

# Pershore, Abbey Park Middle School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 116774            |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Worcestershire    |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 312397            |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 5–6 December 2007 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Gerald Griffin    |

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

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|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Middle deemed primary              |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community                          |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 9–12                               |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed                              |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |                                    |
| School                                    | 211                                |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                 |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Brian Smith                        |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Lynn Evans                         |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 1 October 2004                     |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Abbey Road<br>Pershore<br>WR10 1DF |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01386 552667                       |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01386 561723                       |

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| <b>Age group</b>         | 9-12              |
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Abbey Park Middle School is an average size school for its type. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups. Pupils' skills and experiences on entry are generally average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is at the national average. The school has a Mainstream Able Autism Unit for eight pupils.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Abbey Park is a satisfactory school. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are average overall. The school has some good features and is improving under the resolute and effective leadership of the headteacher, who is providing the school with a sense of purpose and clear direction. The school has taken effective steps to eliminate the recent underachievement in English by improving pupils' writing. However, pupils' skills of sentence construction and their punctuation when writing remain weaker than their reading. Progress in mathematics has improved and is now good because the school has ensured pupils can confidently use their calculation skills to solve mathematical problems. The record of recent gains shows the school is well placed to get even better. Personal development is good and pupils thrive in the school's happy and friendly atmosphere. They are confident, articulate and polite. Behaviour is good and has improved as a consequence of teachers' better class management and the introduction of popular rewards for good behaviour. Pupils feel very safe in school. They enjoy all aspects of school, for instance meeting friends, their lessons and the many clubs and visits on offer as part of the good curriculum. They are keen to learn and try hard because their enthusiastic teachers provide interesting work that engages them well. Teaching is satisfactory rather than good because inconsistencies in practice mean that more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in class. Teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to practise writing longer pieces of work in lessons outside English. The arts are a particular strength of the school and pupils make good progress in drama, dance and music. The staff's very detailed understanding of the needs of every pupil and the way they readily respond very effectively mean that care is outstanding. The school also makes good provision to help those who find learning a challenge. For example, the school provides expert support for pupils with speech impairment, autism and behaviour and other learning difficulties. Academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory. It is improving and is now providing pupils with challenging targets and clear advice on how to reach them. This means that care, guidance and support are good overall. Parents are very supportive of the school. Reflecting the views of many, one parent wrote, 'It is a good place to learn. My child is always happy to come to school and the dedicated teachers want them to do well.' The senior team supports the headteacher well. Recent appointments have strengthened this team, and leadership and management are good overall. The senior team analyses assessment data well to gain a good overview of pupils' performance and progress. However, the analysis is not sufficiently detailed or consistent to identify potential areas of underachievement at an early enough stage.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the accuracy of pupils' sentence construction and the opportunities they have to write longer pieces of work.
- Ensure teachers' planning matches the needs of different pupils so that work consistently challenges the more able.
- Implement a more detailed analysis of assessment data. A small proportion of the schools whose effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Standards in English, mathematics and science are average in the current Year 7. Pupils make satisfactory progress in information and communication technology (ICT), where standards are also average. Boys and girls make similar progress. Pupils make the best progress in Years 6 and 7, where the most experienced staff teach. Progress in mathematics is good overall. Pupils have a good grasp of number and can apply this knowledge well to unfamiliar contexts. Progress in English is satisfactory. It is not yet good because, in written work, the meaning of sentences is not always clear. Punctuation is not consistently accurate and pupils do not link sentences together well enough to make longer pieces of work, such as stories, flow. Progress in science is satisfactory and improving now that more time has been allocated to the subject.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils respect each other, adults and the world around them. A strong moral code underpins their good behaviour, although occasionally they lose concentration and fidget towards the end of lessons. They work well in teams and readily share resources. They are respectful towards people of different cultures and religions. Pupils have positive attitudes towards school and really enjoy their learning, although attendance is average. There is almost no bullying and they feel safe in the knowledge that the rare incidences that occur are quickly and effectively resolved. They know how to keep themselves safe. For example, they have a clear understanding of the dangers of drugs and solvent abuse. Pupils mostly do their best to keep themselves healthy by eating a balanced diet and keeping fit. They are keen to take responsibility as 'playground buddies'. They are rightly proud of the work of the school council, which has a good record of improving school life. For example, it has helped to make school dinners more appetising and healthy. Pupils readily contribute to the wider community by collecting for charity and participating in local events. Average standards and good attitudes are preparing pupils satisfactorily for transfer to high school and for future employment.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

In lessons, relationships are very positive and pupils try their best. However, teachers do not always plan work to match the learning needs of each pupil, especially those who are more able. This means that some pupils are not sufficiently stretched by their work. There are many signs that teaching is improving. For example, teachers plan work that actively involves pupils in their learning by providing time for them to discuss ideas in pairs and to learn through trial and error. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning, especially for less able pupils, enabling them to make similar academic progress to their peers and to make good strides in their social skills.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

Staff ensure that pupils are cared for most effectively. Pupils are very secure in the knowledge that they can readily turn to a member of staff with a worry, knowing their concerns will be quickly and effectively resolved. Child protection procedures and health and safety arrangements are robust and regularly reviewed. Autistic pupils are supported very well in the Mainstream Able Autism Unit. This ensures that its pupils are able to take full advantage of mainstream schooling, to take tests and make very good progress in gaining social skills. Those with severe behaviour problems are given effective support that helps them cope in school and avoid exclusion. The school works well with a wide range of external agencies to support pupils' welfare and education. For example, the staff have been given training by experts so that they can effectively support the learning of pupils with speech impairment. Marking and other feedback is mostly providing pupils with clear advice as to how they can improve their work and reach their challenging targets and this is having a significant impact on improving progress.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum supports pupils' academic and personal development well. For example, assemblies provide effective opportunities for pupils to reflect on spiritual and moral matters. Healthy living is supported well through such lessons as food technology, swimming and physical education. The ICT provision has improved and is being used effectively by pupils in exciting projects such as producing educational computer games. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise writing longer pieces of work, such as reports, outside English lessons. The curriculum provides effective support for individual pupils who fall behind, for example through booster classes. Pupils in the Mainstream Able Autism Unit are given effective support so that they can join in lessons. The wide variety of well attended clubs, visitors to school and educational visits broadens pupils' horizons and raises their aspirations.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher and senior team provide clear direction for the school. Staff enthusiastically share their determined drive to improve the quality of education and staff morale is high. The team's regular monitoring and evaluation are providing the school with a largely accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development, and these are being used well to secure many improvements. For example, the school has successfully tackled the underachievement in English. Progress in mathematics has accelerated and is now good. Behaviour has improved, leading to a significant fall in the number of referrals and exclusions. However, school leaders do not have a sufficiently detailed analysis of progress to enable them to follow up possible underachievement. This is because current procedures for analysing data are not entirely robust. The targets that the school sets are challenging and realistic. Members of the senior team check the work in their areas well. They, and the headteacher, work effectively to improve the skills of the staff. For example, they have provided training which has improved teachers' class management skills so that lessons are not affected by poor behaviour. Staff are deployed well to keep teaching groups small and this has been especially successful in accelerating progress in mathematics. The governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors are very supportive

and work hard on behalf of the school. They have a clear grasp of the quality of education the school provides. However, they are not yet provided with sufficiently detailed data by the school so that they can challenge it rigorously over its performance.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|----------------|

### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?          | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?   | 2 |

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 2   |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2   |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards  | 2   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 2   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 3   |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money  | 2   |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 3   |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?  | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures?   | No  |
| Does this school require a notice to improve?  | No  |

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

- 7 December 2007 Dear Pupils Inspection of Abbey Park Middle School, Pershore, WR10 1DF  
Thank you for making our visit to your school so enjoyable. You were very polite and friendly and you made us feel most welcome. We valued the discussions we had with you about the work and activities you do at school. You clearly get on with each other and the adults in school well and you are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere. We think Abbey Park is a satisfactory school. We also think it is improving. Here are some of our findings.
- You make satisfactory progress in your lessons.
- Satisfactory teaching helps you to reach average standards in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and the arts.
- You really enjoy school and feel very safe and secure.
- You behave well.
- You have good relationships with your teachers and you work hard for them.
- The curriculum provides many visits that extend your ideas well.
- Adults in the school look after you well.
- The headteacher and the senior team lead the school well and teachers are working hard to make sure the school gets better. We have asked the school to do three things to help it improve further.
- Help you improve your writing.
- Make sure that teaching provides good levels of challenge for all of you, especially those of you who find some of the work easy.
- Keep detailed records on how well you do so it can follow your progress more carefully. You can help the school by continuing to behave well and by trying your best in lessons. We wish you all success in the future. Yours sincerely Gerald Griffin Lead inspector

**Annex B**

7 December 2007

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Abbey Park Middle School, Pershore, WR10 1DF**

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- You behave well.
- You have good relationships with your teachers and you work hard for them.
- The curriculum provides many visits that extend your ideas well.
- Adults in the school look after you well.
- The headteacher and the senior team lead the school well and teachers are working hard to make sure the school gets better.

We have asked the school to do three things to help it improve further.

- Help you improve your writing.
- Make sure that teaching provides good levels of challenge for all of you, especially those of you who find some of the work easy.
- Keep detailed records on how well you do so it can follow your progress more carefully.

You can help the school by continuing to behave well and by trying your best in lessons.

We wish you all success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gerald Griffin  
Lead inspector