

Inspection of a good school: Abbey Grange Church of England Academy

Butcher Hill, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS16 5EA

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 March 2022

Outcome

Abbey Grange Church of England Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Abbey Grange has a Christian ethos. There are pupils from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. They travel from many parts of the city to attend the school. One parent said, 'My daughter wants to come to school.' Pupils enjoy school. Despite some long journeys on public transport, pupils' attendance is high. Pupils say that behaviour in lessons is good. They enjoy being able to focus on their work without disruption. There is a calm, positive learning atmosphere in classrooms. Pupils are respectful and kind towards one another. The corridors and staircases are busy, but pupils feel safe. They welcome the fact they see so many staff on corridors.

Staff know the pupils well. Staff take incidents of bullying seriously. Pupils say that bullying is rare. Most pupils and parents believe that staff are effective in dealing with bullying if it does happen. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They have established a curriculum which enables pupils to succeed academically. Leaders see the importance of developing pupils' love of reading. Leaders and staff have a strong focus on the development of pupils' character and personal qualities.

Many extra-curricular activities have restarted after the pandemic. Pupils enjoy the variety of clubs.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Over time, pupils make strong progress. Since the last inspection, leaders have reviewed the curriculum. There are detailed curriculum plans in place for each subject. Plans highlight the sequence by which pupils learn important knowledge. Curriculum leaders have identified the 'golden nuggets' of knowledge that teachers need to stress the most. Teachers emphasise this knowledge regularly, so that pupils can remember it. Lessons usually start with an activity for pupils to recap on content they have learned previously. There is also time in lessons for pupils to work on written tasks independently, with instant feedback from their teacher afterwards. Pupils can talk in detail about what they have learned and remembered across the curriculum. Until this year, key stage 3 had ended at the end of Year 8. Leaders have now established a three-year key stage 3.

In the past, pupils' progress in languages was weak. This is no longer the case. Pupils achieve equally well now in French and Spanish.

Effective systems are in place to support weaker readers. There is a real focus across the school on reading for pleasure. On a regular basis, for example, all pupils stop what they are doing to read.

The support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. Pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as everyone else. Leaders provide teachers with up-to-date information on the additional learning needs of individual pupils. In lessons, teachers use this information to make the adjustments that pupils with SEND need to do well. Leaders also make effective use of teaching assistants to support pupils effectively. A minority of parents are unconvinced that the school's approach to supporting pupils with SEND is the right one. Leaders are already aware of this. They are talking to all parents of pupils with SEND in an effort to respond to these concerns.

Leaders prioritise the personal development curriculum across the school, including in the sixth form. The Christian ethos of the school is central to their work. Learning activities relating to character education are a particular strength. Leaders build resilience in the pupils through the challenge in the academic curriculum. They support this with a wide range of visiting speakers. The extra-curricular life of the school is strong. Most pupils take up something on offer. However, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils taking part in extra-curricular activities is not as high as it might be. Form tutors deliver a considerable part of the personal, social and health (PSHE) education programme. There is some variation in the quality of learning. As a result, pupils cannot always remember the subject content in as much detail as they do in other subjects.

Staff see that leaders at all levels are mindful of their workload. However, leaders are aware that a minority of staff feel less positive about this issue. Leaders have set up a 'well-being' group. They are demonstrating by their actions that they will listen to and involve this staff group in decisions that affect their working life. Leaders have agreed, for example, to involve staff in preparing next year's school calendar.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

No stone is left unturned in order to keep pupils safe and well. Safeguarding is well led. Training for staff is comprehensive. As well as regular sessions during training days, there are short safeguarding reminders for staff every week. This 'bitesize' approach is effective. 'Don't do nothing' is the key message of all training. As a result, staff are vigilant and act promptly should they have a concern. Leaders respond very quickly to individual safeguarding cases, using a wide variety of external agencies when necessary.

Pupils feel safe. Their strong relationships in the school mean pupils have an adult they can talk to. Pupils have confidence that staff will help them solve any problems.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Each subject presently covers the national curriculum in two years. As a result, pupils learn subject content in less detail than they should. Leaders must ensure that curriculum leaders make maximum use of the move to a three-year key stage 3 so that pupils learn the national curriculum in sufficient detail.
- Form tutors play a central role in helping pupils learn PSHE. However, some form tutors are more confident than others in this aspect of their work. As a result, pupils do not always remember PSHE subject content as well as they should. Leaders should provide further support and training for form tutors in this role.
- Leaders realise that fewer disadvantaged pupils than non-disadvantaged take part in extra-curricular activities. Many disadvantaged pupils are missing out on the benefits gained from these activities. Leaders must continue to strive to remove the barriers which prevent disadvantaged pupils from taking up these opportunities.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school to be good in February 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	137083
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10211473
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1589
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	353
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Mr Charles Glenn
Principal	Simon Prinsep
Website	www.abbeygrangeacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is the founder member of the Abbey Multi-Academy Trust.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a change of principal. The present principal took up post in September 2021.
- The academy uses two alternative providers: The Stephen Longfellow Academy and the Pennington Centre (an inclusion unit managed by Ralph Thoresby School on behalf of The North West Leeds Inclusion Partnership).

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the principal, senior leaders, representatives of the trust and governors, including the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, modern foreign languages, art and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector also visited additional lessons in food technology, science, history, religious education and geography. He spoke to pupils in those lessons about their learning.
- Inspectors met with leaders, members of staff and pupils to evaluate the arrangements for safeguarding in school. They looked at records of actions taken by leaders to protect pupils at risk. They also looked at bullying logs. Inspectors checked whether members of staff understood the safeguarding policy and procedures. They checked whether pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including online.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school's development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and several policies.
- Inspectors spoke informally with pupils at breaktime and lunchtime.
- They met formally with groups of pupils across the age range.
- Parents' views were taken into account by considering the 239 responses to Parent View, including the 28 written responses. Inspectors also considered the 93 responses from staff to their online inspection questionnaire and the 527 responses from pupils.

Inspection team

David Pridding, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Featherstone	Ofsted Inspector
Carl Sugden	Ofsted Inspector

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