

# Abbotsfield School for Boys

Clifton Gardens, Hillingdon, Uxbridge UB10 OEX

## Inspection dates

6–7 July 2016

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not significantly improved the quality of teaching in all subjects since the previous inspection. As a result, pupils do not make the progress they are capable of.
- Examination results for key stage 4 pupils are not as good as they should be. The most able and least able pupils do not make sufficient progress. Disadvantaged pupils make progress in line with other pupils nationally.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good enough. Some teachers accept work that is incomplete or untidy.
- While attendance overall is above the national average, it is significantly below average for White British pupils.
- Not enough teachers plan work at the right level for pupils. Teachers do not consistently check that work is challenging enough, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Middle leaders do not all secure the best possible outcomes in GCSE examinations, for example in humanities.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have, this year, focused sharply on improving standards in English. This is starting to take effect, and leading to pupils making better progress at key stage 4.
- The school works effectively to include all pupils in everything that it offers. It provides particularly good support for those who have autistic spectrum disorder. As a result, these pupils perform well.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and their conduct around the school is good. They are proud of their school.
- The pastoral care provided for vulnerable pupils enables them to make the most of their time in school.
- Students following traditional A-level subjects attain results that compare favourably with other students nationally.
- The governing body has become sharper in its understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses since the previous inspection.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective. Pupils feel safe and bullying is rare.

## Full report

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

- Improve the leadership of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
  - leaders are trained to identify how to improve pupils' attainment and progress and take swift action to do so
  - the quality of teaching is checked regularly and suitable action taken when it is not of a sufficiently high quality
  - subject leaders routinely share their expertise with other teachers
  - the progress that pupils make at key stage 4 and key stage 3 is systematically tracked, and those at risk of underachieving are quickly identified and supported to make better progress.
  
- Analyse information on attendance and take action so that all groups of pupils, particularly White British boys, attend regularly.
  
- Ensure that teachers become more effective by:
  - applying the school's assessment and learning policies consistently
  - using assessment information to plan activities that routinely challenge all pupils, particularly the most able and those that join the school with low prior achievement
  - giving pupils appropriate advice on how to improve their work so that they make faster gains in their learning
  - challenging poorly presented, unfinished or carelessly completed work.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### requires improvement

- Leaders have not secured consistently good teaching so that all groups of pupils can achieve well. This is particularly true for the most able pupils and those that join the school with low prior attainment.
- Leaders appropriately identify where teaching and learning need to improve to raise the rates of progress for all groups of pupils from their starting points. However, monitoring is not developed well enough across all departments in the school. Leaders have not evaluated the impact that training is having on standards in the school thoroughly enough. Nevertheless, there is evidence that teaching in English has improved this year and current pupils are now making at least expected progress.
- There is a lack of clarity about who is responsible for temporary teaching staff. As a result, cover work is not sufficiently challenging to meet the needs of all groups of pupils and too many do not make enough progress in their learning.
- Senior leaders are aware of the strengths of the school and the priorities for improvement. For example, they recognise that results in English at key stage 4 dipped in 2015. This led to them developing partnerships with a number of good and outstanding local schools and the local authority to tackle this concern. The partnership work is ensuring that heads of department can establish themselves quickly and begin to raise standards.
- Additional funding received through the pupil premium and the Year 7 catch-up programme is used well to make sure that pupils get the help needed to make better progress. For example, the use of a structured reading programme is contributing to pupils with low reading ages making better progress.
- Since the last inspection, leaders adapted the curriculum to meet the needs of most groups of pupils at the school. Pupils enjoy a range of academic, vocational and work-related courses. For example, construction, level 2 media and film studies are available alongside traditional subjects such as history and art. As a result, pupils in key stage 4 are now making better progress.
- Effective extra-curricular activities such as debating, art and a range of sports, such as cricket and football, develop pupils' well-being, their health and personal skills well.
- Leaders make sure that pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils treat each other with respect and take account of other people's views. In form groups, pupils have the chance to practise living in a democracy through participation in elections for the pupil councils.

### The governance of the school

- Following poor results in 2015, the governors commissioned an external review of governance. This was useful because it enabled them to sharpen their understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. For example, governors are now attached to specific departments. Increasingly they ask sharp and pertinent questions of leaders, and are holding them to account more effectively.
- Members of the governing body have a good range of skills and experiences in education and business. They use their expertise and training well to improve their effectiveness when monitoring the school's performance. They manage the school's finances effectively and make sure that the school's plans for the spending of pupil premium funds can demonstrate that it provides good value for money.
- Governors know about the links between teacher performance and pay progression and understand the work that leaders do to address underperformance.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Policies are up to date and reviewed regularly. Systems for protecting pupils who attend alternative provisions are used well to monitor their attendance and safety. The school ensures that staff know their responsibilities and can act on any concerns that may arise quickly. Staff have received training in the government's 'Prevent' strategy along with other regular training on child protection. Parents appreciate the safe culture that the school offers and its focus on supporting pupils and families.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable across subjects and within departments. Teachers do not always follow the school's expectations, such as using information about what pupils already know, understand and can do to support their planning. As a result, groups of pupils, particularly the most or least able, do not respond strongly or well to aspects of teaching, resulting in progress and rates of success being either accelerated over time in some subjects or held back in others.
- Teachers want pupils to do well, but too often they fail to take sufficient account of the needs of

individuals and different groups in their planning. Not all teachers challenge pupils to think or encourage them to exchange ideas during lessons. Too often, teachers accept work that is incomplete, messy or poorly presented.

- Teaching does not consistently provide work that is well matched to the range of attainment of pupils in the class. For example, in some mixed-ability teaching groups, the same work is given to all pupils without exploring with them the depth of answers they should try to achieve. As a result, some pupils finish quickly while others struggle to begin the work. Better teaching involves work that is well planned and explained so that low-, middle- and high-attaining pupils make equally good progress. This variability in teaching means that too few pupils in key stages 3 and 4 make expected progress from their starting points.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers display good subject knowledge and an enthusiasm for their subject. They skilfully question pupils to extend the pupils' learning and provide them with opportunities to think creatively about their work or reflect on the topic under consideration. Teachers' checks on the quality of pupils' work and progress are not consistently effective. In the best examples, teachers identify what pupils need to do to improve and give pupils time to reflect on the feedback. Some teachers provide opportunities for pupils to respond to advice and check their work for real understanding. Here, pupils make better progress.
- Parents and carers stated that home learning is inconsistent. Inspectors support this view; too often, home learning is not checked by teachers and this hinders pupils' progress. Where home learning is used well, it is detailed and provides pupils with a clear outline of what has to be achieved. This helps them to make good progress.
- The quality of support provided by the learning support assistants and learning mentors is often effective. Those with knowledge of the subject being taught often explain work slowly and clearly and help pupils to make progress. On occasions, however, support staff do not spot individual pupils who are struggling and neither do they respond firmly enough to eliminate low-level disruption.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** is good

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils adapt well to new arrivals in the school. They welcome those newly arrived from overseas and support those who are learning English as an additional language.
- Pupils respond well to assemblies that are thoughtful and focused on topical issues that widen their understanding of the world and develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils have learned about how to keep themselves safe and embrace tolerance in modern Britain while considering challenges such as extremism and gang culture.
- The pastoral care for vulnerable pupils enables them to make the most of their time in school. They are integrated well into the school. Pupils' positive relationships make them keen to learn and enjoy their time at their school.
- Pupils have a good awareness of the different types of bullying. For example, they know about cyber bullying and social network sites. Incidents of bullying are rare and pupils are confident that, if bullying should occur, it is dealt with quickly. The school tackles all forms of discrimination rigorously and actively promotes equality of opportunity.
- Pupils say that they are safe and the majority of parents who responded to the online Parent View survey agree that pupils are safe, well behaved and cared for. Parents considered that the school deals effectively with incidents of bullying and the inspectors agree.
- Most parents and pupils are positive about the careers education provided by the school. Pupils receive advice and guidance that is relevant and supports them to make informed choices about the next stage in their training, education or employment. As a result, pupils make successful choices, supported by their parents.
- On-site provision for a small cohort of pupils who have special educational needs is effective. Strong pastoral care supports this group of pupils very well.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are courteous and respectful towards one another and adults and they treat the school building with care. Pupils of all ages mix and get on well together. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere around the school.
- Pupils' positive attitudes for learning mean that they work hard and maintain concentration, particularly when they are given work that is challenging. They move sensibly around the school and they are very responsive to staff on duty. They cooperate very well at all times, including lunchtime.

- Much work has been done by leaders to address low levels of attendance; it is now broadly in line with the national average. However, a few pupils are persistently absent and the attendance of White British pupils continues to be a concern. Leaders are aware of this and are taking action to address this issue.
- Pupils usually arrive promptly but a few are occasionally late to lessons. Staff do not routinely check on the lateness of pupils.
- Pupils value the opportunities and activities provided for them at the school. Pupils are engaged in many charitable works through fund-raising activities and activities in the local community. Year 10 pupils currently leading on the 'Sky Sports Project' have the opportunity to take on a leadership role that supports their moral development.
- Exclusions are rare. Pupils receive high-quality support if behavioural issues emerge. This ensures that pupils are able to reflect on their behaviour and develop strategies to improve quickly.

## Outcomes for pupils

## require improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement. Following the previous inspection, GCSE results improved in both English and mathematics in 2014. However, in 2015, while results in mathematics showed sustained improvement, those in English dipped.
- The proportion of pupils attaining five GCSEs, at grade C or above, including English and mathematics, was significantly below the national average in 2015. The proportion of pupils making expected progress was also below the national average in mathematics and English.
- In mathematics in 2015, lower- and middle-attaining disadvantaged pupils made better progress than their peers. However, the most able disadvantaged pupils made similar progress to others in the school. In English, middle- and higher-attaining disadvantaged pupils made significantly less progress than their peers.
- In 2015, too few of the most able pupils made the progress expected nationally to gain the top grades in English and mathematics. Although the most able pupils' work is often well presented, in several subjects, such as humanities, there is limited evidence that they have developed additional or deeper understanding and knowledge than other pupils.
- In 2015, pupils' attainment was stronger in media studies, additional science, history and construction. However, in most subjects the proportion of pupils attaining higher grades was below their peers nationally.
- In all year groups, about two out of five pupils were below age-related expectations in their reading age on entry to the school. The school uses the Year 7 catch-up funding well to improve the reading skills of Year 7 pupils with very low reading ages. Leaders recognise the need to build on this work.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities make good progress in most subjects as their learning is well supported. Practically all pupils who receive support for special educational needs, particularly pupils eligible for the pupil premium, make at least the same progress as others. Pupils on roll in the resourced provision make similar progress to other pupils in the school.
- The small number of pupils who attend the on-site provision take a range of GCSE and work-related courses. This ensures that they remain engaged with their education. The school monitors the success of these pupils and they make good progress from their starting points.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

## are good

- Students who take A-level courses achieve well overall. There are particular strengths in mathematics, history and economics. Students make good progress from their starting points, particularly in Year 13.
- Students on vocational programmes make equally good progress. They attain pass grades that enable them to move forward in their careers or on to the next stage of their education and training.
- Teaching is good on the 16 to 19 study programmes. Teachers have good subject knowledge to support learning at this level, and access to regular training, as required, to keep their knowledge of the relevant specifications up to date and to build on their experience.
- Plans are underway for students in Year 12 to have access to good-quality work experience placements where required. This is expected to complement the existing robust system that provides students with impartial careers advice and guidance.
- Students on the 16 to 19 study programmes benefit from excellent facilities. They have access to recreational facilities and opportunities to sit and work quietly on their own to develop independent study skills, and have their own purpose-built learning centre.
- Leadership of the 16 to 19 study programmes is effective. It is overseen securely by the headteacher. He constantly seeks ways to expand the range of programmes and to make the school more attractive to

external students. Currently, about half of the Year 11 cohort transfer to Year 12. Many parents like the availability of level 3 provision within the context of the school.

- Leaders have had a good impact on improving the rates of attendance, which compare favourably with the rest of the school. Students use their non-study time very well to take part in voluntary leadership across the school, while others serve as positive role models for younger pupils.
- The school monitors and celebrates the destinations and successes of past students who go on to higher education. For example, there is a destinations board at the front of the school which lists where students have moved on to from the school. This is starting to motivate other, younger pupils to aim high.
- Outcomes for students who re-sit English or mathematics GCSE are not as strong as they could be. While students make progress in line with national norms, not all groups on the 16 to 19 study programmes make accelerated progress. Nevertheless, the school provides continuous support for these students during their time at the school to enable them to eventually achieve at least a GCSE grade C in these subjects.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	102449
<b>Local authority</b>	Hillingdon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10001988
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	463
<b>Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	116
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ransford Stewart
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Bland
<b>Telephone number</b>	01895 237350
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.abbotsfield.hillingdon.sch.uk">www.abbotsfield.hillingdon.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:Office@abbotsfield.org">Office@abbotsfield.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6–7 November 2013

## Information about this school

- Abbotsfield School for Boys is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. Provision for 16 to 19 study programmes was established in September 2012.
- The school has specialisms in mathematics and computing, combined with applied learning.
- A little over half of the pupils are from White British, Irish or 'other White' or 'mixed White' backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average. The government provides additional funding to support these pupils because they are at particular risk of underachieving.
- The school has resourced provision for a small number of pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders.
- All provision for pupils on alternative programmes is arranged by the school. A very small number of pupils follow courses with various providers off-site, and a small proportion attend the on-site provision.
- A small minority of pupils in key stage 4 and in the sixth form follow vocational courses at the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 35 lessons, of which 10 were joint observations with senior leaders.
- The inspectors made a number of short visits to assemblies, tutorial sessions and lessons.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the school senior leadership and management team, middle leaders, newly qualified teachers and other key members of staff.
- A telephone discussion took place with the local authority representative, and a meeting was held with the chair of the governing body and other governors.
- Members of the inspection team held meetings with groups of pupils representing all age and ability groups in the school. Discussions also took place with pupils informally.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and scrutinised documents including the school's own evaluation of how well it is doing, the school improvement plan and statistical information about pupils' achievement, attendance and exclusions.
- The inspectors considered 13 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and 38 responses to the staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents. These included the school's action plans for 2015–2017, information on pupils' standards and progress, records of behaviour and attendance and evidence of systems for protecting and safeguarding pupils.

## Inspection team

Christopher Doel, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Hayley Follett	Ofsted Inspector
Louise Voden	Ofsted Inspector



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