

Abraham Moss Community School

Crescent Road, Crumpsall, Manchester, Greater Manchester M8 5UF

Inspection dates

16–17 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and other senior leaders provide highly effective leadership. This has led to continuous and rapid improvement across the school. Senior leaders are very well supported by middle leaders. Middle leadership has shown marked improvement since the previous inspection.
- Staff are highly committed to the pupils in the school and to providing the best possible education for them.
- Recent changes have increased the connection between the work of the primary and secondary parts of the school.
- The school is highly inclusive. Pupils are welcomed whatever their background or need. The school is harmonious and pupils are respectful of each other.
- Pupils make very rapid progress in the secondary part of the school. Rates of progress are somewhat slower in primary, particularly in reading, mathematics and some other subjects.
- The leadership of the early years is highly effective and contributes to the outstanding provision. Children make a very rapid start to their education. Carefully planned teaching leads to learning which helps children to catch up on any gaps they have when they arrive and increasingly prepares them very well to make the most of Year 1.
- Teaching in the secondary part of the school is generally very effective. While there is strong teaching in the primary phase, there are some subjects and classes where pupils' learning is not as good as it could be.
- Leaders provide carefully targeted training to improve teaching. This includes sharing and building on the most effective practice, wherever this happens in the all-through school.
- Pupils and children in the early years are cared for very well. Despite the large size of the school, the well-organised approaches to providing care mean that members of staff know pupils and their needs.
- Pupils clearly understand what the school expects, try hard and behave very well. Instances of poor behaviour are rare and are dealt with quickly so that learning can continue.
- The school is safe and secure. The arrangements for safeguarding pupils work well and reflect the additional challenges which exist in parts of the school's locality.
- Pupils attend school regularly and are punctual.
- The governing body is highly challenging to leaders. This reflects governors' absolute determination for the school to be as good as it can be.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and teachers should build on the most effective teaching and learning practice seen throughout the school to further raise pupils' progress and attainment, particularly in the primary phase, including in mathematics and reading, and wherever teaching and learning has less impact across the all-through school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher and other senior leaders provide clear and confident leadership. They work together very well and have led the development of a school culture where doing the best for pupils is seen as an absolute priority. This has been the driver for the rapid improvement in the school since the previous inspection. The senior leadership arrangements for the primary section of the school have recently been reorganised. This change has supported the development of stronger links across the whole school so that staff can make the most of the all-through arrangements. For example, very effective practice in the primary section in how teachers display and use key words to aid pupils' learning has led to training to develop similar practice in the secondary section.
- The school has a very strong sense of community. Leaders ensure that this is based on firm principles including accepting and valuing each other, high aspirations for all and high expectations of work and behaviour. Leaders accept that the school has a responsibility to be a central point in the local community and, where necessary, to challenge the negative expectations and values which some pupils may experience outside school.
- Leaders systematically consider what is working well and how any weaker aspects can be improved. The improvement since the previous inspection has been considerable. Weaker areas identified at that time, such as mathematics in the secondary school and middle leadership, are now strengths of the school. Middle leaders have been given more responsibility for the success of pupils in their areas. They relish this opportunity and accept the accountability which comes with it. A good example is their direct reporting to governors about different subject areas' performance.
- The highly effective leadership of teaching and learning has ensured that these have improved. Senior and middle leaders undertake an extensive programme of monitoring to allow them to check that teachers are doing a good job and pupils are learning properly. If any less strong aspects are identified, carefully planned training and support for teachers is put in place. When new initiatives are introduced, the planning for these is well thought out. For example, the school's recent focus on developing pupils' literacy skills included training matched to the different needs of groups of staff. This also built on the school's already effective work with pupils who speak little English. Inspectors saw teachers using the skills and confidence they had developed to help pupils to practise their skills.
- Staff understand and accept the very high expectations the school has of them. The members of staff who responded to Ofsted's survey were highly positive about the school.
- The curriculum is planned to meet the needs of the wide range of pupils in the school. There is an emphasis on developing pupils' skills, for example, in literacy. The school expects all key stage 4 pupils to follow GCSE courses as their main qualifications, although other courses are offered where these are needed to help pupils to be successful. The school provides a wide range of opportunities outside normal lessons. In the primary phase, these include visits to museums and places of worship as well as

expecting pupils to do things such as enjoy jumping in a puddle and getting dirty, and going to the beach. These illustrate how the school is determined to broaden experiences for all. Some activities allow pupils to provide a service for others. These include members of the pupil parliament and young translators, who help and support communication with some parents and carers, for example at parents' evenings.

- Senior leaders are outward looking. They ensure that opportunities to work with people and organisations outside the school are used when these will help pupils. For instance, there are strong links with a local university and sixth form college which help to raise pupils' aspirations. In addition, senior leaders work in partnership with the local authority to ensure that individual pupils receive the support they need and the school has a clear voice in the community. The improvement support previously provided by the local authority has been very significantly reduced.

Governance of the school

- The governing body provides robust challenge and careful support to leaders. Governors are very well informed about the school's work. This enables them, in their meetings and other contacts with the school, to be probing about how well the school is doing. Members of the governing body have a range of different skills and experience well matched to the needs of the school. While there are a small number of vacancies on the governing body, governors are actively seeking the right people to fill them.
- The work of the governing body is well organised. The remits of governors' committees are clear and allow governors to focus on their areas of expertise. Governors are properly involved in financial decisions, for example in understanding how teachers' pay is awarded and in the use of additional funding. They know that the very good progress made by disadvantaged pupils is supported by the school's effective use of the pupil premium. In addition, they ensure that funding in support of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities meets such pupils' needs. Similarly, their good information about the work of the school means that they are able to check that the extra funding to help some pupils catch up in key stage 3, and to experience the best possible sports provision in the primary phase, is used properly.
- Governors understand the all-through nature of the school and are prepared to focus on whatever part of the school needs their attention. The recent changes to leadership in the primary school were carefully shaped by governors to ensure that staffing was sufficient to give the best deal to pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are clear and are easily available for reference on the school website. Staff receive regular and detailed training to make sure that they are confident to deal with any concerns about safeguarding issues. The systems for reporting such concerns to external agencies, when needed, are thorough and well organised.
- Leaders are acutely aware of the additional pressures some pupils may be under outside school. The school provides additional information and support to pupils about

such issues including gangs, knife crime and the risks of extremism. The success of this work is illustrated by the school's strong sense of community and pupils' concern and challenge to others when extreme or inappropriate views are expressed.

- The school buildings are safe and secure.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils learn well as a result of good teaching. Teaching is more consistently effective in the secondary part of the school where teaching leads to very rapid progress in key subjects such as English and mathematics. There is more variability in mathematics teaching in the primary phase.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan activities which meet the needs of individuals and to challenge pupils. In key stage 3 and 4 classes there is often a focus on the knowledge and approaches which will eventually help pupils do the best they can in GCSE examinations.
- Teachers are skilful in the way they use questions to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers' high expectations and their skill in making their teaching interesting mean that pupils get involved in their own learning and in working with others. In addition, the highly positive classroom relationships contribute to the very good behaviour seen in class.
- Teachers understand that their teaching is not just about the subject concerned. They include appropriate development of wider skills. This was evident in the emphasis on wider literacy seen by inspectors in Year 8 French and science lessons.
- Where needed, pupils receive additional support in lessons from teaching assistants. Teaching assistants are particularly effective in the primary section of the school where they are normally linked to specific classes. In the secondary section, teaching assistants usually follow an individual pupil. While the support they provide helps pupils to engage in learning, this sometimes means that their learning can become separate from the work of other pupils in the class.
- Pupils with particular needs are provided with specialist teaching. Different groups of pupils are supported, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who join school at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The expertise and success developed in these areas are also used more widely in the school, for example in developing all pupils' skills.
- Leaders and teachers ensure that formal assessment of pupils is regular and that the information collected is used to check that pupils are doing as well as they should. Inspectors saw teachers following up recent assessments to ensure that pupils' learning was secure before they moved on to the next topic.
- Teachers plan experiences out of school to help pupils' learning. These range from the use of the museums in central Manchester with primary pupils to specific focus days for secondary pupils on key topics. One example happened during the inspection for Year 11 pupils, who received a boost to their mathematics learning during a tightly focused 'super learning' day.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are very positive about the school. They understand and respond very well to the school's high expectations about how they should behave in lessons and towards each other. Pupils of all backgrounds get on well together.
- The school's approach to pupils' welfare is highly systematic. Information about any difficulties which pupils may have is recorded carefully and acted on quickly. For example, while there has recently been an increase in the number of behavioural incidents involving some pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, leaders swiftly arranged for additional specialist advice to make sure that the school could respond positively to meet pupils' needs.
- The school's clear expectations and positive approaches mean that features such as bullying or name-calling are very rare. Pupils know that racism is not tolerated at all. Pupils have confidence in their teachers. For example, primary pupils told an inspector that 'teachers are good at sorting out problems'.
- The inclusion centre provides individually planned programmes of learning to help pupils to succeed and behave well. The staff involved know pupils very well indeed and help parents to become more involved in encouraging their children.
- School staff liaise closely with the pupil referral unit and any other institutions which pupils attend. There are daily checks on pupils' attendance to ensure that they are safely where they are expected to be. School staff make regular visits to make sure that any pupils working elsewhere are making suitable progress.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Misbehaviour in class is very infrequent. Pupils' very good behaviour in lessons means that learning time is not wasted. As well as reflecting the school's clear systems to promote good behaviour, this very good behaviour indicates pupils' commitment to their own learning.
- Pupils move round the school sensibly, even when corridors are busy during lesson changes. Pupils are highly aware of each other. For example, an inspector saw a pupil indicating to others to wait to allow easier access to a lift for a pupil who uses a wheelchair. Other pupils responded to this without fuss or bother.
- Pupils are keen to be in school and attendance rates are above the national average. Pupils are punctual. Despite the relatively large size of the school buildings, inspectors saw pupils arriving in good time for lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The school's results for Year 11 in 2016 and 2017 show that pupils made very rapid progress over their time in key stages 3 and 4. These pupils made faster progress than seen in very many other schools in English, mathematics and other subjects, including science, humanities and modern foreign languages. The very fast rates of progress mean that, even though pupils frequently have below-average starting points, their attainment typically matches or exceeds the national average. The school's own data and observation of teaching and learning indicate that pupils make very rapid progress across the secondary part of the school.
- While the most able pupils in the secondary part of the school tend to make the fastest progress, the rates of progress for others are almost as fast. Disadvantaged pupils make similarly rapid progress to other pupils. However, their overall final attainment in Year 11 tends to be lower than others' because they often have lower starting points.
- As the first Year 6 group completed their primary education in 2017 it is not possible to take a long-term view about pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2. Nevertheless, the rate of such pupils' progress in writing in 2017 was well-above average. Progress matched the national average in mathematics and reading. However, only half of the pupils in this year group had starting-point information because the remainder had not completed the key stage 1 assessments. In 2017, the attainment of pupils who completed the key stage 1 assessments in mathematics, reading and writing matched or exceeded that of pupils of similar ability across the country. The school's own data indicates that whether or not pupils join the school at the usual time, they gain similar success.
- Inspection evidence, for example from observation of teaching and learning, and pupils' books, together with the school's own records, also indicate that primary pupils learn less rapidly in mathematics and reading than in writing. Progress is also relatively slower in some other subjects, particularly where the curriculum is less well thought out.
- Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 gain similar scores in the national check on their phonics skills to those seen across the country. The Year 1 scores have risen over the last three years.
- Pupils supported by the resourced provision and the inclusion unit develop their wider skills and achieve well. Their results are sometimes lower than other pupils but this often reflects their typically lower starting points.
- The school is not solely focused on helping pupils to do well in examinations. Leaders carefully check if any aspects are weaker than they could be so that they can bring about improvement. For example, the school has recently worked to improve reading, particularly for boys. As well as pupils' higher scores in their assessments and examinations, the success of this programme is indicated by the increasing number and range of books being read in the school library.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language do at least as well as other pupils. Those who speak very little English make rapid gains across the all-through school.
- Pupils' success as they go through the school gives them the academic qualifications, confidence and aspirations they need to help them move to the next stage of their

education. Pupils are further supported by the information they gain from the thorough programme of careers education provided across the secondary years.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children learn and develop very well in the early years. Children frequently have starting points lower than those typical for children of their age. Many children speak English as an additional language and some have a limited range of experiences before they join the school. Once they are at school, they make very rapid progress, including in their English skills. Children happily use English to communicate in school. Children are provided with many opportunities to practise their developing writing and number skills. The proportion of children reaching the good level of development needed to be ready for Year 1 has risen rapidly over the last four years to become increasingly closer to the national average.
- The early years leader is highly knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She uses her experience to ensure that the provision works well. She has prepared an action plan to further improve key aspects; for example, to increase parents' involvement in how the records of children's learning are used and to make sure that more children reach higher attainment by the end of Reception. The leader works with other members of staff to ensure that children new to the early years are made welcome and rapidly build their confidence to learn.
- Parents are very happy with the opportunities provided by the early years both for their children and for them to become involved.
- Teachers and other adults plan interesting and exciting activities. These take place during learning which is led directly by adults and as children choose activities and learn through their play. Inside and outdoors areas are well resourced and are used for formal and informal learning. Staff use different activities to contribute to learning about specific things; for example, children are provided with many activities where they can practise making marks and writing. Boys and girls do this with equal enthusiasm.
- Teachers are highly flexible in the way they draw learning from what is happening. They used the heavy hail showers during the inspection to explain about the weather and, in doing so, to practise children's use of language and vocabulary.
- Children's behaviour is excellent. They play and learn collaboratively and have confidence to talk to adults. One example was in the way children wanted to involve an inspector in their written survey about who liked porridge.
- Children are looked after very well. Staff pay careful attention to the particular requirements about safety for young children. For example, the arrangements for administering any medicines and for changing children who still wear nappies are suitable. Staff supervision is close and supportive.

School details

Unique reference number	105560
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10042431

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,777
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barry Dodds
Headteacher	Gillian Houghton
Telephone number	0161 2196699
Website	www.abrahammoss.manchester.sch.uk
Email address	admin@abrahammoss.manchester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 December 2015

Information about this school

- Abraham Moss Community School is a much larger than average-sized school.
- There have been recent changes to senior leadership in the primary section.
- The school's first Year 6 group completed their primary education in 2017.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is much higher than average. The proportion of pupils coming from families experiencing deprivation is also much higher than average.
- The school population is highly diverse. Pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. Very many pupils speak English as an additional language.
- A significant number of pupils join the school at times other than at the usual entry points.

- There is an above-average proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The school has specialist resourced provision for 12 pupils aged 11 to 16 with autistic spectrum disorder.
- A very small number of pupils in key stage 4 attend a pupil referral unit or a local college for their education.
- The school buildings are used to provide weekend supplementary school provision for members of minority ethnic communities.
- The school meets the current government floor standards for pupils' progress and attainment at Year 6 and progress at Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders and other members of staff.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and spoke to others in lessons and during breaktimes.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning; some of this was completed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' books as a joint activity with primary and secondary leaders. In addition, other workbooks were examined during lessons.
- An inspector spoke with a local authority representative by telephone and met another person who, until very recently, had worked with the school on behalf of the local authority.
- An inspector held telephone conversations with two members of the governing body.
- Inspectors scrutinised school documents about outcomes, teaching and learning, behaviour, and leadership. These included the school's record of self-evaluation and the school development plan. In addition, records and information about safeguarding and minutes of the governing body were considered.
- Inspectors reviewed 28 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 16 additional written comments. Inspectors also received an email from a parent and had a telephone conversation with a parent.
- Inspectors considered 94 responses from members of staff to the online questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

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Iain Sim	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Johnson	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Kelly	Ofsted Inspector
Doreen Davenport	Ofsted Inspector

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