

Inspection of Abbeyfield School

Stanley Lane, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 3XB

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct. Pupils are strongly encouraged to respect their peers and adults, and most do. However, there are a small minority of pupils who do not demonstrate sufficient respect for others. Pupils who need help managing their behaviour receive the right support. Bullying does not occur often. When it does, leaders take effective action to resolve it. Most parents and carers say their child is happy and does well at Abbeyfield school.

Pupils make many positive contributions to the life of the school. For example, sixth-form students are mentors for younger pupils. They help them with their reading, numeracy or social skills. There are meaningful opportunities for pupils to be leaders. Some pupils, for instance, are mental health and well-being champions. Other pupils are sports ambassadors or house leaders.

Leaders prepare pupils well for the future. Alongside their academic curriculum, pupils learn a range of useful life skills. For example, pupils learn about financial management and how to develop their character. Pupils are encouraged to demonstrate responsibility, respect and resilience. Younger pupils enjoy recording in their '3R' cards when they have shown these characteristics.

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

Leaders are ambitious for pupils to gain the knowledge they need to succeed in life. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils who are disadvantaged. At key stage 4, many pupils study the suite of subjects known as the English Baccalaureate. In the sixth form, there are ambitious programmes of study tailored to students' individual needs and aspirations.

The curriculum is well planned and sequenced. Leaders have considered carefully the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn. In the sixth form, leaders identify the subject-specific and technical vocabulary that students should know and use. In key stage 3, leaders have adapted the curriculum for a small number of pupils. These adaptations do not compromise its breadth or ambition.

In most subjects, teachers present subject matter clearly and use assessment to accurately check pupils' understanding. When teaching and assessment are strong, pupils develop detailed knowledge and skills. However, in some subjects, pupils do not always gain as much knowledge as possible because the curriculum is not implemented as intended. Leaders have designed a professional development programme to make the impact of teaching more consistent. This programme has not yet led to all the improvements that leaders intend.

Pupils with SEND are well known to staff and are well cared for. Leaders with responsibility for these pupils provide useful information to teachers to support their planning. Teachers use this to adapt the curriculum for most pupils. Nevertheless,

for a small minority of pupils with SEND, teaching does not meet their needs consistently well.

Leaders identify pupils who need support to improve their reading. However, the curriculum for pupils in the early stages of learning to read does not meet pupils' needs sufficiently. As a result, some pupils do not learn to read fluently and accurately. This means that they do not have a strong foundation for learning across the wider curriculum.

Leaders have devised a personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum that is tailored to each year group. Consequently, pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when online. They develop an understanding of how to keep mentally healthy. Although the PSHE programme is well planned, some aspects of the curriculum are less well implemented than others. This includes some elements of the sixth-form programme.

Pupils, including those in the sixth form, receive effective careers education information, advice and guidance (CEIAG). This includes information about technical education and apprenticeships. Leaders evaluate the curriculum for CEIAG carefully and make improvements when required. Pupils have useful encounters with the world of work. However, too few sixth-form students take up meaningful work placement opportunities.

Staff are proud of the school and enjoy working at it. Leaders and governors are supportive of staff's workload and well-being. Governors are experienced and committed to the school. They provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders. Governors ensure resources are well managed and that statutory requirements are fulfilled.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff understand the importance of sharing concerns about pupils' welfare. Leaders take swift and effective action to help to protect pupils.

Where necessary, leaders make appropriate referrals to safeguarding partners. Leaders work effectively with external partners to secure the support that pupils need. If leaders feel that support is not good enough, they are confident to challenge partners and escalate their concerns.

There are effective arrangements for the safer recruitment and management of adults working in the school. The school has appropriate policies and practices in relation to sexual harassment and abuse in and out of school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum is not implemented as intended. Where this is the case, some pupils do not gain as much knowledge as they could. Leaders should ensure that all pupils follow the planned curriculum in all subjects.
- The programme for pupils in the early stages of reading is not as effective as leaders intend. As a result, some pupils do not develop reading fluency and accuracy quickly enough. Leaders should ensure that the reading curriculum meets the needs of pupils in the early stages of reading.
- A small minority of pupils do not demonstrate enough respect for others. Leaders should ensure that all pupils meet their expectations for respectful behaviour and conduct.

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.

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	131969
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10240439
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	899
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	151
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Patrick Wintour
Headteacher	Nicholas Norgrove
Website	www.abbeyfield.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 and 16 March 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses two registered alternative provisions. It also uses three unregistered alternative provisions.
- There is a greater proportion of pupils with SEND and pupils who have an education, health and care plan than is seen nationally.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, curriculum leaders and members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, geography and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and examined the school's safeguarding records. Inspectors also spoke with a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- Inspectors spoke to an alternative provider used by the school and with officers from the local authority.

Inspection team

James Oldham, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Paul Nicholson	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew Collins	Ofsted Inspector
Tonya Hill	Ofsted Inspector

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