

Abram Bryn Gates Primary School

Lily Lane, Bamfurlong, Wigan, Lancashire, WN2 5JT

Inspection dates 7–8 November 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children start the Reception class with skills typically below those expected of four-year-olds. Pupils make good progress as they move through school and by the time they leave Year 6 they attain average standards.
- Teaching is good. Teachers share the learning intentions with pupils and as a result pupils have a good understanding of what it is they are learning. Support staff provide good guidance and help for pupils because they work successfully in partnership with teaching staff.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and very much enjoy working in pairs and teams. Pupils feel safe in school and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in different situations.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work together as a strong team. Together they monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make on a regular basis. As a result both of these areas are improving strongly. Governors provide a good level of challenge and support to ensure the school moves forward.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teaching is good, it is not yet outstanding.
- On occasions, the most-able pupils are not challenged enough by the work set for them.
- Pupils do not always have sufficient opportunity to practise their writing in different subjects and apply their skills in mathematics to solve problems.
- Pupils are not always given the opportunity to respond to teachers' marking.
- Some subject leaders are yet to monitor and evaluate key aspects of the areas they lead, such as, teaching, teachers' planning and the work in pupils' books, so as to improve their impact on achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed eight lessons and visited various classrooms for shorter periods of time. Two lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, senior leaders, and teachers with responsibilities for leading and managing subjects and key stages. A meeting was held with a group of governors. There was a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Results from 90 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into consideration by inspectors during the inspection.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents including: the school’s data showing pupils’ current progress; documents relating to the school’s own view of its performance; the school improvement plan; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Pritiben Patel, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Adrian Francis

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than most other primary schools.
- Most pupils are of White British background. A small number of pupils are from other White and mixed heritages.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is in line with other schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is in line with other schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is above average. This is additional funding given to schools by the government to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- An above average proportion of pupils leave or join the school part-way through their primary education.
- The school has breakfast club provision every morning from 8.00 am till 8.30 am. It also provides after school provision on Monday's, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 3.30 pm till 4.30 pm.
- The school shares the same grounds as the nursery Twinkle Toes, which is run by an independent provider and is subject to a separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement and the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by ensuring that:
 - the most-able pupils are consistently challenged in all lessons
 - pupils have greater opportunities to practise their writing in different subjects
 - pupils have greater opportunities to apply their skills in mathematics to solve problems
 - pupils have the opportunity to respond to teachers' marking.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that all subject leaders monitor and evaluate key aspects of the areas they lead including teaching, planning and pupils' work to improve their impact on achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start the Reception class with skills that are below those expected of four-year-olds. They are particularly low in writing. Due to good teaching and teamwork children are broadly in line with expectations by the time they start Year 1. This represents good progress from their starting points.
- The results for the Year 1 phonics test in 2013 (the sounds that letters make) were higher than schools nationally. This is because phonics is a key focus from when the children first start school in the Reception class.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with schools nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 are in line with schools nationally and rising quickly. There was a significant improvement in standards in 2013 in comparison to previous years. Although half of the pupils in this group did not start the school in Year 1 they made good progress from their starting points.
- Standards in mathematics have improved because regular assessments are helping teachers to closely identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and use this information to plan and teach lessons that meet their needs. Standards in writing, particularly for boys, have improved because pupils have individual targets which they understand and use to improve their written work. Standards in reading were relatively weaker in 2013 because two pupils did not perform their best under examination conditions and one pupil started the school less than five months before the national tests in Year 6. Standards in reading are average. Pupils enter online competitions to motivate them to extend their reading. Pupils are confident readers and enjoy talking about their favourite authors.
- In 2013, the proportions of pupils meeting and exceeding expectations in mathematics and writing were higher than schools nationally. This represents good achievement.
- The significant improvement in the school's tracking and assessment of the progress that pupils make is helping teachers to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve well. As a result equality is promoted well. Pupils not making the expected progress are quickly identified and supported so that they do not get left behind. As a result all groups make good progress including those from minority ethnic groups. Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs have their own individual plans, which are regularly monitored and help them to make good progress.
- The pupil premium funding is used to ensure that pupils who are eligible for this money receive one-to-one support to ensure they make progress in their learning. Eligible pupils, including those entitled to free school meals in Year 6 in 2013 were about two terms behind in their attainment in mathematics and writing compared to non-eligible pupils and over two terms in reading. Inspection evidence shows however, that the gaps are narrowing.
- The school has identified the need to ensure that the most-able pupils are fully challenged and attain the higher levels, and some of its efforts have been successful but more needs to be done.
- Work in pupils' books show that they do not have sufficient opportunities to practise their writing in different subjects and apply their skills in mathematics to solve problems. For example, in some mathematics books, there is much evidence of pupils learning the basic skills of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division but little evidence of pupils applying these skills to solve problems.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and parents agree. Relationships between staff and pupils are caring and this creates a positive environment for learning. It is clear that pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to work with one another. Teachers adapt their teaching as the lesson progresses to meet

the needs of the pupils. Homework is set regularly to reinforce and develop learning and understanding.

- There is a fast pace in lessons so that pupils remain engaged and focused. This was demonstrated in a Key Stage 2 numeracy lesson where pupils were developing their understanding of 'Terror Tables' and recalling multiplication facts under timed conditions. This gave the pupils a clear focus as well as healthy competition as each of them tried to answer as many questions as possible in the shortest amount of time.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, use questioning to move pupils' learning on and write the steps for success with the pupils so that they are very clear about what is expected of them. This was seen in a Key Stage 2 literacy lesson where pupils were writing their own suspense stories. The teacher wrote a checklist with the pupils exploring what would make a suspense story effective. This helped pupils to understand exactly what they needed to include.
- The school's new systematic approach to assessment and target-setting, which involves regular review, is impacting positively on achievement. One of the reasons for this is because pupils know what they need to do next to improve in their learning.
- The high numbers of adults in the classroom ensure that pupils receive focused support and guidance. Support staff are well-trained and deployed effectively by teachers. They provide support in the classroom as well as outside the classroom when they work with small groups who need to catch up in their learning. Hence, all pupils including those who are disabled or have special educational needs make good progress.
- Although teachers plan activities for different abilities. Pupils who are most able are not always sufficiently challenged in all lessons. This was evident in a Key Stage 1 lesson where pupils were writing instructions about how to make a jam sandwich. The most-able pupils completed the activity quite swiftly. However, there was nothing more planned for them so as to move their learning on further. This slows the progress they make.
- Teachers mark pupils' work on a regular basis and set targets for them to help them move to the next level. When pupils do not have the chance to respond to the marking, this is a lost opportunity to move learning on.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- This is a caring school which has the welfare and well-being of pupils at the heart of its work. Pupils say they are very happy here and their teachers are, 'really fair and friendly'. Parents too are very happy with the school.
- Relationships at all levels in this school are good, making this a real community. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of one another. Spiritual development is good, for example, pupils develop an appreciation of music during hymn practise.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and work hard because they want to do well. The school's new approach to assessment is enabling pupils to take ownership of their learning. The regular dialogue between teachers and pupils is ensuring that there is a strong focus on learning.
- Behaviour during less structured times such as break and lunchtimes is less strong. Pupils who require additional support with their behaviour are well looked after particularly through one-to-one adult support. There have been no exclusions. Pupils say that bullying is not an issue and when it does happen occasionally it is dealt with by adults. There have been no racist incidents.
- Pupils enjoy coming to breakfast club and feel safe in school. They have a good understanding about how to keep themselves safe in different situations. Pupils understand fire drill procedures, they know the steps to take if a fire breaks out and how to keep safe near water because the fire-brigade have spoken with them. Pupils also know about e-safety and why they should not give out personal information such as their names and addresses to strangers.
- There are a range of opportunities for pupils to demonstrate responsibility: reading buddies from Year 6 help Year 4 pupils with their reading; play leaders help the younger pupils to play games at lunchtimes; and break monitors give out snacks at break times.

- Attendance is in line with schools nationally.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher together lead the school well. Parents and staff are very happy with senior leaders. There has been strong determination to improve the school since the last inspection. Areas identified for improvement have been successfully addressed. Achievement has improved along with the quality of teaching and learning.
- The improvement in the assessment and tracking of the progress that pupils make has impacted positively on teachers' understanding of achievement and the use made of this information to plan teaching. Teachers are held to account for the progress that pupils in their classes make and this is helping to improve standards.
- The performance of teachers is managed robustly. Teachers are observed regularly. Those teachers who require additional support to improve their teaching receive training as well as guidance from senior leaders in, for example, planning. Teachers are set clear targets linked to pupils' progress.
- Senior leaders have embraced positively the support and guidance from leaders of other schools as well as the local authority to help the school to improve. Good quality support has been provided to the school in areas such as teaching, leadership and monitoring. The capacity of current leaders to take the school to the next level is good as demonstrated in the significant improvements that have been made in relation to standards in 2013 and the quality of teaching in a short amount of time.
- The school-development-plan has the correct priorities identified to move the school forward with clear timescales and success criteria so that improvements can be measured precisely.
- The curriculum effectively meets the needs of the pupils. Music is a strong feature and pupils have specialist teaching in this area. Sports are also a positive feature of the curriculum. The sports-funding is being used to provide pupils with a wide range of experience in sports, for example, wrestling, fencing, judo and football. The school does not charge for many of these activities so that there is no barrier to pupils' participation. All visits and visitors are paid for by the school.
- Opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in different subjects and apply their skills in mathematics to solve problems have been two less successful areas of the curriculum.
- The school reaches out well to parents. Support is provided to families experiencing difficulties, and parents are kept well informed of the school's work via the website and regular newsletters.
- The school self-evaluation is very detailed and explains clearly all that the school has done and is continuing to do to improve the achievement of pupils. At times it is a little too descriptive instead of evaluative.
- Subject leaders are passionate about the areas they lead. Effective action plans are in place to bring about further improvements. However, not all leaders check key aspects of their areas closely, such as planning, teaching and pupils' books to better their impact on pupils' achievement.
- Safeguarding meets requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have improved their understanding of achievement since the last inspection. They use the nationally published school performance data and know where strong progress is being made as well as areas that require further development. Governors have an effective understanding of the quality of teaching and whether teachers meet their performance-management targets. They help to set the targets for the performance of the headteacher. They access training when required. Governors have an input into school self-evaluation and monitor the school development planning. They know that pupil premium funding is being used on staffing to provide small group support and that this is helping those eligible for this funding to achieve well. Finances are healthy.

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	106414
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	426110

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jack Clegg
Headteacher	Chris Sheekey
Date of previous school inspection	7 December 2011
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