

Inspection of Abbeywood First School

Wood Piece Lane, Church Hill, Redditch, Worcestershire B98 9LR

Inspection dates: 25–26 February 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The 'Abbeywood aspiration' underpins what this school is about. Leaders and staff encourage all pupils to aim high. They open pupils' eyes to the many possibilities for their future. Leaders are determined that all pupils will develop the skills they need to succeed.

Learning is fun and active. This makes every day different. Pupils learn to be curious. They share their ideas clearly and confidently. Pupils achieve well. They are knowledgeable about the world around them.

Staff care about pupils. Pupils know this. They say that this is one of the best things about their school. Pupils feel safe. They trust that adults listen to them. Pupils say that bullying sometimes happens. Adults deal with this. They support pupils to improve their behaviour when necessary.

Pupils behave well. They pay attention to adults and want to learn. Pupils listen carefully to each other. They work collaboratively in pairs and small groups. Pupils play happily together at breaktimes, at lunchtimes and in breakfast club.

Leaders provide a range of opportunities to broaden pupils' experiences. For example, pupils take part in the 'Children's University'. This celebrates pupils' involvement in activities outside school. Pupils are proud to graduate from the University of Worcester.

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

Children get off to a good start in the early years. Adults spend their time working closely with children to support their learning. Children take part in interesting and relevant activities, for example making pancakes on Shrove Tuesday. Leaders prioritise improving children's language and communication skills. Adults model speaking in full sentences and encourage children to do the same. They introduce children to new and interesting words. Adults teach early mathematics well. Learning builds in small steps. An increasing proportion of children are well prepared for learning in Year 1.

Pupils receive a broad curriculum. Teachers weave learning in different subjects together. This helps pupils to make links and remember things. Pupils develop a broad body of knowledge and skills. Older pupils have secure recall of what they have learned in subjects such as history.

Developing pupils' speaking and listening skills is a focus. This helps pupils to express themselves clearly. Pupils have a rich vocabulary. They use this to explain their thinking. Pupils enjoy learning stories off by heart. They are proud to perform these to their parents and carers in weekly storytelling assemblies.

In Reception and Year 1, children learn letter sounds every day. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are fluent, independent readers. However, a few of the weakest readers struggle to keep up with their classmates. This is because teachers do not always give them precise enough support. For example, some of these pupils' reading books contain sounds they have not yet learned.

Leaders have set out what pupils should learn in each subject. Pupils' knowledge and skills grow from year to year. Pupils achieve well at the end of key stage 1. Teachers build on this in key stage 2. In many subjects, teachers break what pupils need to know into small steps. This helps pupils to develop a secure understanding in subjects such as mathematics and physical education (PE). On occasion, the small steps that pupils need to take are less clear. This means that, sometimes, teachers do not deepen pupils' knowledge and skills as well as they could, for example in writing in key stage 2. Some subject leaders do not have sufficient expertise to help teachers to break learning into smaller parts.

Staff identify if pupils have any barriers to learning. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils who find it difficult to manage their feelings and behaviour receive high-quality support. Those who attend 'Willows' get just what they need. Pupils with SEND achieve well. However, some pupils' individual targets are not precise enough. As a result, support is not always as fine-tuned as it could be.

The curriculum promotes qualities such as resilience and respect. Pupils regularly reflect on their own and others' learning. For example, pupils provide each other with feedback about their work. Pupils take others' comments on board. They want to learn.

Leaders provide well for pupils' personal development. Pupils from different RSA academies take part in joint projects. For example, Year 2 pupils have worked with an artist on a collaborative piece of art. Pupils take responsibility. For example, Year 4 pupils have created a mindfulness garden as part of an RSA leadership programme. Pupils leave Abbeywood as confident and well-rounded individuals.

Governors and trustees check what is happening in the school. However, leaders do not provide them with precise enough information about what they are doing to improve the curriculum further. This limits governors' ability to ask leaders the right questions about this aspect of the school's work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Trustees, governors and leaders understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They provide staff with regular training. Staff are vigilant to signs of abuse and neglect. They know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's safety or welfare. Leaders take appropriate action to keep pupils safe. They work with external agencies to provide support for vulnerable pupils and their families.

Pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and social media. The school provides helpful guidance for parents about online safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, the small steps that build towards curriculum end points are not clear enough. As a result, pupils sometimes do not develop as deep an understanding as they could. Some subject leaders need to enhance their subject and pedagogical subject knowledge so that they can better support non-specialist teachers to break the curriculum down into smaller steps.
- For some of the weakest readers, support is not fine-tuned to their individual needs. Sometimes, reading books contain too many sounds that these pupils do not know. A few of these pupils are slow to catch up. Staff need further training in how to support the weakest readers to develop strong phonics knowledge. Reading books need to match the sounds pupils are learning more consistently so that they can practise these.
- Overall, staff support pupils with SEND well. However, some pupils' individual targets are too broad to ensure that they receive the most accurate help. Leaders should check that pupils' targets focus on their next small step in learning so that staff can support every pupil to make the best progress possible.
- The checks that governors make on the curriculum lack precision. This is because improvement plans do not make it clear enough what leaders are working on and why. Plans should identify more closely what needs to improve. This will support governors and trustees to evaluate the impact of leaders' decisions more precisely.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

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

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.

School details

Unique reference number	142541
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10122491
Type of school	First
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	263
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Eric Griffiths
Principal	Nicola Beech
Website	www.abbeywood.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides before- and after-school childcare.
- In September 2019, a new executive principal took up post. The head of school remains the same as at the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We held meetings with the executive principal, the head of school, the deputy headteacher, the inclusion leader and the special educational needs coordinator. We met with subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- We met with two representatives of the Central RSA Academies Trust. We also met with the chair and vice-chair of the local academy governing body.
- We completed deep dives in these subjects: reading, English, mathematics, history and PE. In each subject, inspection activities included discussions with the subject leader, visits to lessons, discussions with teachers, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils.

- We also considered information about the school’s curriculum in science, geography, religious education and personal, social, health and economic education.
- We listened to some pupils read and talked to them about their reading.
- We observed pupils’ behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. We spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons, around school and in breakfast club. We considered the 17 responses to Ofsted’s online pupil questionnaire.
- We met with the head of school about the school’s safeguarding procedures. We reviewed policies and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and pupils who have left the school. We spoke to pupils, parents and staff about how safe pupils are at school.
- We reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school’s self-evaluation and improvement plans, minutes of trustee and local academy governing board meetings and information on the school’s website. We evaluated published performance data and documents relating to the curriculum and pupils with SEND.
- We took into consideration the 35 responses to Ofsted’s Parent View questionnaire, including the 20 free-text comments. We spoke to parents at the start of the school day. We took account of the 17 responses to Ofsted’s online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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