



Abbotsfield School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102449
LEA Hillingdon LEA
Inspection number 283030
Inspection dates 6 December 2005 to 7 December 2005
Reporting inspector Caroline Bolton HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Clifton Gardens
School category	Foundation		Hillingdon
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		Uxbridge UB10 0EX
Gender of pupils	Boys	Telephone number	01895 237350
Number on roll	633	Fax number	01895 271995
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr David Jones
Date of previous inspection	25 November 2002	Headteacher	Mr David Henderson

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Abbotsfield School is a relatively small school for boys which takes its pupils largely from the Hayes and Hillingdon areas of west London. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is higher than the average, as are the percentages of pupils who come from minority ethnic groups and who use English as an additional language. Pupils enter the school with attainment slightly below average, although the proportion identified as having special educational needs is lower than the national figure. The school shares a sixth form with the neighbouring Swakeleys School for girls. When Abbotsfield School was inspected in November 2002, it was judged to require special measures. The inspection of December 2005 took place in accordance with Ofsted's procedures because the school had been in special measures for more than two years.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Nevertheless, in accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to standards and achievement and the quality of teaching and learning. Standards and achievement are too low, particularly at Key Stage 4, where the progress of the pupils who took the GCSE in 2005 was inadequate. In 2005 achievement improved at Key Stage 3 and the school exceeded its targets for the statutory tests in English, mathematics and science. The school is rigorous in its monitoring of teaching and learning and has taken a number of appropriate measures to bring about improvement but the quality remains too variable and it is inadequate overall. The use of assessment to raise standards is inconsistent. The progress of pupils for whom English is an additional language is inadequate. However, the pupils' personal development and behaviour are satisfactory and greatly improved since the last inspection. Self-evaluation by the senior staff is robust; they know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. The headteacher has been in post for less than two terms but has established a clear strategic direction. The quality of subject leadership is uneven but has improved significantly. Governors are supportive but not as rigorous as they might be in holding the school to account. The school makes effective use of support from external partners. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has a deficit budget and standards are too low so that overall, the school provides inadequate value for money. The school's managers recognise that there is much work still to be done but Abbotsfield is an improving school in which there have been positive developments since the last inspection, particularly in leadership and management, in the pupils' personal development and in the care, guidance and support provided by the staff. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form is satisfactory. Standards rose in 2005 but remain below national averages. The rate of the students' progress improved significantly in 2005 and was above average overall. However, there is a small number of subjects in which students do not achieve well and the school has not taken effective action to address some of these weaknesses. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but some lessons are insufficiently engaging and challenging. There is a sound system for checking the progress of individual students, including regular interviews with tutors. For most subjects, students know what they need to do to improve their work. The curriculum is satisfactory and includes a range of extra-curricular activities and work-related learning. However, curricular routes are not yet planned for all students from the main school into the sixth form. Although a

physical education session is offered each week, only a small number of students make use of this opportunity. Leadership and management are satisfactory but the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are not effective enough.

What the school should do to improve further

* improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is all at least satisfactory and more of it is good or better* continue to implement measures to raise achievement across the school * ensure that assessment is used effectively by all teachers to raise standards* improve the provision for and progress of pupils for whom English is an additional language

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Grade for sixth form: 3

Standards overall are below average. In 2005, all the Year 11 pupils achieved at least one GCSE pass and the school exceeded its target in this respect. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more higher grade passes is much lower than the national figure and fell short of the school target. The school's data show that the progress over time of the pupils who took the GCSE examinations in 2005 was unsatisfactory. Ofsted's most recent data show that pupils of white ethnic heritage, by far the largest ethnic group in the school, make generally weaker progress than that of other groups. Standards at Key Stage 3 improved in 2005 and the school's targets were exceeded in each subject. The school's data indicate that the progress made by these pupils during Key Stage 3 was better than that of the Year 11 pupils who took the GCSE in 2005 and that it was stronger in mathematics than in English or science. In lessons, the pupils' achievement varies with the quality of the teaching. Where they are well taught and there is planning to meet their differing needs, the pupils make good progress but across the school the progress of specific groups of pupils, including higher attainers, pupils who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, is inconsistent.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The pupils generally enjoy school and they take advantage of the good range of opportunities it offers. Attendance has improved, in response to robust measures to raise awareness of its importance and it is now satisfactory. There are still too many pupils who arrive at school late. Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is satisfactory; pupils feel safer in school than in the past and know that adults are always ready to help them with their concerns. They are conscious that there has been a recent decline in the amount of bullying and inconsiderate behaviour and this contributes to their feeling of well-being. However, the rate of exclusions of pupils from school is not falling. The pupils respond quite thoughtfully when asked to discuss significant moral and topical issues and they show satisfactory understanding of right

and wrong. They know their responsibilities in taking an active role in the school and in the wider community. They show understanding and respect for the ways of life associated with different cultures and they are aware of the importance of religious belief in the lives of many people. Pupils respond reasonably well to improved opportunities to eat healthily while in school and many say they have recently improved their eating habits. There is good understanding of the necessity of taking part in physical activity in order to be healthy and the school offers good encouragement for this. Pupils appreciate the opportunities they are given to develop an understanding of the world of work and they are well aware of its importance.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning are inadequate. However, senior managers have implemented a rigorous monitoring and support programme for teachers and have made significant progress in raising the quality of teaching in the past year. As a result, lesson planning is now more consistent and behaviour management in most lessons is good.

Nevertheless, the pace of learning in many lessons is too slow. The best learning takes place when lessons are well paced, stimulating and challenging. These lessons have a range of activities and opportunities to learn in a variety of ways, such as in pairs, groups and as a whole class. In an outstanding Year 10 lesson pupils made excellent progress because they rapidly learned new skills. However, effective learning styles are not shared widely enough in the school. Pupils are keen to learn and generally try hard in lessons. The school recognises that a key priority for improving achievement is for teachers to focus on how pupils learn best and to identify stages in the development of their learning. Often teachers do not ensure that work is pitched at a challenging level for all pupils including those for whom English is an additional language. This prevents them from making the progress of which they are capable. There has been effective monitoring of the quality of the teachers' marking and use of assessment data for tracking the progress of individual pupils. The school is taking a good range of steps to improve the use of assessment to support the pupils' learning, which have included staff training. Some teachers make good use of assessment data and marking to help raise standards. However, the overall quality of assessment is unsatisfactory.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and meets statutory requirements. There are significant strengths in work-related courses, which have added breadth to the options available to all pupils. For example, the school offers a wide choice of vocational options in Years 10 and 11, including motor vehicle maintenance and food and hospitality

courses. The staff provide timely guidance for both students and their parents at the point when choices have to be made. The school has a strong extra curricular programme of sport, music and drama, as well as many clubs and special events. Participation in these activities by pupils of all ages is good. Curricular links with local primary schools are developing satisfactorily. Staff in the modern foreign languages, art and media departments organise a good range of activities to extend learning. Journeys to America and France were commented on very favourably by students. The school promotes healthy eating and exercise satisfactorily through a wide variety of activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of support which is given to pupils is satisfactory overall. Those in danger of under-achieving are clearly identified and given a range of support to improve their progress. Pupils whose unsatisfactory behaviour is having a negative impact on their own and others' learning are carefully monitored and given strong guidance to help them to improve their conduct. The school effectively uses a good range of support from external agencies, as well as from its own resources. The school also works well with parents to enhance the effectiveness of its work with individual pupils. A clear example of this is the way in which attendance has been improved by involving the parents of pupils who experience difficulties in this area. The support which is given to pupils with English as an additional language is inadequate. Teachers are given insufficient specific advice on how to meet the needs of these pupils. Their progress is not tracked systematically so that teachers are not aware of the next steps they need to make. Pupils who are unfamiliar with external examinations and tests are not well enough prepared to meet their requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The present headteacher has set out a clear strategic direction for the school. The systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are much more rigorous than was formerly the case and the senior managers know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and recognises that the pupils' progress over Key Stage 4 in particular is still inadequate and that the quality of teaching and learning is not consistent enough. The senior managers make effective use of the outcomes of monitoring as the basis of action to bring about improvements, including support and professional development for staff. However, the impact of the action is not yet evident in the standards achieved by pupils. The school is active in seeking and using the views of parents and pupils within its self-evaluation processes. In the majority of cases, the parents' views of the provision in school are positive, although a significant minority are still concerned about the pupils' behaviour. The management of subjects is uneven in its effectiveness but it has greatly improved, particularly in the skills with which subject leaders analyse data and use other information to evaluate the work in their areas. There has been helpful professional

development for the middle managers, who are active in the school's cycle of self-evaluation and development planning. The governors are very supportive of the school but they are not as proactive as they might be in holding the school to account for the standards achieved and the quality of the provision. The school is working productively with a good range of external partners. A building programme is nearing completion, which will bring about some much-needed improvement in the generally inhospitable accommodation. The school has a budget deficit. A recovery plan is in the process of being agreed with the Local Authority. Given this deficit and the fact that standards are too low, the school provides inadequate value for money. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. The school's leaders recognise that much work remains to be done. They have brought about improvement since the last inspection, in the pupils' behaviour and personal development, in the leadership and management of the school and in the care and guidance for pupils. Achievement at Key Stage 3 has also showed improvement in 2005. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	3
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	4

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	3
The behaviour of learners	3	3
The attendance of learners	3	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	3
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	3
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	No	No

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	No
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

After our visit to inspect your school, we should like to tell you about our findings. We would also like to thank you for welcoming us and for contributing to the inspection by telling us about your work and about your views of life in school.

You told us that behaviour is better and that you feel safer in school now. We agree that behaviour has improved a great deal since the last time the school was inspected. Many of you were very courteous and helpful to us as we made our way around the school and we were impressed by the positive attitudes which most of you showed in lessons. You and the staff have worked hard to bring about this improvement and it is a real success for the school. The headteacher and the other managers in the school know very well what is going well in the school and what still needs to be better. They check carefully on your progress and they are taking steps, often working with partners in other local schools, colleges and universities to raise the levels of your achievement.

There are, however, a number of areas in which the school needs to make some further improvements. Standards have risen in the sixth form and in the Year 9 tests in 2005 but they are still too low overall and you need to make more rapid progress, in Key Stage 4 especially. A good deal has been done to improve the teaching and learning and the assessment of your work but they still vary too much from one lesson to another. Overall, the care and guidance which the staff provide for you have improved a good deal but those of you who use English as an additional language need more help and support. We have asked the school to ensure that there is improvement in these matters as soon as possible by giving what is known as a Notice to Improve. We believe that the school will be able to do this because we know there have already been some changes for the better. We shall be coming back in about a year's time to check on the progress which the school has made.