new experiences and learning about others.
- Attendance is above average. New systems have reduced the number of pupils who stay away from school for long periods of time. The number of pupils who are late for school is reducing, due to the school's concerted efforts, but ensuring all families understand the importance of ensuring their child comes punctually to school each day remains a key priority.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The leadership and management require improvement because pupils' achievement is not yet good. Systems to check the progress pupils make are not used sufficiently well to quickly identify and address any underachievement.
- Improvement has been slowed by staff changes but leaders have ensured that the school is once again moving forward. The headteacher has successfully introduced a consistent approach to marking pupils' work. She has devised thorough methods for collecting information on pupils' progress and involved staff in understanding what pupils should achieve.
- The headteacher has united the staff in a common sense of purpose and ensures they know how to improve their work. Their training matches the school's needs. Staff performance is checked and targets set regularly. The positive responses from staff questionnaires indicate they feel supported in their work.
- Good local authority support helps the school to develop leadership skills and set realistic targets for improvement. As a result, the school has identified well-formulated priorities for its development. Leaders have instituted a range of ways to make effective checks on the quality of teaching and learning, especially in English and mathematics, and these are leading to improvements
- Leaders make sure the school offers a broad range of subjects that cater for all pupils' needs and interests. There is a clear focus on building pupils' understanding of values and opportunities for new experiences. Trips, visitors and strong links with the local church, enhance pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development well. Good management of pupils' behaviour and safety promotes moral development well.
- Leaders provide effective arrangements for children starting in the Reception class and make sure parents and children are well prepared. In Year 6, pupils say they feel well prepared for their move to secondary school. There are good daily links with parents and the school offers a range of ways for them to support their children's learning.
- A small minority of parents expressed dissatisfaction over the school's handling of their concerns and information they receive about their children's progress. The inspection found the school has suitable channels to receive and handle concerns and regular ways to keep parents informed on their children's progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are ambitious for the school. After some recent re-structuring, they have developed their skills in recognising how well it is doing and what it needs to do to improve further. They recognise, however, that in the past they have not done enough to check the school's work or hold it fully to account for its effectiveness. They undergo relevant training for their own professional development. Governors are directly involved in key decisions about spending and raise questions over its impact. They know how the pupil premium is spent and the effect it has on pupils' achievement and well-being. Governors understand the link between good teaching and good achievement and how decisions are made about teachers' pay. They are involved in checking performance and make decisions about staff training. Governors have an on-going focus on maintaining and establishing further links with parents. They fulfil their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and ensure the school's arrangements meet requirements.

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	110850
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	412188

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Select
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Robin Price
Headteacher	Maureen Basford
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2010
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