

# Abraham Moss High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105560
<b>Local authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	377265
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 October 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Janet Palmer 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>	Community
<b>Age range of students</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of students</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of students on the school roll</b>	1,200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr B Dodds
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr D J Watchorn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 January 2009
<b>School address</b>	Crescent Rd Crumpsall Manchester M8 5UF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 45 lessons and 45 teachers. They held meetings with staff, groups of students and the Chair of the Governing Body; the School Improvement Partner was interviewed on the telephone. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including progress data and records relating to the safeguarding of students. They analysed the responses to questionnaires from 419 parents and carers, 254 students and 81 members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Students' attainment and the progress they make; especially those with lower levels of attainment when they enter the school and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school's strategies to tackle instances of student absence.
- The quality of leadership and governance and the ability to sustain improvements.

## Information about the school

This is a larger than average size secondary school serving an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is very high compared to the national average. Students originate from 59 different countries and speak more than 50 languages. Pakistani heritage students make up the largest ethnic group representing almost half of the students. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average. The school has a base for students with physical disabilities. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is higher than average; the numbers who enter and leave the school other than at the usual times is above average and there are approximately twenty percent more boys than girls.

The school is part of a large community complex that includes a leisure centre, an adult learning centre, theatre and a public library. The school has received the International School Award, the Gold Artsmark, the Sportsmark, the Extended Schools Award and has twice been awarded the Inclusion Quality Mark.

**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

Abraham Moss is a good school characterised by outstanding levels of care, guidance and support. Senior leaders have an ambitious vision for the school which is communicated well to staff, parents and carers. The school has developed a range of effective partnerships to promote learning and well-being. The school prides itself on its inclusive policies which permeate all aspects of its work. Engagement with parents and carers, particularly those who are hardest to reach, is outstanding, as is the effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion.

Students' attainment overall in GCSE examinations has improved year-on-year although it remains consistently below the national average. Low levels of attainment overall are affected by the intake of high numbers of students, often at different times of the year, with little or no knowledge of English. Nevertheless, in some subjects such as art and design, design technology, and computer studies, attainment is significantly above the national average. Students make good progress, given their starting points and for some groups and in some subjects progress is outstanding. From 2008 to 2010 progress in English and mathematics was significantly above the national average. Students of African heritage make outstanding progress overall and those who speak English as an additional language make outstanding progress in English.

The quality of teaching is good. Strong relationships underpin teaching and learning so that lesson time is used effectively. The well-planned deployment of informed and supportive teaching assistants aids the personal development, well-being and good progress of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The curriculum has a good range of courses to meet individual needs; extra-curricular options enhance provision and support students' good and outstanding personal development. The school provides a safe environment within which to learn; behaviour is good and exclusions are low. Strategies to improve attendance have been successful; taking account of Eid and the medical absences of some students with physical disabilities, attendance is satisfactory.

The governing body is developing its knowledge of the school with increasing levels of information from the headteacher and from departmental presentations, but they are at an early stage of monitoring the review of statutory policies and are not fully involved in setting priorities for improvement. Good awareness of the strengths and

priorities for the school by senior and middle leaders, effective development plans and the smooth running of the school indicate good capacity to improve.

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

- Embed the best departmental practice more widely across the school to continually raise attainment to be in line with that found nationally, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Improve overall attendance by continuing with successful strategies to reduce absenteeism.
- Enhance the effectiveness of the governing body to challenge and support the school by improving levels of governor training.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of students**

<b>2</b>
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Overall, achievement is good. Results for 2011 indicate that attainment has steadily improved and data shows that more students are making the higher levels of progress than in previous years. In the majority of lessons, students make good progress and are well motivated to learn. The outcomes for students' personal development and well-being are mostly good and outstanding. There is high participation in extra-curricular sports and students are aware of the importance of healthy eating. Students' understanding of the factors affecting physical and mental health and well-being is well supported through the curriculum in, for example, personal, social, health and economic education, food technology and BTEC sports. The extent to which students feel safe in the school is outstanding. Students, including the most vulnerable, reported that they are safe and confident in school; bullying is not tolerated and the very few incidents that occur are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Students are proud of and committed to their school community. Many participate in the focus and consultation groups, such as the Building Schools for the Future project and Learner Action Teams. Others offer support to younger students through peer mentoring and by acting as sports leaders.

Students' excellent social, moral and spiritual development is exemplified by the harmonious and diverse community that is the school. Students relate to each other very well and take responsibility for themselves and others including through systems of restorative justice. Their high levels of cultural understanding are developed through the strong tradition of art, drama, music and dance. Their global awareness is enhanced by many international links across the continents. Students are well prepared for their future economic well-being. They have an excellent understanding of future options and how to achieve their aspirations, good financial literacy and enjoy a good range of work experience and business links. Attendance is satisfactory and improving and students are punctual to lessons and ready and prepared to work.

*These are the grades for students' outcomes*

<b>Students' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Students' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of students' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which students feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Students' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which students adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which students contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which students develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Students' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching is good overall because teachers have good subject knowledge and vary activities well; as a result, students sustain their motivation in lessons. In the best lessons, teachers plan appropriately challenging work, good use is made of interactive whiteboard technology and good opportunities exist for creative and independent learning. For example, in a Year 11 history lesson students engaged in a well informed and enthusiastic debate on the Arab-Israeli conflict, well managed by the teacher to ensure that all participated. In less effective lessons, teachers do not use questioning sufficiently well to assess learning or deepen understanding and work is not always planned that is appropriate to individual needs. Assessment of students' work is good overall and the best marking makes clear what they need to do to improve.

The school's philosophy of inclusion runs through its curriculum design resulting in many good and some outstanding opportunities for learning. Alternative options including vocational courses and links with other institutions, such as a local special school helps provide for students' complex needs. The extensive range of extra-curricular activities ensures there is 'something for everyone'. Sports are particularly popular and contribute well to students' adoption of healthy lifestyles.

Excellent transition arrangements ensure that students who join in Year 7 or at other times settle into the school quickly and smoothly. Case studies for students whose circumstances make them vulnerable, including those whose needs are multifaceted, demonstrate the excellent support arrangements the school has with external agencies, parents and carers. The school tracks well students' progress in their personal well-being. Intervention strategies are carefully designed, contributing to the outstanding care, guidance and support students enjoy and exemplifying the school's deeply embedded concern for every student's individual progress.

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

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Senior leaders communicate well their ambitions for the school. Staff at all levels are well supported in their professional development resulting in a highly motivated and committed team. The monitoring of teaching and learning is robust and informs development planning and staff training. The tracking of students' progress is well established in Key Stage 4 and informs effective interventions. Tracking at Key Stage 3 is in the early stages of development. The governing body has an understanding of the school's strengths and priorities as presented by the headteacher and subject departments but is not involved in improvement planning that is informed by its own monitoring and evaluation of the school's effectiveness.

The school's work with students whose circumstances make them vulnerable, including new overseas arrivals at the early stages of speaking English, is greatly enhanced by its success in engaging parents and carers and this has led to some excellent outcomes for these students. Regular consultation evenings together with interim and end of year reports keep parents and carers well informed of their child's progress. Parenting classes on behaviour and attendance and on how to support their child's learning are highly appreciated. Partnership working is central to all aspects of the school's work. Many partnerships are specifically tailored to meet the individual care needs of students. Academic partnerships with post-16 providers and local universities help extend students' ambitions and support their careers guidance. The school's excellent work on promoting equality and tackling discrimination is exemplified by its deep understanding of its own community and the celebration of diversity evident around the school. The school's work has been recognised nationally by its award of the Inclusion Quality Mark.

The school has robust safeguarding practices. These include safe recruitment procedures, clear guidance and principles on child protection and sound risk assessments.

*These are the grades for the leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>

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<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## **Views of parents and carers**

Approximately one third of parents and carers gave their views and the great majority of responses were supportive of the school and its management. A very small minority did not feel that the school helped their child have a healthy lifestyle or took account of their suggestions and concerns; inspectors judged these aspects to be outstanding. A few did not feel that the school dealt effectively with unacceptable behaviour; inspectors judged behaviour to be good overall. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers reported that their child enjoyed school; most felt their child was making sufficient progress and was safe. Ninety five percent of those who expressed a view were happy overall with their child's experience at the school.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of students registered at Abraham Moss High School 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 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 419 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,200 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	181	43	226	54	7	2	3	1
The school keeps my child safe	172	41	227	54	12	3	3	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	158	38	226	54	28	7	4	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	149	36	248	59	10	2	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	161	38	236	56	13	3	3	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	157	37	212	51	33	8	7	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	138	33	219	52	44	11	6	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)	165	39	220	53	14	3	3	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	135	32	247	59	19	5	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	161	38	196	47	37	9	13	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	116	28	236	56	41	10	9	2
The school is led and managed effectively	135	32	246	59	15	4	4	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	185	44	212	51	12	3	2	0

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 students' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its students well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its students.
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 students. 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Student referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and student referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a student in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the students' 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 students acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of students.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets students' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which students are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the students' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**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.**



14 October 2011

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Abraham Moss High School, Manchester, M8 5UF**

I would like to thank you for welcoming the inspection team to your school. I am pleased to be able to report that your school provides you with a good education with some features that are outstanding. These were the things that we found during our visit.

- Abraham Moss is well led by the headteacher and senior team.
- You make good progress during your time at the school. Your GCSE results are the best in the school's history. The majority of your teachers make lessons interesting and work to ensure that you progress as well as you can. In turn, you behave well in class and show enthusiasm for your work.
- The care, guidance and support you receive are outstanding and contribute significantly to your progress and well-being. You told us that you enjoy school and feel safe.
- The school provides a good range of curriculum options and extra-curricular sports activities to match your needs and interests.
- Your attendance has improved, but some of you still do not attend school regularly and this is affecting your chances to succeed.
- You make a very positive contribution through the student voice in school and by helping younger students through activities such as sports leadership.
- You have a very good understanding of a range of cultures and traditions and show respect for others.

You are rightly proud to be members of Abraham Moss High School. Your teachers and the staff have worked hard to bring about improvements and they want to carry on doing this. To help them, I have asked the leadership team to continue helping you achieve the best results you can in all subjects and further improve the school's overall attendance figures. We have asked the school governors to make sure that improvements continue.

Yours sincerely,

**Janet Palmer**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

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