

Abbot Beyne School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124449
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	340574
Inspection dates	11–12 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Limm HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	865
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	126
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Fletcher
Headteacher	Christine Thompson
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2007
School address	Linnell Building Osborne Street Burton-on-Trent DE15 0JL
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 24 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, and groups of students. They observed the school's work and looked at its policies and development plans, its analyses of students' attainment and progress, a sample of students' work, and other key aspects of performance. Inspectors considered the views expressed in 102 questionnaires completed by parents and carers. They also considered the views expressed in 125 questionnaires completed by students of the school and 7 responses from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- trends in students' attainment and achievement since 2006
- the impact of leadership and management, focusing particularly on how well the school has addressed the points for improvement identified in the previous inspection
- the quality of teaching and learning, especially the use of assessment to improve learning
- how well the school meets its statutory requirements in relation to equalities and safeguarding

Information about the school

Abbot Beyne School is a smaller than average comprehensive school in its seventh year of designation as a specialist visual arts school. The main school roll is falling due to a decline in the local population although the numbers in the sixth form are increasing. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is about average. A large majority of students come from White British backgrounds. A small minority of students come from minority ethnic backgrounds and have English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special education needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average. The school is situated on two sites some fifteen minutes walk apart. The upkeep of the buildings is a pressure on the budget because of their age.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Abbot Beyne School is a good school. Students' attainment is broadly average but this represents good progress from below average starting points and all groups achieve well. One student said of the school, 'it has a brilliant mix of different races and backgrounds'.

The headteacher provides dynamic and determined leadership, supported well by a senior team that is a good mix of new and experienced leaders. The school has good capacity to improve further because senior leaders have a good understanding of the school's key priorities and how its good provision can be improved further. This is especially the case in relation to how well it addresses the varied needs of students from different cultural backgrounds. The governing body provides effective support and challenge and has a clear grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school has responded well to the points identified in the last inspection, with teachers having higher expectations of students' achievement and better leadership of the sixth form.

The excellent system for tracking individual student performance identifies clearly where students' performance requires improvement. The school acknowledges that although teaching and learning are good, and there is a rising trend in students' attainment, the monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet resulting in most lessons being outstanding in quality. Excellent practice is not yet embedded consistently across the school, and in particular, assessment information is not always used effectively enough to plan lesson activities that fully meet the needs and interests of all students.

Students develop into responsible young people. Attendance is above average and a majority of students who responded to the questionnaire said they enjoy school. Lesson observations confirmed the school's view that students are eager to learn and contribute exceptionally well to the life of the school and the wider community. The school's exemplary approach to inclusion means that it promotes equality of opportunity extremely well. The school's contribution to promoting community cohesion is excellent.

The quality of the curriculum is good, and it is enhanced by good partnership work with other schools and through the specialist subjects. The outstanding care, support and guidance provided by the school ensure that students are prepared well for the

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future. One student said, 'I think I can do good in life'. Another said, 'the school is very comforting if I have any problems – they are quickly sorted.' Students in the sixth form attain broadly average results but this represents good progress taking into account their below average attainment on entry. This is because teaching is good in the sixth form and students enjoy their lessons.

The ageing accommodation, on two sites, undermines the school's drive to raise attainment further, but the headteacher and staff have managed the school's resources well, demonstrating good value for money and additional evidence for the school's good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment further in Key Stages 3 and 4 and increase the proportion of outstanding learning and teaching by ensuring that all teachers use assessment information as accurately as the best teachers to plan work that better meets the needs and interests of students in the lesson.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students were seen to be making good progress in lessons. They generally concentrate well, especially when teachers engage them actively in their learning and when activities move on at a brisk pace. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good individual support in lessons, as do those students who are identified as requiring extra support to help them attain their target grades at GCSE. As a result, they achieve well. Students attain GCSE results that are broadly average and rising. While girls attain better results than boys, the difference is not as great as that nationally. The achievement of both boys and girls is good. Performance across subjects is usually good but there are some, such as visual arts that are outstanding, and others such as mathematics which perform less well. There is a new team in mathematics and it has succeeded in raising attainment and narrowing the gap with the national average.

Students behave well in most lessons and make a good contribution to their learning. Students say that occasionally, when lessons are less stimulating and challenging, some of their peers do not behave so well. Students say they feel safe at school. They demonstrate safe practice in lessons especially where they handle tools and equipment. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.

Students develop their personal qualities well. They recognise the steps they need to take to achieve their goals. Their workplace skills are being developed well and students said they were confident about making decisions regarding their future

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education and careers. Students make good progress in developing their basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information communication technology though attainment remains broadly average. The school has good plans to improve basic skills further. Students respond extremely well to the good range of initiatives provided by the school to promote healthy lifestyles and enjoy healthy eating and taking exercise. Students make an excellent contribution to the community, organising many events to bring groups together in, say soccer tournaments, or through activities designed to improve the local environment. The outreach work of the specialist subjects, often involving students, makes an excellent contribution to embracing the needs of different groups in the community.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Common features of the good teaching seen by inspectors were sound subject knowledge and clear explanations to help students learn quickly. The best lessons provided students with many opportunities to work together in small groups, as well as learn on their own when appropriate. In these lessons, students worked with pace and enthusiasm. This was most clearly demonstrated in visual arts and some sixth form lessons. A common feature of the less successful lessons is that students work on the same task for too long, they lack appropriate challenge and make slower progress. Teaching strategies in these lessons are not varied enough leading to students occasionally losing interest. Progress was better where teaching

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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assistants were deployed carefully by teachers to engage actively with their target students and give them effective classroom support.

Assessment is used well to support learning in the best lessons. Here there is a common approach to assessment which enables both staff and students to know what went well and what could be improved. There are good examples of students being encouraged to evaluate their own work and learn effectively from each other. Students interviewed knew what their targets were because of the helpful feedback they receive from teachers. This good practice was not consistently applied by teachers across the school.

The good curriculum is focused well on improving outcomes for students from the full ability range. It is enriched by the good use of the school's specialist subject. The new programme in Years 7 and 8 provides a good foundation for GCSE examination in Key Stage 4. There is a good range of activities for the more gifted and talented students. Provision is customised well for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure that these students make good progress. The development of occasional themed days has supported the provision of cross-curricular links and enabled the school to promote community cohesion extremely well. Students say that staff ensure there are opportunities for them to catch up when they fall behind or miss work. Tutorial time is used effectively to support students' learning and personal development. The formal curriculum is enhanced by a growing programme of extra-curricular activities which students enjoy, and in which they participate enthusiastically and in growing numbers. Transitions are carefully planned, including through good liaison with primary schools.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. There are effective channels of communication at all levels and, as a consequence, staff have a very clear picture of students' individual needs. A high level of support is provided for individuals or groups of students who are vulnerable or experiencing problems of any kind. Students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with excellent support so they achieve as well as others. The school uses external agencies well to enhance its own internal support for individuals with extra needs. The number of students excluded from school is small. Statutory requirements for safeguarding are fully in place and procedures are exemplary.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has been pivotal in establishing a clear vision for how the school should develop, focusing tightly on continuing to raise attainment for all groups of students. Leaders and managers have a good grasp of what the school needs to do to achieve this vision, particularly through even better leadership of teaching and learning. Strategic planning and self-evaluation are thorough. Underperformance is addressed effectively so that students' achievement is good and improving and any unevenness between different groups is minimal. The school's promotion of equality of opportunity is outstanding and it meets the statutory requirements for equalities and addressing discrimination extremely well.

Leadership and management of the school's specialism and related subjects are extremely good, and the specialist facilities, including an art gallery, have been used well by the local community and other local schools. The specialism contributes very well to promoting community cohesion. Promotion of community cohesion is a strength of the school. The school has carefully analysed the nature of its local community and how well school provision engages with the different groups it caters for. It works extremely well with external agencies and partners to ensure potential tensions are addressed robustly but sensitively. Its own evaluation of the impact of this provision provides clear indication that the school's work in this area is excellent.

The governing body has a good grasp of the school's strengths and areas requiring improvement. It provides a good balance of support and challenge to ensure the school keeps on track to achieve its aims and maintain its tight focus on improving attainment.

The school has developed a number of effective methods for communicating regularly with and seeking the views of both parents and the wider community. It works well with parents to support students' well-being and learning and ensure that the school community is both cohesive and harmonious. Despite this a very small number of parents feel that communication with the school is not always effective. Good partnerships with a range of organisations outside the school are used well to support students' learning and well-being.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities	2

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met	
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

The sixth form provides a good education. Standards on entry to the sixth form are below average when compared to other sixth forms. By the time students leave at the end of Year 13, standards are broadly average. Recent changes in the leadership of the sixth form have resulted in more rigorous self-evaluation. Effective action has addressed weaknesses and inspection evidence confirms the school's judgement that the quality of teaching and learning, and current progress, are improving and are now good. The most recent examination results and the school's tracking of students' progress show that standards are rising. Care and support are extremely good, leading to rising retention rates for the sixth form and a majority of students progressing onto further and higher education. Students are given clear guidance so that they take appropriate courses linked to their capabilities and are given good advice on how to improve the quality of their work. Students develop into confident and mature young adults.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

Just over one in eight parents returned the inspection questionnaire. Parents are largely satisfied with all aspects of the school's work. The views expressed were mostly positive, particularly in relation to children's safety and the leadership and

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management of the school. Inspectors agree with these views.

A small number disagreed that the school helps them to support their child's learning or takes account of their views. A similar proportion felt the school did not deal with poor behaviour well. Inspectors recognise that any lapse in communication is a concern for those involved, but consider that the school works very hard to communicate with parents, take account of their views and seek ways to engage them with their children's learning. Inspectors also found behaviour to be good around the school and in lessons. Records indicate that behaviour management by the school is good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Abbot Beyne to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 102 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 865 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	33	61	60	5	5	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	31	30	66	65	4	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	35	34	59	58	6	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	24	64	63	11	11	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	25	25	67	66	9	9	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	20	20	59	58	20	20	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	17	73	72	7	7	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	25	25	63	62	3	3	2	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	16	16	73	72	12	12	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	20	57	56	19	19	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	19	59	58	14	14	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	31	30	56	55	9	9	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	35	34	59	58	6	6	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>the following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.



13 November 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Abbot Beyne School, Burton-on-Trent, DE15 0JL

Our thanks to all of you who shared your views about the school with us. We were impressed by your pride in the school and loyalty to it. Your headteacher and all the staff have worked very hard to provide you with a good education. The main points we want to report about your school are as follows.

- You told us you enjoy lessons especially when they are stimulating and interesting and it is not surprising that you make better progress in these lessons than in those that are less interesting. You have positive attitudes to learning, although some of you get distracted when you are not directly engaged by the lesson activities.
- You make good progress in your time at the school. Attainment in terms of results is broadly average, though good or better in some subjects, such as the visual arts, than in others. However, there is still room for improvement. You work hard to meet your targets. We have asked the school to ensure that lessons always engage you fully and stimulate you to attain even better results. You work hard in the sixth form and make good progress.
- The staff work extremely hard to provide you with all the support you need to do well. They set you challenging targets but make sure you get the help you need to achieve these. Those of you who find learning difficult or have disabilities are provided with support that matches your needs well and helps you make good progress.
- You told us that you feel safe in school and that any bullying is dealt with quickly and effectively. Behaviour has improved and so has your attendance which is now above average. Please keep this up.
- You study a suitable range of subjects both in the main school and in the sixth form.
- Provision in the sixth form is good and improving. Sixth form students make a good contribution to school life.

We think Abbot Beyne will continue to improve. You can play an important part in making that happen.

Yours sincerely

Peter Limm
Her Majesty's Inspector

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