

# Inspection of a good school: Abbey View

Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire GL20 5SW

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Inspection dates:

17 and 18 May 2023

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Abbey View offers short- and long-term placements for pupils who struggle to meet expectations in mainstream secondary schools, putting them at risk of permanent exclusion. Pupils attending Abbey View need support to improve their behaviour or their attendance, or both. Many pupils have significant challenges to overcome which have made it difficult, over time, for them to engage positively with their education. The school sets out to help pupils to overcome these barriers.

While attending the school, most pupils develop positive relationships with staff. They feel safe in school and say that staff are quick to intervene in the event of any bullying or meanness. Some lessons proceed without disruption. When this happens, pupils listen carefully and engage well with the curriculum. However, outside of classrooms, there is, at times, a disorderly atmosphere which undermines the school's work to establish the positive behaviours needed for learning.

Pupils are encouraged to be active and to find positive role models in the local community. For example, pupils attend a youth centre each week. Here, they socialise, play games and, increasingly, access advice and health services. Some pupils have taken up hobbies, such as fishing and boxing, following activities arranged by the school.

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

Pupils follow a curriculum which includes English, mathematics, science and information technology. All pupils study art and photography. Many pupils produce striking outcomes as a result of the well-designed art curriculum that is in place. Leaders have begun to broaden the range of subjects offered to pupils. For example, pupils in key stage 3 now study themes in history, geography and religious education. Increasingly, pupils in key stage 4 continue to study some of the subjects they selected at their secondary school.

Nevertheless, the curriculum does not reliably provide the knowledge and skills pupils need. For example, there is insufficient focus on arithmetic in mathematics and on

grammar and handwriting in English. Some pupils receive extra support with their reading. However, leaders are not rigorous in their use of assessment to identify reading problems. Pupils with insecure knowledge of phonics do not have the regular teaching they need to catch up.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit from supportive teaching. This helps them to build self-esteem when it comes to learning difficult curriculum content. Teachers present information clearly and check that each pupil understands. There is a new focus on extending pupils' wider reading. Pupils in key stage 3 enjoy reading both modern and classic novels as part of the English curriculum.

Leaders are reviewing their support for pupils' transition into Abbey View and then beyond. Pupils receive careers advice, which they value. Some gain work experience. Pupils visit workplaces and hear from local providers of education and training. However, there is not a consistent or detailed approach to assessing pupils' needs when they join the school. Leaders recognise that they need to gain a more fulsome picture of pupils' circumstances so that they can better match provision to pupils' needs.

Pupils receive clear, positive messages from staff about showing respect for others. The trustees support the school's ethos by talking with pupils about the impact of verbal abuse. As pupils mature, they are encouraged to be more independent. Nonetheless, in some classes, low-level disruption limits what pupils learn. Even where pupils behave well and show focus, their lessons can be interrupted from the outside by noisy behaviour. This makes it especially difficult for pupils with SEND to learn in a focused way.

Staff enjoy working at Abbey View. There is a healthy culture of coming together each day, for example to notice pupils' progress and achievements. Staff feel supported by leaders and by one another. Although workload for most is manageable, some staff say this is not always the case for those with leadership responsibilities.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe in school. They feel listened to by staff and report their worries to them. The trustees seek out pupils' views and take action on any concerns shared with them.

Staff understand the different risks in pupils' lives and are watchful. There are clear systems into which they report their concerns. Leaders recognise the risks of criminal exploitation, such as county lines, and have plans to work more closely with the police to build pupils' trust.

Appropriate vetting checks are carried out when recruiting new staff. A single central record of all staff working in the school is kept in good order.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff's expectations of how pupils should conduct themselves in school are too low. Therefore, some pupils refuse to attend lessons and instead behave in unruly or disrespectful ways around the school. This creates a disorderly atmosphere. Leaders should ensure that there is a calm and orderly environment which supports pupils to engage positively with their education and, where necessary, improve their behaviour.
- Leaders do not identify pupils' needs well enough when they first join the school. Consequently, the curriculum is not designed to target the gaps in pupils' academic or personal development. Leaders should strengthen their assessment practices and work closely with commissioning schools to ensure that the provision for each pupil is informed by a well-rounded understanding of their needs.
- Pupils who struggle with reading do not follow a well-structured and well-taught phonics curriculum. As a result, pupils' struggles with reading persist. Where pupils' knowledge of phonics is not secure, leaders should ensure that this learning has a high priority in the curriculum so that pupils are supported to catch up quickly.

## 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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2017.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139660
<b>Local authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240485
<b>Type of school</b>	Alternative provision
<b>School category</b>	Free schools alternative provision
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	39
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Sara Chandler
<b>Principal</b>	Dale Hills
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.abbeyviewschool.co.uk">www.abbeyviewschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	6 and 7 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Abbey View offers alternative provision for pupils who are not in mainstream education. The school aims to support pupils to make a successful return to their home secondary school. Pupils remain registered with both Abbey View and their secondary school throughout their placement.
- The school offers placements of different lengths, ranging from one to eight weeks, typically in key stage 3, to long-term placements in key stage 4.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- 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 principal and the assistant principal, who between them also hold the roles of designated safeguarding lead and special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector also met with a group of trustees, including the chair of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with teachers and leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders about how they identify, assess and meet the needs of pupils when they first begin to attend the school. The lead inspector held telephone discussions with leaders from two schools who place pupils at Abbey View, and a representative of Gloucestershire local authority, to consider how the provider works with schools and other agencies to ensure a smooth transition to and from alternative provision.
- Inspectors spoke with the principal and the trustee with oversight of safeguarding and held discussions with staff and pupils to consider safeguarding practices. The lead inspector considered the school's processes for safer recruitment and scrutinised the single central record of staff working in the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, alongside the responses to the surveys for pupils and staff.

### **Inspection team**

Lydia Pride, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jen Edwards

Ofsted Inspector

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