

Abraham Moss Community School

Crescent Rd, Crumpsall, Manchester, M8 5UF

Inspection dates

22–23 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement requires improvement because it is not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection. In 2013 too many students did not achieve well enough in their GCSE examinations, especially in mathematics and English.
- Students are not making consistently good progress in Key Stage 3.
- Over time, teaching has not been good enough. Behaviour in lessons is not always managed well by staff so that some students misbehave and do not learn enough.
- Staff do not expect enough work from the most able students in some lessons.
- Staff do not give enough chances for students to discuss their ideas so that they do not all develop good communication skills.
- The way the school judges the teaching of lessons does not take enough account of the effect that teaching has on students' progress over time.
- Senior and middle leaders have not fully tackled students' underachievement in Key Stage 3.
- The governing body is not checking closely enough on the school's performance or the rate of improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher and deputy headteacher, well supported by other senior and middle leaders, have acted swiftly and effectively to bring about improvements in teaching, the curriculum and students' attendance.
- Students' progress is speeding up, particularly in English and mathematics in Key Stage 4.
- Students known to be eligible for free school meals are catching up quickly on those who are not. They reach standards of attainment that are close to those reached by similar students across the country.
- The school is a highly inclusive and harmonious community. Students from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures get on well with each other. Students feel safe in school and are well cared for.
- Students in the resourced provisions for disabled students and those with autistic spectrum disorder make good progress.
- Leaders have made a good start on establishing the primary age education. Children joining the Reception classes settle in quickly and make good progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 43 part-lessons. Five of these were carried out jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors analysed students' work in their books and listened to pupils and students from Years 2, 7 and 8 reading.
- Discussions were held with staff, students, governors, a representative of the local authority, a local leader of education, and two school improvement advisers.
- Documents looked at included the self-evaluation summary, improvement plans, information on pupils' progress, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance, documents relating to safeguarding, and local authority reports on the school's performance.
- Parents' views were taken into account through the 18 responses to Parent View (the Ofsted on-line questionnaire), six letters received from parents during the inspection and the school's recent survey of parents who attended parent evenings for Year 7, 10 and 11 students.

Inspection team

Gillian Salter-Smith, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janet Peckett	Additional Inspector
Alan Parkinson	Additional Inspector
Fiona Dixon	Additional Inspector
Timothy Gartside	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than an average-sized secondary school.
- The primary school has been open since September 2012; currently it has two Reception classes, two Year 1 classes and a mixed Year 2 and 3 class.
- The school provides specialist resourced provision for students aged 11 to 16 with physical disabilities and for students with autistic spectrum disorder.
- Alternative courses are provided for a small number of students away from the school site at Manchester College and at The Factory Youth Zone. The courses at the Factory Youth Zone are led by school staff.
- A Somali supplementary school is run for parents and students on Sunday mornings. The aims are to help improve students' progress in learning basic skills, and to support parents.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium is well-above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.)
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is well-above average. The majority of these are from Pakistani backgrounds. Over 20 different minority ethnic groups are represented and there are over 60 languages spoken at the school.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is very high.
- A well-above average proportion of the students arrive mid-year, many from abroad. Many speak little or no English.
- A well-above average proportion of students is supported through school action. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well-above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards that set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has undergone a period of turbulence in leadership. An acting headteacher was appointed from June 2013.
- A new deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2012. A head of the primary school took up the post from September 2013. There has been a change of Chair of the Governing Body since the last inspection.
- The school is supported by a local leader of education from St Matthew's Roman Catholic High School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that, over time, students make good progress by:
 - improving teachers' skills in managing students' behaviour so that learning is not slowed down in lessons
 - encouraging all students, especially those more reluctant to have a go, to talk through their ideas with each other and improve their abilities to communicate and use different vocabulary
 - staff expecting more extensive answers from students in response to their questions so that students deepen their knowledge and understanding further
 - staff insisting that students take more note of and act upon the advice they are given on how to improve when their written work is marked
 - ensuring that the most able students are fully stretched to do their best in all lessons.

- Improve students' achievement in English and mathematics, especially in Key Stage 3, by:
 - improving students' skills in speaking English well so that they can use a good range of vocabulary and communicate their ideas clearly to each other and to staff
 - extending the effective systems used to improve students' progress in Key Stage 4 more widely to Key Stage 3
 - continuing to focus on improving students' spelling, punctuation and grammar.

- Improve students' behaviour and attitudes to learning by:
 - ensuring that all students get to lessons on time
 - making sure that students behave well in all lessons.

- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by:
 - broadening the work of middle leaders so that they check students' progress and provide effective support for students at risk of underachieving in Key Stage 3
 - taking full account of the effect of teaching on students' progress over time when making judgments on the quality of teaching
 - making better use of information collected about students' behaviour to plan how best to improve behaviour and attitudes.

- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body by:
 - increasing the knowledge and skills of governors so that they are able to make more rigorous checks on how well the school is performing and improving.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students' achievement requires improvement. Standards of attainment have dipped since the previous inspection when achievement was judged to be good. Too many students underachieved in the 2013 GCSE results, particularly in English and mathematics. However, senior leaders and middle leaders have acted quickly and changes to the curriculum, improved teaching, extra help for individuals, greater involvement of parents and better attendance are resulting in students making much better progress, particularly in Key Stage 4. Current Year 11 students are on track to improve on the 2013 results, including in English and mathematics.
- Systems used in Key Stage 4 to identify students at risk of underachieving and provide the right support, are not yet used widely in Key Stage 3. Consequently, improvements in the progress of students in Key Stage 3 are not as rapid as in Key Stage 4.
- The attainment of many students when they join the school at age 11 is low. Many students arrive at different times in the school year; many are international new arrivals and speak little or no English. These students are well cared for and most settle into school quickly. They make rapid progress in learning English.
- In 2013 in GCSE mathematics, students who speak English as a second language, Pakistani students, girls, White British students, and some students with special educational needs at school action plus underachieved.
- In GCSE English, girls, some students with special educational needs supported at school action plus and White British students underachieved.
- Swift and effective action has led to better progress for all students in English and mathematics. As a result, these groups of students are on track to improve their achievement.
- The school generally does not enter students for examinations before the end of Key Stage 4, including in mathematics.
- Most students following courses in GCSE biology, chemistry and physics achieve well. In 2013, lower attaining students did not achieve well enough in the core and applied science courses. Students did not achieve well in geography, history and religious education. School data and inspection evidence show that students are on track to improve their achievement across most of these subjects.
- In 2013, students known to be eligible for free school meals made similar progress in English and mathematics to other students eligible for free school meals across the country. The gap in the progress they make compared with students who are not eligible is getting narrower. The progress of these students currently in school is improving further. In the 2013 English results, students known to be eligible for free school meals were around one GCSE grade behind other students; in mathematics they were less than a grade behind.
- Pupil premium and catch-up funding are being used effectively to support disadvantaged students. For example, special classes to boost students' progress in mathematics and English are very well staffed so that students get a great deal of additional individual support. Learning mentors and activities designed to increase students' self-esteem and attendance are proving successful. As a result, the progress of these students is speeding up.
- In 2013, the most able students made the progress expected of them in English. Progress of this group was not as strong in mathematics. The school has improved the teaching and support for the most able students in mathematics. The most able students in Year 11 are currently on track to improve their attainment and their progress in both English and mathematics.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs in the specialist resourced provision make good progress. They have tightly targeted support from experienced adults who enable students to learn at a good rate and, at the same time, learn to accept responsibility for themselves.

- Disabled students and those with special educational needs, other than those receiving the special resourced provision, make similar progress to other students. In 2013, many students receiving support at school action plus underachieved. Many of these students were following courses off the school site. Their attendance was poor and they underachieved in English and mathematics. Leaders acted quickly. These courses were stopped. Similar students are now taught by school staff and follow a range of courses that suits them much better. Their progress in English and mathematics is improving.
- A high proportion of pupils join the primary school at different times in the school year. Many are international new arrivals and have had little, if any, formal schooling. Children and pupils settle into the school quickly. The children in the Reception classes make good progress from their starting points. By the end of the Reception year the majority of children have developed skills that are typical for their age. The emphasis on improving reading skills works very well. There is a good emphasis on improving pupils' communication and language skills across the primary classes. Pupils continue to make good progress in Year 1. Progress in the Year 2 and 3 class is not as rapid because there have been a number of changes in staffing that are now resolved.
- The school works hard to enable every student to achieve, no matter what level of need they arrive with, reflecting their commitment to equality of opportunity.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it has not resulted in enough students making good progress over time. In most lessons seen during the inspection teaching was good and some was outstanding. Improved teaching is helping to speed up students' progress.
- Not all teachers are skilled in ensuring that students behave well in lessons. In some lessons, teachers spend too long dealing with students' misbehaviour. This disturbs other students and learning slows down.
- Teachers do not always do enough to ensure that all students improve their communication skills and broaden their vocabulary through sharing their ideas with each other. Some students are allowed to quietly take a back seat in lessons.
- Students do not increase their knowledge and understanding enough because staff do not always ask questions that really make students think and work things out for themselves. They accept too many short answers and do not encourage more extensive replies.
- Most able students usually tackle hard tasks that stretch and extend their learning. There are a few lessons where their work is not hard enough and they make less progress.
- Most staff give students useful guidance on how to improve their work. They identify students' errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation. In some subjects, such as geography and history, students and teachers hold useful conversations in their workbooks that help students to improve. Teachers do not, however, always insist that students act on the guidance they give and so improvements are not always made quickly enough.
- Most students are attentive and happily tackle tasks because teachers usually plan lessons that interest students and develop their understanding. In a science lesson, students were enthralled when watching an investigation into the reaction of alkali metals with water. Through good questioning, the teacher really made the students think and predict what might happen in the next stage.
- Students often settle to tasks well and are ready to learn because staff build positive and supportive relationships with them. Staff give students well-deserved praise and take a close interest in how well they are doing so that students feel their work is valued and they feel supported.
- Students make good progress when teachers plan steps in learning carefully, drawing on good understanding of their subject. Teachers watch carefully and check on how well students are learning. In many English lessons, students work through well-planned tasks that help prepare them to analyse texts. They discuss their ideas with each other and teachers constantly check

that they have understood and develop their understanding further. In a Year 9 English lesson, students were prepared in this way and they confidently analysed a text to show how the writer had created tension.

- Disabled students and those with special educational needs, including those who are part of the resourced provision receive well targeted support from adults. Teachers and teaching assistants know the individual students very well and they are skilled in knowing how best to improve students' understanding, their confidence and their ability to work on their own.
- The school's recent focus on training staff on how to improve students' language and communication skills is helping students who speak English as an additional language to improve their progress.
- Teaching in the primary classes is good overall, particularly in the Reception classes and Year 1. Children and pupils settle into the school's routines quickly when they arrive because teachers expect a great deal of them. The teaching of early reading, language and communication skills is well planned and children and pupils make good progress. Teachers quickly recognise when children or pupils start to fall behind and they make sure that they get the extra help and support they need to catch up. Those children and pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants. The recently completed outdoor area gives children and pupils lots of chances to learn outdoors.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. A small number of parents have concerns about the standard of behaviour in the school. Inspectors found that in some lessons in the main school, students do not get on with their work and they distract others so that learning slows down. Some students do not get to lessons on time because they linger and have no sense of urgency when moving between classes.
- However, in most lessons students settle to tasks quickly, and get on well with each other when working in pairs and groups. On the whole, students are keen to do well and take a pride in their work.
- Most students behave well in the dining areas and in the public areas. Students are well supervised by adults around the school. Most move along narrow corridors sensibly although there is some boisterousness.
- A small number of parents have concerns about the safety of their children. The inspection found that the school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school. The vast majority of parents responding to parental questionnaires consider that their children are safe in school.
- A well-planned programme of personal and social and health education helps students to know how to keep themselves safe, including when using modern technology.
- Students say that bullying does not happen very often. They know about the different ways in which students can be bullied, including homophobic bullying. Most students are confident that staff will sort out any problems they have.
- The number of students excluded from the school was above the national average two years ago but the number has reduced quickly.
- Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are recorded. However, this information is not used extensively enough by leaders to plan ways of improving behaviour.
- Students from different backgrounds and cultures get on well with each other. Students who are part of the resourced provision get on well with other students and take part in the full range of school activities. Students say they are well-prepared for life in modern Britain and believe in their school motto, 'Strength comes from diversity'.
- Students take on responsibilities with maturity. The school council, 'Student Voice', is very active and its members feel that their ideas on how to improve the school are listened to.
- Attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is now broadly average.

- Children and pupils in the primary school love school and learning. Their behaviour is good and they get on well with each other. They are kept safe and secure.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management requires improvement. Following the decline in GCSE results in 2013, the acting headteacher and deputy headteacher acted swiftly and with determination. They have galvanised staff and leaders into action. As a result, students' achievement and the quality of teaching are improving quickly although they are not yet good. Accurate evaluation of the school's performance has helped to identify the right priorities. Staff are working together well to put improvement plans into action. Staff morale is good.
- Middle leaders are taking much more responsibility for checking on students' progress and the quality of teaching. They ensure that class teachers check on the progress of the students closely. Where individuals start to fall behind they take action to support them. This approach is working well for students in Key Stage 4 but is less well developed for students in Key Stage 3.
- Checks on the quality of teaching in lessons are frequent and carried out by senior and middle leaders. However, when making judgements about teaching, leaders are not fully taking into account the effect teaching has on students' progress over time. Progressions in salary are appropriately awarded for good performance.
- Staff training is closely linked to school priorities. For example, training in how to improve students' literacy skills has led to a much better focus on improving literacy skills across subjects. Newly qualified teachers are well supported.
- Secondary and primary leaders have a shared vision and ambition for the school and have successfully established a school for young people aged five to 16. Leadership of the primary school is good. Staff work well as a team and are successful in establishing a welcoming school and improving pupils' and childrens' progress.
- Primary school sport funding has not yet been awarded to the school. Nevertheless, a plan to improve the involvement of children and pupils in healthy physical activity is being put into practice and the number of activities and pupils involved is increasing.
- The curriculum is well planned to meet students' different needs. For example, recent changes to the off-site alternative courses for lower attaining students have led to much improved attendance and progress. A strong focus across the school on improving students' literacy and communication skills is starting to result in improved progress.
- Leadership and management of the provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs, including the leadership of the resourced provision, are good. Students are happily integrated into classes and the life of the school. Detailed plans for support for individual students guide the work of skilled staff in providing effective support. Staff go that extra mile to make sure that the right support is found for each student and that external expertise is sought whenever it is needed.
- Increasingly, the school is finding ways of involving parents in supporting their children's learning. Parents are invited to many workshops and classes to develop their skills. The school works hard to reach out to the local communities. A success has been the establishment of the Somali supplementary school which takes place at the weekend and is an opportunity for students and parents to work together on their education.
- The local authority provides good support for this improving school. Regular checks on the school's progress since the summer are helping to maintain the pace of improvement. The acting headteacher has received good support from a local leader of education.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors support the acting headteacher and other leaders in their determination to make improvements quickly. Governors are starting to make more frequent visits to school to see the school's work for themselves. Links between governors and individual subjects or different areas of the school are being established. Governors have reorganised the committee structures and evaluated their skills. They know that the school's performance needs improving in relation to the national picture. They know that the quality of teaching needs to be improved further. They support leaders' decisions on rewarding staff for effective performance. They know how weaker teaching is being supported and improved. Governors are aware of how pupil premium funding is being spent and its impact on these students' progress. Governors are starting to work with the local authority to monitor the school's performance and progress in making improvements. They are aware that some governors have not gained the understanding they need to be able to ask the right questions to challenge leaders. The local authority has instigated an external review of governance. The inspection fully endorses the call for an external review of governance in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	105560
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	434616

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	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1342
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fiaz Raisat
Acting Headteacher	Lynne Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2011
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