

# Abbeywood First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131275
<b>Local Authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	315770
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Callow

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	158
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gina Craig
<b>Headteacher</b>	Valerie Wilkinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Wood Piece Lane Church Hill Redditch B98 9LR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01527 63007
<b>Fax number</b>	01527 595427

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<b>Age group</b>	3–9
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Abbeywood opened in September 2006, following the amalgamation of Marfield Farm and Ravensbank First Schools. It opened in the premises of Ravensbank and shares a large site with the adjacent, Church Hill Middle School. Pupils who attend Abbeywood come from a wide variety of backgrounds, but most are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The majority of children join the Foundation Stage Unit of the school when they are three years old, but others join when they are four years old from different pre-school settings.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Abbeywood is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. The headteacher's role in achieving this has been outstanding. She has built a capable and enthusiastic team which is extremely committed to ensuring that the personal development and well-being of all pupils has high priority and that the standards they reach get better very quickly. As a result, the behaviour of pupils has improved significantly and is now good. There is a calm, purposeful atmosphere in the school, where pupils are happy in their work and their play. They are making much more progress in their lessons than when the school first opened and standards are rising. One parent expressed her awareness of these improvements by saying, 'Children seem far more settled and thoroughly enjoy what they are doing'.

When children begin in the Nursery class of the Foundation Stage Unit, their skills vary considerably, but overall they are at a level which is well below those expected for their age. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move up through the school, but their standards in English and mathematics are still below average when they leave in Year 4. As a result of very thorough and accurate self-evaluation, leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses. This, together with a clear plan that focuses on all pupils reaching the challenging targets that are being set, demonstrates the school's good capacity for further improvement. For example, after pupils' assessment information was carefully analysed in 2007, leaders correctly identified that not all of the more able pupils were being sufficiently challenged to reach the standards of which they were capable. Much better provision was put in place and is now successfully meeting their needs.

The headteacher has rightly concentrated on improving the quality of teaching and learning. There is an increasing amount of good teaching, but it is not yet consistent throughout lessons or across the school. Teachers are, however, becoming more skilled in planning tasks that meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. The school's recent involvement in the 'Assessing Pupils' Progress' programme has supported this and has already proved highly effective in enabling many pupils to start to achieve well. Imaginative approaches to the curriculum, using role-play for example, are helping pupils to enjoy their lessons more and, consequently, to become more engaged in their learning. A lot of these approaches are relatively new and so they have not had a chance to have a significant impact on helping to accelerate the amount of progress pupils are making.

The pastoral care given to pupils is good and has ensured that their personal development and well-being has become a strength. Despite the fact that the vast majority of pupils enjoy school and the school has been working hard to improve attendance, it remains below average and limits the amount of progress that some children can make. The school tries hard to ensure that it communicates well with parents, for example through the weekly newsletter. However, it is aware that for a minority of parents, even more could be done. The academic guidance given to pupils has started to get better as teachers make pupils increasingly familiar with their targets. Whilst pupils' work is usually marked thoroughly, they are not given sufficient opportunities to reflect, and act, on teachers' comments that tell them how to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

The care and concern for each child enables them to settle quickly into the Foundation Stage Unit and to feel safe and secure. Children are happy, participating in a wide variety of interesting activities both inside and outside and make satisfactory progress. For example, children were seen enjoying their learning by making use of their 'space ship' in the home corner and building shelters outside. Leaders have developed good systems for recording their observations and assessments of children's progress, so that they can plan activities that more effectively meet their needs. There is a strong focus on children's personal, social, emotional and language development and there are examples of them making good progress in these areas, for example when out on the 'wellie-walk'. However, there are missed opportunities, particularly to develop children's language skills and for them to become more independent, which is limiting their progress.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in English and mathematics across the school by ensuring a consistency of good quality teaching.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to consider how well they are doing in their work, including when it has been marked, and have time to improve it.
- Work closely with parents to improve attendance and communication.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

The skills of children entering the Foundation Stage Unit at three years old, are much less well developed than might normally be expected across all the areas of early learning. There are particular weaknesses in language, personal and social skills. Standards catch up a little as pupils move up through the school, but they are still below average in English and mathematics when pupils leave at the end of Year 4. The achievement of pupils is satisfactory, but improving all the time, as a result of work being better matched to pupils' needs and good systems for tracking pupils' progress. However, the lack of consistently good teaching is limiting the amount of progress pupils can make. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress and some achieve well, because of good individual education plans.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Even the youngest pupils have a good understanding of what helps them to lead a healthy lifestyle, which was shown when a child in the Foundation Stage said, 'Raisins are good for you and help you grow'. Their awareness of keeping safe is also developing well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they are open and friendly with visitors. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that if they do have any problems, then adults will always listen and act promptly. Despite the fact that pupils are most emphatic that they enjoy school, attendance remains stubbornly below the national average. Pupils particularly enjoy taking responsibility and are keen fund-raisers for a range of local and global charities. They regularly

participate in local events, such as Beoley Church Fete. The school's emphasis on increasing pupils' collaborative skills means that they are developing a better understanding of how to work as a team, share and take turns. However, their level of basic skills in literacy and numeracy mean that their preparation for the next stage in their education is not as good as other aspects of their personal development.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Good relationships between adults and pupils underpin all lessons. Adults manage the small number of pupils with challenging behaviour extremely well, in order that others can concentrate on their learning. The headteacher is rightly leading a major emphasis on developing teachers' assessment skills, which has already had an impact in increasing the amount of progress that pupils make. This is because activities are much better matched to the differing abilities of pupils. There is some good teaching in parts of many lessons and throughout some whole lessons. The lack of consistently good teaching means that not all pupils are able to reach the standards of which they are capable in English and mathematics. Good strategies, such as interaction by pupils as 'learning partners', are not always as effective as they might be, because either the teacher or the pupils do not understand how to make the best use of them.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Developments to the curriculum are increasingly making it more exciting and engaging for pupils. They particularly enjoy the practical activities and the chance to use information and communication technology. Sport and art have high priority and there is a varied programme of extra-curricular activities. Learning is made interesting through visits and a range of partnerships with other organisations. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 who visited the neighbouring middle school spoke enthusiastically of their learning in science through experiments, dance, drama and art. Whilst the curriculum is broadening pupils' experiences, there are still missed opportunities to practise and reinforce literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects. In addition, some well-planned interventions, such as those to develop pupils' knowledge of sounds and letters and their skills in calculation, are only just beginning to make an impact on raising standards in English and mathematics.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The high quality of care ensures that pupils are happy, feel secure and are ready to learn. It makes a significant impact on their good personal development. The concern shown for each individual means that those pupils who are potentially vulnerable are very well supported. Parents of pupils with behavioural difficulties are keen to acknowledge the support given to their children and to themselves. Child protection and health and safety procedures are firmly in place and help to ensure that the well-being of pupils is good. Pupils have clear targets for improvement in English and mathematics. There are some missed opportunities to remind pupils of their targets in lessons and to explain what they need to do to reach them. In addition, whilst pupils' work is usually marked thoroughly with helpful comments about how to improve, not enough time is given for pupils to consider these comments and to do something about them.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The strong leadership of the headteacher, with the good support of the deputy headteacher and governors, has ensured the significant improvement of Abbeywood since it first opened. Thorough and accurate self-evaluation is one of the main keys to their success. Rigorous evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning means that it is now at least satisfactory and sometimes better. Good systems have also been introduced for setting challenging end of year targets for all pupils and carefully monitoring their progress towards them. Any pupils at risk of under-achievement are quickly identified and intervention strategies and support put in place. There are already some signs of these having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The capable senior leaders, who are new to their posts, recognise the need to take more responsibility for the analysis of assessment information. Much has been done to work in partnership with parents, with events such as the 'Inspire Workshops'. The school is aware that for a minority of parents, there is room for further improvement in establishing good communication.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Abbeywood First School, Redditch, Worcestershire B98 9LR

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your school recently. Most of you have been through lots of changes since Abbeywood opened. It is a satisfactory school, which has got better very quickly and is clearly one that can improve even further. One of the main reasons for this is because your headteacher is very determined for you to do as well as you can, especially in your behaviour and in the standards of your work.

- These are some of the best things that are happening:
  - your behaviour is good
  - most of you who were at Abbeywood when it first opened are now making more progress in your work
  - the adults look after you very well
  - your teachers are increasingly finding ways of teaching you things in interesting ways so that you enjoy your lessons
  - many of you know how to live healthily by eating the right sorts of food and taking exercise
  - the work that has been planned for you to do is nearly always at the right level, so it is not too easy and not too hard.
- The leaders of your school are good at working out what will make your school even better. We talked to them and together we decided that these are now the most important things to do:
  - make sure you reach higher standards in English and mathematics by the teaching in your lessons being good all of the time; you can help by always working to the best of your ability
  - teachers should give you time to think about how to improve your work and especially after they have marked it; you can help by listening carefully to what they say and reading the comments they write in your books
  - the school should work even more closely with your parents so that those of you who miss school a lot attend all the time; you can help by trying not to miss school unless you are ill.
  - the school should work even more closely with your parents so that they always know what is going on; you can help by telling them about what you are doing and talking about what is in the newsletters that you bring home.

With best wishes

Peter Callow Lead Inspector

25 January 2008

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Abbeywood First School, Redditch, Worcestershire B98 9LR**

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Peter Callow  
Lead Inspector