

Abbey View

Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury, GL20 5SW

Inspection dates 19–20 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Students' achievement is not consistently good enough in English, mathematics and science.
- Not all teachers know the gaps in students' learning and do not provide activities to close these gaps. As a result, some teaching does not help students to make good progress.
- There are too many fixed-term exclusions.
- Too many students do not attend school as often as they should.
- The school's behaviour policy is not consistently applied by staff to ensure that students' behaviour is good.
- The governing body has been too reliant on the Chair of the Governing Body and the Principal in evaluating the school's effectiveness.
- The school's website does not comply with the funding agreement the school has with the Secretary of State for Education.

The school has the following strengths

- The school ensures that, where appropriate, students return to mainstream education and make good progress.
- There is good and better teaching in the school that can be used as a basis to develop wider, more effective practice.
- Students in Years 10 and 11 make good progress and achieve well in their option subjects.
- Most students leave Year 11 with a place in education, training, apprenticeship or employment.
- Pastoral support provided by staff ensures that students feel safe in school.
- Students feel that they have someone they can rely on and who will deal with any concerns.
- The interim leadership team has already helped attendance and standards in literacy to improve.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited six parts of lessons, a tutorial, and looked at a selection of students' books. She also observed students at the start of the school day, during break and as they moved around the school.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including minutes of meetings of the governing body, achievement data on students' current progress and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- At the time of the inspection, most students were in Year 11. On the afternoon of the first day of the inspection, Year 11 students were taking their science GCSE examination.
- The inspector held formal discussions with the Principal, both vice principals, three representatives from the governing body and a group of students. Informal discussions were also held with students during the school day.
- There were not enough responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, to take into account.
- Ten questionnaires returned by staff were taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Steffi Penny, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- In September 2013 the headteachers of Chipping Camden, Cleeve and Tewkesbury Schools became the directors of the CCT Trust. They set up Abbey View as a free school to offer alternative provision for young people who find the demands of a mainstream education difficult and for those who are at risk of permanent exclusion. Abbey View School evolved from the alternative provision previously used by the three schools. The previous provision was not subject to an inspection by Ofsted.
- The school is registered for students from 11 to 18 years old. Generally, students are in the age range of 14 to 16 years old. To date no student has joined the sixth form.
- The number of students on the school roll frequently changes, as some students only stay on the school roll for a few days or weeks. The maximum number on roll is 40 students to age 16 with two part-time places available in the sixth form. A few students on the school roll have never attended because they or their parents have not accepted the allocation of a place at this school.
- All students are dually registered on the school roll and on the roll of the mainstream school that referred them to, and commissioned a place at, Abbey View. The school does not accept direct applications from parents.
- There are a higher number of referrals for students in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7, 8 and 9. Slightly more referrals are made for boys than girls.
- Approximately one third of students are entitled to free school meals, this and the proportion of looked after children vary throughout the year. The pupil premium funding for these students is built into the cost of the placement.
- The proportion of students registered as disabled or with a specific special educational need fluctuates, but all students have some identified need related to turbulence in their past schooling or personal trauma.
- In the past, the school used the alternative vocational provision at The Tewksbury Launchpad, which is part of Gloucester College. This resource is currently not in use by the school.
- The planned retirement of the headteacher occurred the day after the completion of this inspection. The current Vice Principal has the role of Acting Principal until the arrival of the newly appointed Principal in September 2015.
- As the school is small most teachers act as middle-leaders for a specialist subject or area.
- This is the school's first full standard Ofsted inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement throughout the school by ensuring that all staff:
 - have accurate information about what students know, understand and can do so that they can use this information to fill any gaps in students' learning
 - provide students with learning activities that reinforce previous learning and rapidly extend their knowledge and understanding
 - consistently apply the school's behaviour policy.
- Ensure that commissioning schools and the governing body:
 - are provided with more regular reports that include accurate information about students' progress so that they can use this information to challenge and support the school to raise students' achievement
 - refresh the school's policies so that they accurately reflect school practice.
- Work more closely with the commissioning schools and the local authority to ensure that all students on the school's roll attend and get the education to which they are entitled.
- Ensure that the school's website complies with the funding agreement the school has with the Secretary of State for Education.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Changes to the leadership team to include two vice-principals with dedicated roles have provided the school with the capacity to continue to improve and be effectively managed during the change of Principal. Both vice-principals have high expectations of students' achievement and attendance. They have already shown the difference they have made to school improvement, by working with the Principal to raise attendance and ensure improvements in students' literacy. They, deservedly, have the confidence of the governing body, staff and students.
- Senior leaders, the governing body and the commissioning schools have not ensured that all students who are on the school's roll get the education to which they are entitled. This is because some students do not attend often enough and fixed-term exclusion rates although falling, are still too high.
- Close working relationships with partnership schools enable both sets of leaders to determine effectively when students are ready to return to a mainstream school. Where possible, students, particularly younger ones, are encouraged to reintegrate into a mainstream school. Since November 2013, 33% successfully returned to their mainstream school out of 82 student referrals.
- Monthly pastoral meetings are held with the leaders of the dual placement schools. This allows the schools to share information effectively about the progress students are making in controlling their behaviour and levels of anxiety. Weekly attendance information is also provided to the dual placement school. However, the information about the academic progress students are making is not shared so frequently or effectively.
- Pastoral support from dedicated staff enables students to feel secure when in school and to be able to share their concerns and worries. These staff ensure that the personal and emotional needs of students are met in order for them to be ready to learn and enjoy their time at school.
- The school has a core focus on the teaching of English, mathematics and science. Nevertheless, students in Years 7 to 9 have a similar experience to their peers in mainstream schools, in that they also experience a broad range of activities. In Years 10 and 11, students have a reasonable range of other subject options, such as creative arts and vocational aspects from which to choose. Through work in English, life skills, expressive arts, art and tutor time, the school effectively promotes students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Students are effectively prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The large majority of students who left the school at the end of Year 11 in 2014 took up places in education, training, apprenticeship or work. This was due to good quality careers guidance and support from school staff that helped to ensure students could follow their ambitions through informed choices and sensible courses.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Chair of the Governing Body has been a key member of the group. She is the lead governor for safeguarding, children who are looked after, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. She has ensured that the school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and the arrangements are effective. Other governors have not played their full part and have left too much for her and, in the past, the Principal to do. A consequence is that policies need to be refreshed and the school's website does not meet the requirements of the school's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education. The governing body has an inflated view of the quality of teaching throughout the school. This is because although well informed about students' attendance and behaviour, they have not paid regular enough attention to the rate of academic progress that students make. Nevertheless, where they have found teaching to be inadequate they have taken swift action to support staff and to follow through with any required remedial action. The governing body is aware of how the pupil premium funding is being spent and that it is effectively used.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement.
- Students are fully aware of the rewards and sanctions that the school uses to help manage behaviour. Students who spoke with the inspector thought the school rules were fair and well balanced, providing a good inducement for students to attend school and concentrate on learning.
- Most staff ensure that students follow the school's behaviour policy. However, not everyone consistently applies it. This means that sometimes when behaviour slips it is not dealt with as effectively or efficiently

as it should be. When this happens, it leaves students confused and staff unhappy about unresolved inconsistencies.

- The school is aware that there are too many fixed-term exclusions and that other sanctions need to be consistently used by all staff to de-escalate potential student outbursts.
- The behaviour of students at social times is good. They develop their social skills, with staff acting as good role models that students respond to and reflect back to staff and each other. Students' behaviour during transitions between lessons or activities is not as good, because staff need to keep reminding students how to behave and some adults are not as effective as others at getting students to conform with the required expectations.
- The school has investigated different school timetables to ensure that students are ready to learn at the start of the day and have sufficient breaks between lessons. Students report that the current arrangements are working well. Inspection evidence supports their view.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement.
- Safeguarding procedures are sound and practice is better than some of the school's published policies would indicate. For example, mobile phones are not used in school and students have a good understanding about e-safety and how to keep themselves safe. This good practice, although in place, is not detailed in the e-safety policy.
- Senior leaders have been successful at getting more students to attend Abbey View more regularly than they have other schools. Some students who previously did not attend school at all, now do. Students told the inspector this was because they had made a significant friend and now appreciated the 'second chance' that Abbey View School offered.
- Nonetheless, too many students still have an attendance rate below 80%. In addition, a few students on the school roll have never attended because of their own or their parents' refusal to accept the allocation of a place at this school. These students are not getting the education to which they are entitled.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time across the school is inconsistent. School records show that not enough students in all year groups in English, mathematics and science make consistently good progress. Sometimes this is because students have not attended frequently enough. However, not all teachers make sure that the tasks that they set the students are appropriate to either reinforce previous learning or increase students' knowledge and understanding. This is because not all staff have an accurate enough understanding about what students have learned and can do.
- The quality of marking and feedback to students about how to improve their work varies between subjects. It is best in English in Year 11 where students know how to make small incremental improvements to their work and gain extra marks as a result of careful guidance.
- Students' behaviour is good in lessons where the task set by the teacher is interesting and set at the right level. Where this is not the case students become anxious that they cannot do the task, get frustrated because they do not understand the relevance of the activity or are bored and become disruptive.
- Most teachers carefully construct the curriculum so that it encompasses important items that are in the news that will support and help students' understanding of the world around them. English is a prime example of preparing students to be good citizens with a full appreciation of British values, the right of law and equality. Students investigate and interrogate issues such as immigration and drug culture through their iGCSE English coursework. Frequently this has led to students moving from more extreme views to having a greater understanding of others and of the impact that they have on others.
- Students reported, and school documentation confirmed, that those students who regularly attend Abbey View achieve clear improvements in their confidence, employability skills, motivation, and a greater appreciation of the value of learning. This is because of the good quality pastoral care and careful planning of the curriculum and teaching by most subject leaders.

The achievement of pupils**requires improvement**

- The school is provided with a range of information from their mainstream school but this does not always provide an accurate benchmark from which to measure students' progress during their time at Abbey View. Sometimes this is because there have been large gaps in the students' education.
- Those students who do not attend school as often as they should do not make enough progress. Their achievements do not reflect their capability as indicated from their Year 6 test scores, and they are not sufficiently prepared for life after school.
- Students who stay for very short periods, such as a few weeks, are provided with work from the commissioning school. This work is then assessed and marked by that school. The reports from these partnership schools indicate that students make good progress on these occasions. There are no discernible differences in achievement between the other different groups of students at the school.
- In the recent past, the school has not been sufficiently able to demonstrate exactly how effective it is in raising students' achievement, particularly in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10. To rectify this the school has developed a standardised mechanism to assess the students' starting points upon entry. This has been implemented this year and now provides a good range of information that the school uses to better identify and meet individual student needs more comprehensively.
- In 2014, most students in Year 11 attained English and mathematics results well below those predicted for them. Senior leaders have responded by measuring students' progress more systematically and by improving the way in which students are prepared for examinations as well as GCSEs. Students strongly appreciated being able to sit examinations and to practise answering questions under formal conditions. All students are now entered for functional skills examinations in English and mathematics. Students report how these changes have helped them gain in confidence and improve their examination technique.
- At the time of the inspection, of the 19 students on the school roll in Year 11, over 40% had attained at least a Level 1 Functional Skills qualification in English and mathematics. In addition, five students gained Level 2 in either English or mathematics. These results and the work seen in students' books support their own and the school's view that students are now better prepared for formal examinations and that standards are improving.
- Students are generally successful in completing their option courses. For example, in photography, all students taking the option in Year 11 have gained a distinction in their Business and Technology Education Council Level 1 Award, with students currently in Year 10 demonstrating they are making equally good progress.

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	139660
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	450029

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
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	39
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kim Mquail
Headteacher	Jane Hamshere
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01684292829
Fax number	01684276419
Email address	office@abbey-view.org.uk

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