

Abbeyfield Primary Academy

Orphanage Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S3 9AN

Inspection dates

25–26 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Under the leadership of the principal, the school is improving quickly since it became an academy. The principal's unwavering determination that all pupils are entitled to do as well as they can permeates everything that is happening at the school.
- The principal is well supported by the deputy headteacher and the trust. The chief executive officer and trustees have helped to set a new course for the school. They have invested much necessary resource to bring about rapid improvement of the school.
- The quality of teaching is strong. Teachers and teaching assistants have committed to the principal's vision. Morale among staff is high.
- Leaders have done much to prioritise the teaching of reading and to foster a love of reading across the school. Phonics teaching is effective the very large majority of the time, although pupils' occasional uncertainties are sometimes missed.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They conduct themselves with consideration for each other. In class, pupils want to do well. They behave respectfully towards their staff.
- Leaders work relentlessly to improve rates of pupils' attendance but face substantial barriers, external to the school, to improve the situation. While there is more work to be done, however, leaders remain resolute.
- There is a trend of rising outcomes since the school became an academy. Pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics at both key stages 1 and 2 is improving strongly.
- While teachers' expectations are high, very occasionally, the most able pupils are not moved on in their learning as effectively as they could be. Some gaps in pupils' basic knowledge still persist, as a legacy of inadequate teaching prior to academy conversion.
- In the early years foundation stage (EYFS), children make good progress from their starting points. Leaders monitor children's progress carefully, although sometimes they do not use this information as effectively as they could to further push children's learning. Leaders have established a solid learning base as preparation for Year 1.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further strengthen the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are further challenged in their knowledge, skills and understanding, by moving them on in their learning as soon as they are ready
 - making sure that pupils' phonics skills are consolidated and extended by more regular recapping of learned sounds, and that any uncertainties are spotted quickly and dealt with
 - continuing to eliminate the legacy of gaps in pupils' basic knowledge to promote more secure progress.
- Improve rates of pupils' attendance at school.
- In the early years, meet individual children's needs more effectively by taking greater account of the school's monitoring information about how well children are doing.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Under the determined and skilful leadership of the principal, the school is improving quickly. She is well supported in the turnaround of the school by other senior leaders and the trust. Leaders took firm decisions at the point of academisation, followed by swift action. As a result, the school is on an upwards trajectory. Pupils' outcomes are improving quickly, the quality of teaching is good and behaviour is vastly improved. The morale of staff is high.
- Leaders took firm steps to urgently improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Central to this has been the trust's provision of high-quality continual professional development for staff. As a result, staff feel valued, supported and challenged. The trust has made effective use of its links to external providers of teacher training as a further strategy to improve the quality of teaching. After a period of some turbulence in staffing, the school is fully staffed for September 2019.
- Pupils are prepared positively for life in modern Britain. They have an age-appropriate understanding of fundamental British values, such as tolerance. Pupils told inspectors that at their school, 'It is OK to be different.' Through the school council and other opportunities for pupils to have their say, leaders have taken steps to increase pupils' understanding of, and participation in, democracy.
- Leaders make effective use of additional funding. Leadership of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is in its early days, but some effective provision is already in place. Leaders have broadened the range of sporting opportunities available to pupils through the sport premium. For example, pupils can access activities including kick-boxing, flag football, golf and gymnastics. Numerous opportunities to represent the school competitively are also available. As a result of the sport premium strategy, participation rates in physical activity are rising.
- Pupil premium funding is similarly well used. Leaders identified gaps in provision for supporting disadvantaged and other vulnerable pupils, with the result that additional support has been put in place, such as 'The Den'. This has been particularly effective in reducing the risk of exclusion for identified pupils and in boosting disadvantaged pupils' reading skills.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. The wider curriculum is effective in widening pupils' horizons and providing them with opportunities to develop as young people. It is a credit to leaders' high aspirations for their pupils that such opportunities are many and frequent. For instance, pupils have recently worked in school with Jaguar Land Rover, the Young Literacy Trust and the Young Engineering Challenge. A scheme to encourage pupils' thinking skills and understanding of the world through access to philosophy has also been introduced.

Governance of the school

- Trustees have a clear line of sight regarding the school's trajectory since academisation. They know the weaknesses which they inherited and can articulate very convincingly the steps taken by leaders to improve the school.

- The trustees have a clear understanding of the school's current strengths and where there is still more work to do. They receive detailed analysis from leaders about the school's performance and, as a result, are in a knowledgeable position about how well things are going.
- The trust acted swiftly to address the areas of weakness identified in the predecessor school when it was last inspected. Trustees have supported the principal in taking some tough decisions to get the school to its current, quickly improving position.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A strong culture of safeguarding permeates the school. Leaders have ensured that staff are appropriately trained in the necessary areas of safeguarding, including the government's 'Prevent' duty. Staff know what to do should they be worried about any pupil's welfare. They also know the process to follow should they have concerns about any member of staff's conduct. Arrangements for checking the suitability of staff to work in school are in place and meet legal requirements.
- Leaders have established effective links with external agencies, such as the local authority's children's social care provision. Leaders' records of referrals to such bodies are detailed and indicative of a doggedness in getting the necessary help.
- The principal, supported by the trust, has established a healthy culture of reflection around safeguarding matters. When these arise, the principal routinely considers whether there are any lessons to be learned for the future. This openness to professional scrutiny as a means to continually improve safeguarding provision is a strength of the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Across both key stages and all classes, learning takes place in a calm, orderly and purposeful environment. Teachers, ably supported by teaching assistants, have established strong routines and expectations, founded on respectful relationships. They have high expectations of what pupils should achieve. As a result, teachers can teach and pupils can learn.
- Typically, teachers' planning makes effective use of information about pupils' abilities. Consequently, pupils are well supported in their learning, with appropriate resources to help them achieve well from their starting points. For most of the time, pupils are set tasks which challenge them at the right level and enable them to move on in their learning as soon as they have grasped the new knowledge or skill. Occasionally, the most able pupils could be moved on more promptly to the next stage in their learning as, sometimes, they are ready and waiting.
- Pupils with SEND are very effectively supported in their learning by teaching assistants, who have a clear understanding of their role in each class. As a matter of routine, teaching assistants reinforce the school's high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They liaise effectively with teachers to make sure that the appropriate resources are used to support the pupils with whom they are working.

- The development of pupils' spoken English is a priority across the school. Pupils are frequently asked to respond to teachers' questions. This serves two purposes: first, it enables teachers to check pupils' understanding of the learning and encourages pupils to think more deeply; second, it provides opportunities for pupils to speak in full sentences using standard English. The consistent emphasis on the quality and accuracy of pupils' spoken English is an important part of their learning as it supports their ability to access the curriculum. It also strengthens the relationships between staff and pupils.
- Leaders have made pupils' reading a priority. Inspectors saw a love of reading being encouraged and nurtured across the school. A number of strategies have been put in place to good effect. For example, teachers make use of books they are reading in class to teach and reinforce aspects of English grammar. As a result, it is typical to see pupils using a variety of sentence types, vocabulary and punctuation in their writing to make it suitable for the audience and purpose.
- To teach pupils how to read, teachers use the same phonics scheme across the school. Furthermore, the teaching of phonics does not stop at the end of key stage 1. Teachers continue to use the school's phonics approach, wherever it is needed to help pupils catch up with their reading. While pupils make good progress, however, at times this could be even stronger. Very occasionally, teachers do not spot when pupils' phonics skills might be insecure and do not take swift enough action to strengthen them.
- Across all classes, teachers make effective use of 'modelling' to demonstrate to pupils the correct way to use a new skill or to show new knowledge. Typically, this is generally effective. However, due to a legacy of previously inadequate teaching, there are some gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. Sometimes, these are not identified and dealt with quickly, and so they persist.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Strong relationships between staff and pupils are at the heart of what the school does. As a result, pupils and staff work cooperatively and considerately with one another. Across all years and classes, pupils are keen to do well. Typically, pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.
- Leaders have taken decisive action to provide support for the most vulnerable pupils in school. A substantial number of pupils join the school from overseas throughout the year. They are supported well in the 'international new arrivals' class. Other vulnerable pupils are nurtured as part of the school's inclusion class. Here, pupils have access to a range of appropriate sources of support and activities. This includes, for example, opportunities to learn and build self-confidence in a woodland setting, where the central slogan is 'Work together, keep trying, be happy.'
- Pupils' personal development is effectively supported elsewhere through a variety of means. For instance, the pastoral team is on hand to pick up any problems or worries as they arise. 'Healthy Minds Champions' support pupils with their emotional well-being

and organise things such as random acts of kindness. Through the sport premium funding, pupils have many opportunities to take part in a wide range of sporting and physical activities, such as judo, tennis and dance.

- All of the pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they feel safe in school. They have a secure understanding of how to keep safe, particularly when online and for road safety. Pupils told inspectors that bullying is very unusual in school. They are confident that, should it happen, it would be sorted out quickly by an adult.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Throughout the inspection, the conduct of pupils in lessons and around school, including breaktime and lunchtime, was good. Inspectors saw no poor behaviour. Pupils and staff are unanimous in saying that, since the appointment of the principal, behaviour has vastly improved. In class, pupils listen respectfully to each other and to their teachers. They get on with their work with a clear sense of purpose.
- Since becoming an academy and joining the trust, leaders have introduced a behaviour management system, so that everyone knows what is expected and what the sanctions are for poor behaviour. This led to the appropriate use of permanent exclusion over the last 12 months. The rate of fixed-term exclusion rose during the last year as a result of application of the new behaviour system, but the rate is in line with the national average for similar schools. From the point where the school became an academy, the number of behaviour incidents has reduced substantially.
- Leaders are working tirelessly to improve rates of pupils' attendance. Many appropriate strategies are in place to secure better attendance. Despite this, however, the rate of absence remains stubbornly above the rate for similar schools nationally. To a very large degree, leaders' actions are limited in their effectiveness because of the high rate of in-year arrivals of new pupils from overseas. Leaders are working hard to build relationships with these families and overcome their limited experience of settled, formal schooling and its requirements around attendance. Where leaders have targeted particular pupils who have especially poor attendance, there is evidence of improvement as a result of leaders' actions.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Since the school converted to an academy, there is a strong trend of improvement in pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics across both key stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils typically join the school with below-average prior attainment. Despite this, pupils' attainment, at the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined, was above both the local authority and national averages at the end of key stage 2 in 2017/18. Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics was in line with the national averages.
- Pupils' attainment in spelling, punctuation and grammar at the end of key stage 2 is improving over time and in 2017/18, was above the national average.

- By the end of key stage 1 in 2017/18, pupils' attainment in each of reading, writing and mathematics improved markedly compared with the previous year. In reading, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in reading was above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who passed the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 in the last two years has been below the national average. This is affected to a marked degree by the rate of pupil movement in and out of the school. However, the success rate for all pupils and those who are disadvantaged is improving.
- For pupils currently in the school, the large majority make good progress most of the time. In English, for example, the content and sequencing of the English curriculum is enabling pupils to develop their knowledge through each unit of work. This supports their progress well. Spelling is developing strongly, as is pupils' use of punctuation and grammar. At times, some pupils' handwriting and letter formation are not developing as strongly. Occasionally, progress is limited by pupils' basic errors, often stemming from previously inadequate teaching.
- In mathematics, pupils typically make consistently strong progress across the years. Typically, work is appropriately challenging for pupils with different starting points, including those with SEND. Pupils make strong progress in their arithmetic. They also make good progress in other aspects of mathematics, such as algebra and problem solving.
- Pupils newly arrived at school from overseas, who have little or no English, make strong progress as a result of effective teaching and support. In mathematics, for example, pupils make strong gains in both arithmetic and reasoning. Routinely, accurate written English is incorporated into mathematical problem-solving questions, to further aid pupils' progress in English.
- Leaders have prioritised reading across the school. As a result of their actions, pupils' reading outcomes at the end of both key stages 1 and 2 have improved over time since the school became an academy. In particular, disadvantaged pupils' progress in reading at the end of key stage 2 improved from well below to being in line with the average. In the early stages of learning to read, staff make sure that pupils have lots of practice, with the result that good progress is typically made. Occasionally, books are not as closely matched to pupils' phonic knowledge as they could be, which means that for a few pupils, reading progress is sometimes less strong.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have established a setting in which children are well prepared for the requirements of key stage 1. Leaders have a strong understanding of the challenges facing the early years provision, particularly as a result of the high levels of children joining during the year, typically with no or little knowledge of English.
- Leaders have acted effectively to create a nurturing and stimulating learning environment. As a result, in children's learning journals, there are numerous examples of the learning that has been taking place, such as number, reading, art, music, computing and communication. Other journals show 'snapshot' evidence of children's playing and exploring, active learning, creating and thinking critically.

- Teaching is effective in enabling children to acquire the basics of reading. Leaders base their phonics teaching on a single phonics system. The consistent approach to phonics helps children's reading skills to develop well. However, sometimes teachers do not recap previously learned sounds often enough to help children grasp them fully and quickly. Leaders know that some of the reading books which they inherited from the predecessor school require replacement, so that there is always a consistent match between children's reading ability and the books they are given to practise with.
- The very large majority of children are learning to write English as a second language. Children are taught the basics of writing, so that by the end of the early years, most can spell simple words and sentences. When spellings of common words and frequent but irregular words are incorrect, the children's spellings are phonetically plausible. Occasionally, teachers could do more to 'model' correct letter formation systematically.
- The outdoor space is well used to generate opportunities for children's physical development and to learn through play, for example by using balls and equipment to help with balance. Children are encouraged to explore their world through play with different resources. Teachers use questions to generate discussion with children about what they are doing. Sometimes, however, such opportunities are not exploited as often as they could be to fully engage the children in their learning.
- The early years staff have established secure routines and expectations for the children to follow. As a result, the setting is calm and orderly. Children are taught the necessary skills of social interaction, such as taking turns and listening considerately to others. When children very occasionally get cross with one another, staff are quick to act and to reinforce the required behaviour.
- Leaders have implemented a system to establish an initial assessment of children's abilities on entry to the setting. While this is effective in enabling leaders to make regular ongoing checks on how well the children are doing, leaders and staff do not always make the best use of it. At times, for example, staff could use the monitoring information more precisely to match activities to children's learning needs.
- From starting points which are typically well below average, children make good progress. The proportion of children who achieved a good level of development in the early learning goals has improved over the last two years and is now above that seen nationally.
- Safeguarding arrangements are secure and in line with the arrangements in the main school. The specific welfare requirements for early years settings are met.

School details

Unique reference number	143052
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10087489

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	483
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Sue Hunter
Principal	Helen Best
Telephone number	01142 426 009
Website	http://abbeyfieldprimaryacademy.co.uk/
Email address	enquiries@abbeyfield.sheffield.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Abbeyfield Primary Academy converted to become an academy on 1 August 2016. When its predecessor school, Firs Hill Community Primary School, was last inspected it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The school is part of Five Rivers Multi-academy Trust, which it joined on conversion. Responsibility for governance of the school rests with the board of trustees.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is in the highest 20% of schools nationally.
- The school serves a community which is in the highest 20% of deprived areas nationally. The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is also in the top 20% of schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who receive help for their SEND is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a range of lessons across subjects and years, sometimes accompanied by the school's senior leaders. During these visits, inspectors talked to pupils and looked at work in their books.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work across several subjects, with different year groups and pupil abilities represented.
- Meetings were held with the principal. An inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust, the chair of the board of trustees and with other trustees.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders with responsibility for: the EYFS; attendance; behaviour; provision for SEND; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; pupils' personal development and welfare; the pupil premium and sports premium funding; the curriculum; literacy and reading; pupils' progress information and safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with four groups of pupils, drawn from across year groups. Inspectors also spoke informally with pupils at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with several members of staff including middle leaders, teaching assistants, teachers at different career points and support staff.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, on corridors, in social spaces such as the dining room and the yard, and at the start of the day when pupils were arriving at school.
- A wide range of documentation was examined. This included: leaders' self-evaluation and plans; minutes of governors' meetings; attendance, behaviour and exclusion information; records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching; records of contact with parents in the EYFS; logs and analysis of incidents of bullying; accident logs and pupils' progress information. Leaders' processes for vetting adults' suitability to work in school were checked, along with safeguarding files.
- Inspectors considered the 12 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Parent View, together with 12 free-text parental comments. They took into account 18 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire. Inspectors spoke with parents at 'drop-off' time at the start of the day. An inspector spoke with one parent on the telephone.

Inspection team

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