



Abraham Moss High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105560
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	324242
Inspection date	16 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Julie Price Grimshaw

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Con Keegan
Headteacher	Mr D Watchorn
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2006
School address	Crescent Road Crumpsall Manchester Lancashire M8 5UF
Telephone number	0161 219 6699
Fax number	0161 721 4973

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress made by students during lessons; safeguarding procedures; features of the quality of provision judged by the school to be outstanding; and outcomes for students in terms of personal development. Evidence was gathered from: national published assessment data and the school's own records; scrutiny of students' work, a range of school documentation and parents' questionnaires; observations of the school at work; and discussions with staff, students and members of the governing body. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but evidence relating to them was gathered which is referred to where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school serving an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is over four times the national average, the largest group being of Pakistani heritage. Students come from a very wide range of ethnic groups and over 50 languages are spoken in the school. Over three quarters of students speak a home language other than English. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above the national average. The school has a base for students with physical disabilities. The number of students who enter and leave the school other than at the usual times is above average. The school is part of a larger community complex, the Abraham Moss Centre. This includes a leisure centre, adult and further education centres and a City Learning Centre, theatre and a public library.

The school has received the International School Award, the Inclusion Quality Mark, the Gold Arts Mark, the Sports Mark and the Extended Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Abraham Moss is a good school, with a range of outstanding features, serving its community extremely well. Parents from all groups within the local community praise the school, through comments such as, 'Abraham Moss is a very welcoming multicultural high school.' and, 'An excellent school – our children are so happy.' This is an exceptionally inclusive school, where all students are valued, supported and motivated to achieve. Students with learning difficulties are provided with tailored support and those with physical disabilities thrive within the 'barrier free' environment. Skilled specialists in language development help to ensure that all of those students for whom English is an additional language achieve their full potential.

Students join the school with standards that are well below average. They make outstanding progress across Key Stages 3 and 4 to reach standards that are broadly in line with the average. Standards and achievement have shown an improving trend over the past five years. Achievement in English is a key strength. Standards and progress in mathematics and science have improved since the last inspection. Results in some subjects at GCSE are particularly impressive: for example, in art and design, and design and technology, the proportion of students gaining higher grade passes is above the national average. In media studies and information and communication technology, the proportion of students gaining the highest GCSE grades of A* and A is well above the national average. Many students are encouraged to take a GCSE examination in their home language and they achieve well. In addition to GCSE examinations, students have the opportunity to take AS level examinations in religious education and Urdu. The achievement of all groups, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is outstanding. Students of Pakistani heritage make particularly impressive progress.

This remarkable achievement is due to teaching and learning that is of excellent quality, together with first-rate academic guidance. Teachers plan lessons very thoroughly, carefully considering the individual needs of all students within a group. As a result, tasks are very well matched to students' ability levels. Superb working relationships between teachers and students are evident and students are very supportive of each other. The school's work on assessment is exemplary. Throughout the briskly paced lessons, there is a sharp focus on how students can build on their learning and what they need to do next, so no time is wasted. As a result, students make outstanding progress during lessons. They are fully aware of what standard they are working at and exactly what they need to do in order to improve. Use of peer assessment and self-assessment is very effective in supporting their understanding of this. The school is meticulous in tracking the progress of each student and this information is used successfully to set individual, group and whole school targets.

The outstanding curriculum is designed to meet the needs of all and cater for a wide variety of interests. There are opportunities to develop vocational skills and the most able students are provided with activities that successfully extend their learning. The provision for social and emotional learning is particularly strong and supports students' good personal development. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding, supported by the richly diverse and highly inclusive nature of the school community. Students make an excellent contribution to the wider community through a range of fund-raising activities. They are also proud to represent their school within the local community, for example, by staging a multicultural entertainment event at a local senior citizens' home. Students clearly enjoy their education and most attend regularly, although the school's overall attendance is lower than leaders would like. Nevertheless, this has improved since the last inspection due to the school's

relentless efforts to promote good attendance. Students have a secure understanding of healthy lifestyles and many take advantage of the numerous opportunities to participate in sporting activities. Behaviour, whilst good overall, is excellent in many lessons. Students know how to stay safe and are supported well by the school's effective anti-bullying and anti-racist policies. Secure basic skills, good quality careers guidance and involvement in a range of enterprise activities means that students are well prepared for life after school and many go on to further education. Pastoral care is generally of high quality. Students know that staff genuinely care for them and an extremely effective support network ensures that all students receive any help they may need. This is enhanced through the school's outstanding work with a number of outside agencies.

The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, who knows the school very well and is totally committed to serving the local community. A key strength of leadership and management is the corporate approach: all staff are valued and know that their contribution is important. Staff are encouraged to be innovative and managers support their work wholeheartedly by ensuring that appropriate professional development is available for all. The school's work in initial teacher training, especially in coaching and mentoring, is of particular note and helps to maintain high quality teaching throughout the school. The school's promotion of community cohesion is outstanding. Its work within the local community helps to ensure that students develop awareness of and respect for those from a wide variety of faiths and cultures. Procedures for monitoring the quality of classroom practice are robust and, consequently, the school has a secure overview of its main strengths and weaknesses.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which 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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

On behalf of my colleague and myself, I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for sharing your views with us when we came to inspect your school recently. I would like to share our main findings with you.

We found Abraham Moss to be a good school, with many outstanding features. We were delighted to see you making excellent progress in lessons, mainly due to the very high quality teaching that is widespread in your school. You told us that your teachers are very committed to helping you achieve as well as possible, and we could see that this is certainly the case. It was very encouraging to see you helping and supporting each other in lessons. We were very impressed that you can assess your own work and know exactly where you are up to, as well as what you need to do to improve further. As a result, you make outstanding progress at Abraham Moss, particularly in English, although standards in mathematics and science are rising each year. Some subjects get fantastic results at GCSE – well above the national average.

One of the real strengths of your school is the fact that everyone is valued and included in everything the school has to offer. It is a thriving multicultural community and we could see that you have respect for each other's faiths and cultures. Your personal development is good and the school ensures that you are well prepared for the world of work. It was good to see the Year 11 students dressed smartly and looking forward to their mock interviews when we were in school! Staff work very well with outside agencies to make sure that everyone's needs are met. At the start of the inspection I found that the school had not ensured that all safeguarding requirements for the checking and recording of information about members of staff had been met. The school acted quickly to ensure full compliance with those requirements.

In terms of improving your school even further we have asked for your governors to be even more involved in evaluating the quality of the school's work.

The school leaders told us that they never set limits on what you can achieve and we know that with your help and hard work the school has the potential to improve even more. We wish you every success for the future.