



Abraham Moss High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105560
LEA Manchester
Inspection number 277377
Inspection dates 17 May 2006 to 18 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Jane Austin HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Crescent Road
School category	Community		Crumpsall
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Manchester, Lancashire M8 5UF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 219 6699
Number on roll	1182	Fax number	0161 219 6699
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms A Thaw
Date of previous inspection	11 December 2000	Headteacher	Mr D Watchorn

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 17 May 2006 - 18 May 2006	Inspection number 277377
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Abraham Moss is a larger than average comprehensive school serving an area of significant social disadvantage. There are more boys than girls on the school's roll. At 84%, the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is very high. Pupils come from 59 countries. Almost half are from Pakistani backgrounds, a sixth are white British and there are small groups from a large number of other minority ethnic backgrounds. A number of pupils are asylum seekers and refugees. There are 52 different languages spoken in the school and for 70% of the pupils, a very large proportion, English is an additional language. Of these, 88 are at the early stages of learning the language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is very high. The percentage identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. Within the school, there is a base for 30 pupils with physical disabilities and a barrier free environment so that they are fully included in the life of the school. The number of pupils 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, and makes regular use of the leisure centre, City Learning Centre, theatre and public library which form part of this facility.

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 judges itself to be a good school and inspectors agree. The headteacher and staff are committed to, and have considerable success in, ensuring that the needs of all pupils in its extraordinarily diverse community are met. The outstanding care provided for pupils reflects an ethos which values all equally and seeks to ensure that every pupil achieves as well as possible. Good school organisation underpins this overarching aim, tracking pupils' achievements, analysing their needs and providing individual support when required. Standards are below average overall. Results in 2005 indicated that standards in mathematics and science were too low but these have begun to improve. Overall, pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points. This is a consequence of teaching that is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils enjoy learning, particularly in practical ways, and behave well both in lessons and around the school. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils, with good provision for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those who speak English as an additional language. Opportunities for extra curricular activities are very wide ranging and many pupils benefit from these. Despite the school's efforts, attendance is well below average. However, pupils who attend regularly are proud of their school and feel happy and secure.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher's vision for the school as fully inclusive and responsive to the diverse character of its community, commands high levels of loyalty from staff. The senior team work cohesively and assiduously to sustain and develop this shared vision. They in turn are well supported by capable middle leaders. A keen focus on professional development for all staff includes a strong emphasis on nurturing leadership at all levels. The school has been effective in addressing the issues raised at the time of the previous inspection. Its capacity to improve is good. The school gives good value for money, matching its resources well to the wide ranging needs of its pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics and science.
- Continue to improve levels of attendance and punctuality
- Ensure that pupils know what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. Although the overall standards attained at the end of Year 11 are below the national average, pupils make good progress in comparison with those in similar contexts.

The majority of the pupils enter the school in Year 7 having achieved standards that are well below the national average. In 2005, standards at the end of Year 9 were

below average, with progress from Year 7 being uneven. Pupils achieved well in English whereas progress in mathematics and science was below the national rate.

Pupils make very good progress during Years 10 and 11. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C has risen each year from 2002 and in 2005 the school obtained its best ever results. Very few pupils leave with no qualification. There has been an improvement in the performance of both genders, although girls do significantly better than boys. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and so make good progress.

There are marked variations in pupils' performance between subjects. The school recognises that there has been underachievement in mathematics and science. Significant staffing difficulties in these departments have been resolved. New departmental heads have been appointed and well focused strategies are bringing about improvements. Evidence from lesson observations and the school's tracking procedures indicates that the school is on target to achieve the desired improvements and meet its agreed targets in 2006.

The tracking of progress towards targets is a strength of the school. Underachievement is identified at an early stage and a suitable range of support strategies put in place. Parents are kept well informed, in particular when their child is underachieving or performing exceptionally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The school celebrates and draws on the diverse background of its pupils to create a community that shares and values the experiences of all. Pupils enjoy coming to school and express confidence in their relationships with each other and staff. They feel safe and secure in the knowledge that good support is available from staff. More vulnerable younger pupils appreciate the group provided for them at break and lunchtime by senior pupils. Pupils value the opportunities available to them both inside and outside the classroom. Their involvement in sporting activities reflects a positive approach to healthy lifestyles, although their choice of food at break and lunchtime does not match this, despite the availability of healthy items. The school sets and achieves high standards of behaviour and manages incidents firmly with clear strategies for support. Attendance has improved since the last inspection but is still significantly below the national average. It is recognised that the religious and cultural commitments of many pupils impact adversely on attendance. The poor punctuality of small groups of pupils at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions has an unsettling effect on lessons and tutor periods. Learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good as illustrated by their care for each other, the good work that they carry out with partner primary schools and their support for a wide range of charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. A significant number of outstanding lessons were also seen during the inspection. A particularly striking feature of the work is the manner in which teachers respond so sensitively and constructively to the great diversity amongst their pupils and seek to help them fulfil their potential. In the more effective lessons, teachers have good classroom management skills. They possess very good subject knowledge, pace lessons well and hold the attention of pupils. Lessons are well planned and a number of teachers use a three-part lesson structure to make the work more accessible to pupils. The support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language is very well targeted and effective in enabling pupils to achieve well. When lessons are less effective, the teacher does not ensure that the work provides all pupils in the class with an appropriate level of challenge. Thus, for example, whilst gifted and talented pupils are identified, tasks that interest and challenge them are not set consistently. The quality of marking is mixed. At best, it provides pupils with helpful feedback but in some instances it is superficial or work is not marked for lengthy periods of time.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum. In Years 7 to 9 it is broad and balanced. Good opportunities are provided for pupils in Year 7 to explore three modern foreign languages as 'tasters'. For pupils whose literacy skills are below average, there is a special course to help them improve rapidly. All pupils have the opportunity to study drama and so help them develop their skills in communication. The curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is broad, balanced and varied. The provision made to learn about citizenship, and the opportunities to experience work related learning, are being developed further. The school has identified its gifted and talented pupils, and some provision is made for them to achieve well. Outside the formal curriculum, the school offers a very wide range of opportunities for pupils to consolidate their learning and to develop their interests in such areas as the arts and sport. The school has gained a gold Artsmark Award and the Sportsmark Award.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care provided by the school is outstanding. Well established links with partner primary schools ensure that the strengths and needs of all pupils are identified and that a smooth transition to high school takes place. Pupils benefit from a comprehensive network of guidance and support managed by the heads of upper and lower school. Vulnerable pupils receive excellent support through the learning support

unit and the work of learning mentors. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the excellent learning support provision, and the well established links with parents and outside agencies. Child protection procedures are clearly set out and understood by staff and arrangements for safeguarding pupils are well established. Pupils confirm that they have ample opportunities to consider and discuss issues relating to staying healthy and safe. They feel well informed about their progress in school and receive good advice about curriculum choices and future educational and career opportunities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, very ably supported by an experienced and effective senior team, provides resolute leadership. Founded on a strong commitment to including and securing equal opportunities for all pupils, he sets a clear and coherent strategic direction for the school. Staff support this fully because the headteacher fosters their enthusiasm effectively and delegates leadership astutely. An open and collaborative approach enables staff at all levels to contribute their ideas for improvement and, as appropriate, to lead development projects. As a consequence, morale and motivation are high and staff enjoy the challenge of contributing to the life of the school. The culture of high expectations and continuous improvement that pervades the school's work is supported by well targeted professional development, much of which builds on existing good practice.

Led by the senior team, middle leaders play a key role in planning and delivering improvements. There are systems for holding them to account and they, in turn, monitor the performance of their teams regularly. However, these systems need to be applied consistently to have their full effect. Links between tracking the academic performance of pupils and their pastoral care have been strengthened recently.

Ably led by the chair of the governing body, governors are experienced and skilled in contributing to the leadership of the school. They are well informed, monitor the work of the school effectively and provide a robust level of challenge when appropriate.

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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

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

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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

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	Yes
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

We enjoyed our recent visit to your school. Thank you for being so pleasant and helpful when we came to your lessons, talked with you in discussion groups or met you around the school. We would like to tell you what we found.

We think you go to a good school that provides you with a good education and equips you well for the future. The headteacher and senior staff work well together to ensure you make good progress. The school provides outstanding care and support for all of you. Staff are very committed to you and the community. You told us that they are very approachable and deal quickly with any bullying, racist incidents or other problems. Staff keep close track of how you are getting on in your courses and provide the right type of extra support when you need it. Your teachers work hard and teach well. We saw some outstanding lessons that you really enjoyed. Almost everywhere we went we found that you were keen to learn and behaved well.

There are a few improvements we think would make your school an even better place to learn. Although the school has been successful in improving attendance, it is still not good enough. It is up to you to get yourselves to school and be on time. It is really important for your future to attend regularly and benefit from all that your school has to offer. In any school, some subjects do better than others. The school knows that you could do better in mathematics and science and staff are already working hard to ensure this happens. Your teachers are very willing to help you improve. We have asked that your work be marked on a regular basis with indications of how you might improve.

You are fortunate in being at a school that does so much to help you. We wish you and your school well in the future.