

# Abbey Grange Church of England Academy

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	137083
<b>Local authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	385572
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 February 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Clive Moss HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,223
<b>Of which number on roll in the sixth form</b>	204
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anne Wilson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carol Kitson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 May 2009
<b>School address</b>	Butcher Hill Leeds LS16 5EA
<b>Telephone number</b>	0113 2757877
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Clive Moss

Steven Goldsmith

Robert Birtwell

James McGrath

James Kidd

Her Majesty's Inspector

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 48 lessons taught by 46 teachers. Telephone discussions were held with parents and carers. The inspectors met with groups of students and spoke with them informally in lessons and around the school, and governors; and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the academy's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, analyses of surveys of parents' and carers' views carried out by the academy, records of monitoring of the quality of teaching, safeguarding documentation, records relating to support for individual students, policies such as the academy's equalities scheme, and records relating to behaviour, including the racist incidents log. The inspectors looked at 176 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 183 from students, and 46 from members of staff.

## Information about the school

Abbey Grange C of E Academy is larger than the average secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, but has risen since the previous inspection. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is average and has risen since the previous inspection. The proportion of students with English as an additional language is below average. The proportion of students with special educational needs supported at the 'school action' level is below average; it is well below average for those with a statement of special educational needs. The academy is a specialist school for the humanities. It meets the government floor standards, which set minimum expectations for attainment and progress. It holds a nationally-recognised award for the quality of its work in study support. The school has changed its status and become an academy since the previous inspection. A separate section 48 inspection, on behalf of the Diocese of Ripon and Leeds, took place at the same time as this inspection.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- The academy provides the students with a good education. There are particular, significant strengths in its excellent provision for the students’ social, moral, spiritual, and cultural development, and in the quality of the support given to individual students who either need additional help, or who are at risk of underachieving. The sixth form is good.
- The students achieve well. The quality of teaching is routinely good. The teachers inculcate good learning habits in the students, who respond well. The students are keen to learn and seize the opportunities they are provided with avidly. As a result, they make good progress in lessons. However, the teaching does not provide them with sufficient opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. There is some excellent practice in the marking of the students’ work, but the quality is too variable, as it was at the previous inspection. Also, some parents and carers do not receive enough information with sufficient detail, or at appropriate times to enable them to support their children’s learning to best effect.
- The students are polite, good-humoured and dignified young people, who delight in conversation and discussion on a broad range of issues and conduct themselves sensibly and safely around the school. Students from all backgrounds mix together very well.
- The calm and orderly atmosphere and the ethos for learning that pervades the academy reflect good leadership and management. There have been significant changes in personnel and in the status of the academy since the previous inspection, both of which are leading to new and unfamiliar ways of working. Nevertheless, generally, the students, parents and carers, and the staff continue to express high levels of confidence in the academy.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure consistently high levels of challenge for all students by:
  - providing frequent and regular opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own learning
  - using techniques for questioning students and involving all of them in thinking about and discussing topics deeply
  - providing feedback during lessons that is focused on pushing them to higher levels
  - marking the students' work so that they have clear commentary and guidance that routinely challenges them to achieve at higher levels.
- Enable parents and carers to contribute fully to the achievement of their children by:
  - providing them with sufficient and appropriate information about their children's progress and attainment
  - ensuring that they receive the information sufficiently frequently and at useful times throughout the year
  - offering them clear guidance about the most effective ways of supporting their children's learning
  - ensuring that dialogue between the school and parents and carers facilitates mutually beneficial partnerships.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Overall, the students make better progress than might be expected, given their starting points, including those from minority ethnic groups and those with English as an additional language. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make better progress than similar pupils nationally and reach higher levels of attainment. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is consistently high and above average in the sixth form. A greater proportion of students complete their sixth-form courses than is the case nationally. Most parents and carers agree that their children are making good progress. A combination of circumstances resulted in untypically weak performance in English in 2011. The academy's data show that the students' progress and attainment in English have now returned to the levels seen more usually in previous years. This was confirmed by scrutiny of work and lesson observations during the inspection. For example, in an outstanding English lesson, the relentless sense of challenge created by the teachers' sophisticated questioning elicited high-level responses from the students, who made rapid progress and took evident pleasure in each other's achievement.

Generally, learning proceeds at a brisk pace in lessons. The students exhibit very positive attitudes and sustain good levels of concentration throughout. They apply themselves diligently to the tasks set and maintain a good work rate. They answer questions articulately and fluently and show considerable capacity to think deeply and to reflect on difficult topics. The students rise to a challenge very well and their oral contributions to lessons demonstrate their capacity to think deeply and reflect on complex issues, when given the opportunity. Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress in lessons as a result of well-conceived, individualised support.

## Quality of teaching

The teachers have good knowledge of their subjects. They plan lessons thoughtfully, with a variety of activities that sustain the interest of the students well. The school uses a variety of strategies to support both groups and individuals who need additional help. The students receiving additional support speak highly of it. Teachers focus well on developing the students' literacy, communication, and numeracy skills in a wide variety of subjects. Lessons provide many imaginative opportunities for the students to develop their social, moral, spiritual, and cultural awareness, from a sociology lesson in which the students discussed issues of social inequality, to a history lesson in which the students gave very impressive responses to complex issues connected with the Treaty of Versailles.

Most parents and carers responding to the inspection questionnaire think that their children are taught well, as do most of the students. The inspection evidence supports that view. In the best lessons observed by the inspectors, the teachers ensured a good level of challenge for the students. Such lessons provided good opportunities for students to learn independently and be actively involved in solving meaningful problems and had a powerful effect on the students' confidence. They involved the teachers asking increasingly probing questions of the students, who were enabled to engage in debate about significant issues. The teachers' approach ensured that every student took part; there was no hiding place in the lesson! More generally, however, the students were not invited to comment on each other's contributions, ask their own questions, or provided with enough feedback on their answers. The students with whom the inspectors spoke were able to state how well they were doing and knew what they could do to improve. The inspectors found excellent examples of clear and detailed marking in students' work, but not consistently. The marking does not provide sufficiently clear guidance often enough aimed at challenging the students to reach even higher standards. In a minority of lessons, students learn passively, because the teaching does not provide opportunities for them to engage with the learning actively, or to show initiative and take responsibility for developing their own learning.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students settle into the academy quickly; for example, one Year 10 student who had joined only a few weeks before the inspection, told an inspector how he had been helped to feel very much at ease very quickly. The staff show constant concern to promote the students' welfare. Sixth-form students are integrated fully into the life of the academy. They contribute significantly to the purposeful learning ethos that permeates the academy, for example, by being actively involved in lessons with younger students, in order to add to the support the younger students receive.

Almost all parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire said that their children feel safe at the academy and a clear majority endorsed that view strongly. The view is echoed in other surveys carried out by the academy and in the comments of students. Attendance is high. The students, the staff, and parents and carers particularly report that behaviour is good typically. The students told the inspectors that bullying and instances of racist behaviour were rare and handled promptly, sensitively and effectively when they occur. They admitted that homophobic language was used from time to time, but were unequivocal in saying this is not tolerated by the staff. The students have themselves led assemblies on the subject of homophobic bullying and student anti-bullying ambassadors take the initiative in highlighting the dangers of different forms of bullying and how it can be tackled. The rates of short-term exclusions for misbehaviour are below average and the

number of permanent exclusions is half the national average. Discussions with the students confirmed that the academy works very effectively with students to help them improve their behaviour, so that individuals are increasingly involved less in disciplinary matters. There are few instances of individuals receiving multiple short-term exclusions or referrals to the school's internal isolation provision. However, boys and students with special educational needs are more likely to receive a short-term exclusion than those from other groups.

## **Leadership and management**

The governing body is ambitious for the school and keen to support the staff in improving it from an already strong base. The students' attainment is increasing. The proportion of students gaining higher GCSE grades is improving consistently, faster than nationally, so that the extent to which the academy is above the national average is increasing. Similarly, there is a clear, improving trend in A-Level results in the sixth form. The trends demonstrate the academy's good capacity to improve. Performance in the specialist subjects is significantly better than for those subjects nationally.

Clear management structures ensure that the staff are involved routinely in discussing the effectiveness of their work. Systems for monitoring and analysing the progress of students are much improved since the previous inspection and being used much more consistently throughout the academy. The school uses a wide range of partnerships with other educational establishments and external agencies successfully to support improvements in the quality of teaching, including in the sixth form.

The curriculum meets the needs of the students well, including in the sixth form. It is adapted to meet individual needs. Provision for the social, moral, spiritual, and cultural development of the students is excellent, involving exemplary widespread practice throughout the curriculum. It is valued particularly highly by parents and carers. Its impact is summed up by a comment from an elderly member of the community who had worked with the students to learn how to use a mobile 'phone; 'The students were very helpful and nothing was too much for them.' Generally, parents and carers hold the academy in high regard and the academy operates a range of mechanisms for keeping them informed. The inspectors received a number of comments praising aspects of the academy's work, often involving examples of the support provided to individual students experiencing difficulties. Equally, however, and even amongst responses that were positive about the academy, there were parents and carers who were keen to improve the quality of the dialogue they have with the academy, so that they become better able to support their children's learning. Amongst their comments, they pointed to variations in the marking of their children's work that meant they were unable to help the students respond, a lack of information at appropriate times to enable them to understand their children's targets and to gauge their children's progress in order to be able to provide support, and difficulties experienced in establishing a productive dialogue with the academy.

Safeguarding checks are carried out and recorded carefully. The governing body ensures that it keeps safeguarding and health and safety policies and practice under regular review. The academy has in place the relevant policies and plans to promote equalities. These have led to some excellent examples of work with the students, for example in sociology lessons about gender issues and crime. The academy identifies individuals who are at risk of underachieving and provides good support. Also, it identifies variations between the attainment of different groups and has established a clear priority to reduce the differences.

## 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add up exactly to 100.



## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



10 February 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Abbey Grange Church of England Academy, Leeds, LS16 5EA**

Thank you for talking to my colleagues and me and making us welcome when we visited your academy recently. The inspectors spoke with you, looked at your work, read the results of questionnaires filled in by you, the staff and your parents and carers, and spoke with some of your teachers. Here is a brief summary of the main findings, which I hope will be of interest to you.

- Abbey Grange provides you with a good education. It is improving well all the time. This is also true of the sixth form.
- You make good progress overall from your starting points when you join the academy. Your attainment is high and it is improving well and faster than nationally.
- Your attendance is high. That is very commendable.
- Your behaviour is good. The inspectors took note of the way you get on so well together and of how you respond to the teachers well, how you conduct yourselves around the academy.
- You get much enjoyment from learning and find lessons interesting. The quality of the teaching is good and those of you who need extra help are supported very well.
- Your social, moral, spiritual, and cultural development is excellent. It is reflected in many aspects of your work, your behaviour, and the relationships you establish in and out of school.

I have asked the staff and the governing body to make sure that there are even more opportunities for you to take the initiative in lessons and exercise responsibility for your own learning, including through the marking of your work and the feedback you are given. I have asked the school also to add to the ways in which it works with your parents and carers, so that they are fully able to give you the support that they want to.

Yours sincerely,  
Clive Moss  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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