

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Abbey Junior School

Barclay Road, Smethwick, West Midlands B67 5LT

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 March 2025

Outcome

Abbey Junior School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend Abbey Junior School and enjoy coming to school each day. They feel happy and secure in the supportive and caring school environment. In the words of one pupil, the school 'is a welcoming and lovely place where teachers show us how to be good people'.

Behaviour in school is calm and purposeful. Pupils rise to the high expectations that staff have for them. Pupils have strong attitudes to learning in their lessons. They listen attentively and treat each other with respect. Pupils move around the school courteously and play well together in the playground.

The curriculum is engaging. It is designed carefully to inspire pupils and support their learning across a broad range of subjects. Pupils live up to the high expectations of staff and achieve well. Older pupils are well prepared for their transition to secondary school.

Pupils take on a range of responsibilities, becoming 'playground buddies', 'eco warriors' and members of the health and safety council. These opportunities help pupils build their leadership skills. Pupils are pleased with the positive impact their work has on the school community. As a result, pupils leave the school as confident, thoughtful and well-rounded young people.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have designed an ambitious, broad and rich curriculum. The curriculum is carefully sequenced so pupils' knowledge builds up step by step through the years. Teachers use the school's 'Learning Journey' and their strong subject knowledge to build effectively on pupils' prior understanding. Teachers present learning clearly. They design

activities that allow pupils to discuss their learning enthusiastically with each other. There is a focus on developing and extending pupils' vocabulary. Consequently, pupils can recall and talk about important information.

The school checks pupils' learning regularly. It identifies pupils' emerging needs or any barriers that may have arisen. These checks ensure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have well-planned support in place. Typically, these checks ensure teachers address any gaps or misconceptions in pupils' learning. However, on occasion, the school does not check pupils' understanding well enough. Some pupils who need extra help, or who are ready to move their learning on, are not supported as well as they could be.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Staff choose texts to enable pupils to develop awareness of other cultures and to support the wider curriculum. Pupils who fall behind with reading have targeted support. This helps them to catch up quickly. The school library is stocked with engaging books. Pupils enjoy reading and the variety of books they have to choose from. By the time pupils leave school, they have read a wide range of literature.

Leaders have robust systems for ensuring pupils attend school regularly. They work with families to promote the value of high attendance and its impact on learning. As a result, pupils' attendance is high.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They are highly engaged in lessons and speak enthusiastically about their work. Pupils enjoy their social time and the fun activities the school provides. They say that they love their playground, including the reading bus, as everyone can do something that they like.

Pupils' personal development is extensively supported. A 'bucket list' of activities offers pupils the opportunity to broaden their horizons. This includes a theatre visit, residential experiences and 'sparklers, jacket potatoes and hot chocolate'. Sporting activities play an important role in building teamwork. The school promotes tolerance and respect for different beliefs, cultures and ways of life. Pupils learn how to keep safe, using the term 'SMART' to help them keep safe online.

Staff support each other and work well as a team. Leaders ensure that all staff have the time, training and support they need to be effective in their roles. There are opportunities to work with others in the local area and learn from other schools. Staff know that leaders consider their well-being and workload. Governors know the school well. They offer effective support and challenge in key aspects of the school's work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, the school does not check what pupils know and remember well enough. As a result, there are times when pupils who need extra help, or who are ready to move their learning on, do not get the support they need. The school should ensure that all teachers have the knowledge and skills to make effective checks on pupils' learning and adjust their teaching and learning practice to meet the needs of all pupils.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in April 2015.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	103929
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10343777
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	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Philip Jones
Headteacher	Richard Kentish
Website	www.abbeyfederation.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 December 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of a federation with Abbey Infant School. The executive headteacher oversees both schools. The schools share the same governing body.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school clubs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, other leaders, the special educational needs coordinators, representatives of the governing body and pupils. She had a telephone call with a representative from the local authority.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents provided by the school. These included improvement plans, leaders' self-evaluation, minutes of the governing body and documents relating to behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector listened to a range of pupils read. The inspector observed catch-up interventions to learn how staff provide extra support for pupils.
- The inspector considered the responses to the staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school. She took into consideration responses to the pupil survey.
- The inspector took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the free-text responses. She also spoke to parents and carers at the school gate.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Karen O'Keefe, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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