

Inspection of Abbeyfields First School

Abbot's Way, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2LZ

Inspection dates:	10 and 11 December 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Sandra Ford. This school is part of the Cheviot Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Alice Witherow, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Carvin.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Abbeyfields First School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Abbeyfields First School to be outstanding for overall effectiveness, before it opened with the same name as a result of conversion to academy status. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a welcoming and happy school that pupils are proud to attend. Pupils know that they are safe here. They are polite and demonstrate self-control in their classrooms and when moving around the school. Pupils say that bullying is rare and are confident staff would deal with it effectively should it occur. Pupils' relationships with adults are polite and respectful.

The school encourages all pupils to do their best and to achieve highly. Pupils take pride in their work. They focus well on their learning and listen to advice to help them deepen their knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive timely and effective support. This helps them to progress through the curriculum and achieve well.

Children in the early years receive an excellent start to their education. They behave well, developing independence and resilience.

Pupils have opportunities to take on leadership roles in the school. These include opportunities to serve as an Abbeyfields MP or a junior safeguarding lead. These enable pupils to share their ideas and concerns with leaders. There are many additional opportunities to develop individual talents, for example in musical theatre, dance and sports clubs.

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

The school has designed an ambitious, sequenced curriculum that allows pupils to build on their understanding progressively. In some lessons, starter activities enable pupils to review what they have learned and make links between past and new learning. Resources, such as sketchbooks, are designed so pupils can easily review prior knowledge and adapt this to new learning. The school reviews what pupils should know and remember and adapts plans accordingly.

The school's curriculum is built around the national curriculum. The curriculum meets the needs of the school's pupils. It has been tailored to ensure that learning is adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. As a result, pupils with SEND learn the curriculum alongside their peers whenever possible. However, the school adapts the curriculum more successfully in some subjects than others. Where this is done well, the checks that staff make on what pupils have learned are used effectively to inform future learning.

Staff understand and teach subjects, such as geography, well. Pupils are exposed to technical vocabulary that they use in their writing to explain physical processes or locations. This vocabulary is extended as pupils move through the school.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils start to develop the skills for reading as soon as they enter the school. In the Nursery, oracy is at the heart of what the children are taught. Adults use rhymes, songs and wordplay to grow the children's vocabulary. In Reception, daily lessons are highly focused on developing initial phonics skills, and

children start reading books from the first term. Staff regularly check what children can read and ensure that teaching is matched to children's individual needs. Those pupils who start to fall behind are given specialist support to help them catch up. Reading books are well matched to pupils' phonics knowledge, and this helps them to read with fluency. Across the school, staff read to pupils from identified high-quality 'must-read' texts. These help to develop pupils' passion for reading.

The early years learning environment is calm and well resourced. The school has thought carefully about how this area is used. Children focus on their tasks and interact sensibly with each other. They are well prepared for their next stage of learning.

The personal development curriculum is outstanding. The school has looked carefully at the skills pupils need to live in modern Britain and has embedded these through the curriculum. Pupils are well prepared for life outside of school. Pupils talk openly about difference and how they can be inclusive. They understand different faiths and beliefs in detail. The interests of pupils are extended through a range of after-school activities. These provide pupils with the opportunity to act, dance, sing and be physically active. The school gives pupils the opportunity to consider future careers by taking part in a careers week.

The school has prioritised attendance. Staff follow policies and procedures to promote attendance rigorously. Pupils behave well and focus on their learning in class. Most behaviour in unstructured times is good. However, some children find it difficult to match the school's expectations consistently.

Staff are appreciative of the actions the school has taken to support well-being and workload. They enjoy working at the school. Governors are proud of the school and know its strengths. They hold leaders to account through appropriate support and challenge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The monitoring and evaluation of some subjects is less developed than others. This means the school is not as clear as it could be about what pupils know and remember. The school should improve how it checks what pupils know and remember to ensure that this checking is consistent in all subjects.

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	144181
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10346683
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	322
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Carvin
CEO of the trust	Alice Witherow
Headteacher	Sandra Ford
Website	www.afs.cheviotlt.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This school offers both a breakfast club and after-school childcare for pupils.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have

taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography, science and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also reviewed a sample of books from other curriculum subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, curriculum leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and the early years phase leader.
- Inspectors met with members of the local governing body, the school improvement partner, the chair of trustees from the Cheviot Learning Trust and the trust's CEO.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at the breakfast club and after-school club, around the school and at breaktimes. Inspectors considered the views of pupils and parents and carers about behaviour in school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors 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.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and staff gathered through Ofsted's surveys. Inspectors also spoke with groups of parents at the beginning of the school day and to some of those attending school performances.

Inspection team

David Hodgkiss, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Cathy Lee	Ofsted Inspector
Gemma Jeynes	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024