

Inspection of Abbey Park School

The Learning Campus, Redhouse Way, Swindon SN25 2ND

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to talk about their school. Leaders are ambitious for pupils. The new 'Abbey Park Proud' vision sets out the high expectations leaders have for pupils. Most pupils understand the raised expectations. As a result, pupils' behaviour in lessons is positive and focused. Behaviour during breaktimes is purposeful and calm. A minority of pupils sometimes behave in challenging ways. When this happens, leaders manage this behaviour effectively using many resources and strategies.

Pupils learn about bullying and unkind behaviours. A majority of pupils say bullying is not common. They are confident that when they report bullying, leaders will take it seriously and deal with it. However, leaders recognise that pupils do not always see the actions taken when dealing with reports.

Pupils have good relationships with staff. They feel safe and well supported. There are many opportunities for pupil leadership. For example, the school council works with local primary schools to run a 'buddy reader' programme. Pupils attend a wide range of clubs and activities, such as social justice, tabletop games and jewellery making, as well as sports and performing arts. Year 11 pupils attend subject catch-up clubs. They are positive about how these help them.

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

Leaders have taken a consistent approach to develop a broad and ambitious curriculum. Consequently, subject leaders have planned out a well-sequenced curriculum. They have identified the important knowledge they want pupils to know and remember. In some subjects, such as English, teachers adapt the curriculum well to meet individual pupils' needs. This remains ambitious and all pupils work towards the same learning.

Teachers help pupils to review their learning. This means pupils can remember more. Pupils use 'learning checklists' to understand what they have learned and how well. They know what they need to do to improve. Leaders ensure most pupils get appropriate extra help. However, a small number of pupils receive this extra help when other pupils are learning modern foreign languages. This means that when they return to languages, they have gaps in their learning. This hinders their learning of languages.

Leaders have high aspirations to ensure pupils can read with confidence and fluency. Through careful monitoring and tracking, leaders understand the reading needs of pupils. As a result, pupils get the right intervention at the right time. Pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read follow a systematic phonics programme. They build their confidence through lots of practice.

In lessons, pupils focus on their learning. This helps them to achieve. Pupils are keen to talk about what they know. For example, in history, Year 7 pupils eagerly

explain who the Tudor monarchs were and how their views of the church affected their reign.

Leaders want pupils to be ambitious and informed about their future choices. All pupils follow a well-planned programme of careers education. They learn about a broad range of careers and training. The personal, social, health and citizenship education curriculum (PSHCE) is carefully considered. Leaders adapt the curriculum to deal with relevant issues when they occur. Pupils learn about healthy relationships each year. The content is age-appropriate. Through the PSHCE programme, pupils learn about respect and tolerance. These values prepare them well for the future.

Teachers receive detailed information about the needs of pupils. They use this to plan carefully for pupils' learning. Staff supporting pupils in lessons are well trained. This means pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities get the support they need.

Leaders focus on professional development for all staff. The trust provides opportunities for leaders to work with leaders in other schools. Staff appreciate the work leaders do to manage workload. They feel supported. Governors and trustees provide a high level of support and challenge to leaders. They are all resolute in their vision for the school. Parents are positive about the improvements leaders have made at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure staff are well trained to see when a pupil may be at risk of harm. As a result, staff know what to do if they have concern.

Leaders work strategically across the trust and with external agencies to understand the risks pupils face. The members of the safeguarding team know their pupils and families well. They check the right support is in place when it is needed.

Leaders make sure pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, both online and in the community. Pupils' mental health and well-being are priorities. Pupils feel supported by the pastoral staff. They know where to find help when they need it.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Additional support for key stage 3 pupils is timetabled when other pupils are learning modern foreign languages. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge of the language curriculum. This hinders their learning. Leaders need to give careful thought to planned interventions to ensure there is equity of the curriculum for all pupils.

- A minority of pupils are responsible for a significant amount of the most challenging behaviours. Leaders manage this well. However, leaders do not evaluate the impact of the work they are doing. This means they do not have the information they need to identify what has been successful in managing behaviour. Leaders should evaluate the impact of their actions to inform future strategic planning.

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	145744
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10256578
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,156
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Matthew Dixon
Principal	Jon Young
Website	www.abbeyparkschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Abbey Park School is part of The Park Academies Trust.
- The school converted to become an academy on 1 October 2018. When its predecessor school, Abbey Park School, was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2016, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement 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.

- Inspectors held discussions with the principal, members of the senior leadership team, curriculum leaders, the chief executive officer of the trust and other trust leaders, and the chair of the local governing body.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, history, modern foreign languages and performing arts. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector examined school records. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and spoke with a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke to the alternative providers used by the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also viewed the responses to the pupil survey and the staff survey.

Inspection team

Rachel Hesketh, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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