

# Abbey School

Hampton Court, Fore Street, Torquay, TQ1 4PR

**Inspection dates** 19–21 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

## Summary of key findings

### This school is good because

- The attainment of pupils is consistently above the standards expected nationally and all, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs, make strong progress from their starting points.
- Teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations and form excellent relationships with their pupils right through from the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The curriculum, based firmly on the National Curriculum, meets pupils' needs and provides a rich experience as well as promoting excellence in reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills.
- Behaviour is outstanding and no time is lost in lessons, where pupils are eager and enthusiastic learners. They are consistently thoughtful, kind and supportive of one another, and develop an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.
- The leadership team has developed since the last inspection and provides focused and inspirational leadership for the school. Leaders ensure that teaching and achievement are good and that the provision for pupils' personal development and welfare, health and safety is excellent. Staff are strongly supportive of the school and its leadership.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- The school's very detailed data on individual pupils' progress are not always used well by teachers in their planning and teaching.
- The school's clear marking policy is not uniformly implemented. Occasionally, it does not provide advice on how work could be improved or time for this to be implemented.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school regulations') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was undertaken with 24 hours notice. Fifteen lessons were observed taught by the school's eight teachers.
- Individual meetings were held with members of the senior leadership team and with a representative group of pupils. Discussions took place with staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- Written evidence, including pupils' work, lesson planning, the tracking of pupils' progress, individual education plans and a range of policies and procedures, including those for ensuring the safety of pupils, was looked at. Some pupils read to the inspectors.
- The views of pupils, staff, parents and carers were taken into account.

## Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Helen Griffiths

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Abbey School is a day school for boys and girls between the ages of three and 11 years. There are currently 101 pupils on roll and it is registered to take up to 200.
- Currently there is one pupil with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school is registered to provide childcare for children up to the age of three years but this provision did not form part of this inspection.
- The school was last inspected in May 2010.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teachers are equally confident and effective in making the most of the data on the tracking of the progress of every pupil in their class in planning and teaching, in order to maximise achievement.
- Ensure that all teachers' marking is as good as the best through rigorously implementing the school's assessment policy and, in particular, by:
  - giving written advice to pupils on how their work could be improved alongside praise for their achievement when marking books
  - allowing time for pupils to respond and advice to be acted upon, so that the work is of a higher quality.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

**Good**

Pupils' achievement is good and throughout the school pupils make rapid and sustained progress from their starting points with the most able pupils' attainment being well above the national average. The current Year 6 have all been successful in gaining the grammar school places they were seeking. This is because teaching and the curriculum are very effective and successfully meet pupils' needs. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make excellent progress towards the early learning goals in all areas. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language make equally good progress because of the individual support that is effectively provided. Achievement is supported by detailed tracking that provides clear evidence of individual pupils' progress and supports the setting of challenging targets. Some teachers are more confident than others in maximising the use of progress data in their planning and teaching.

Pupils quickly acquire a range of skills, including those in reading, writing, communication and mathematics, because they enjoy their learning. The introduction of formal teaching of phonics (an understanding of letters and the sounds they make) has seen standards in early reading rise recently and pupils go on to become confident and accomplished readers.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

**Outstanding**

The behaviour and personal development of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are eager, enthusiastic, highly courteous, love work and appreciate what adults do for them. No time is lost in lessons to poor behaviour. Pupils show a strong commitment to doing their best and to supporting the positive ethos of the school in promoting the importance of every individual. Around the school as a whole, pupils are consistently thoughtful, kind and supportive of one another. They are extremely happy in their learning and they have a strong understanding of how to be safe, which includes an understanding of the dangers of the misuse of the internet and social networking sites. They say that there is no bullying in any of its forms, including cyber bullying. While there is a little parental concern about this issue, the evidence gathered during the inspection supports pupils' views. Because pupils enjoy school so much attendance is extremely high, as is punctuality.

The school encourages enquiring minds and provides pupils with a positive awareness and respect of other cultures, races and religions and knowledge of public institutions. Pupils are well prepared for life in contemporary multicultural Britain. They have an excellent understanding of right and wrong, and a strong sense of justice. They develop a strong sense of self-awareness and self-confidence, and all are encouraged to excel in a chosen field. Their willingness to help others is reflected in their enthusiastic support for community activities such as South West in Bloom and in the very high numbers who undertake first-aid training, the school having won a national competition for this work. This reflects pupils' willingness to volunteer and take on responsibilities. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. It is supported through a range of very popular extra-curricular activities, including sporting and musical opportunities. There is high-quality display of pupils' work throughout the school.

### Quality of teaching

**Good**

The quality of teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding. There have been some changes in staffing since the last inspection and the strong team now in place is beginning to maximise its effectiveness. As a result all pupils, including the small number who are disabled, have special educational needs or speak English as an additional language, make very good progress from their starting points and some make exceptional progress. Teachers have high expectations to which pupils respond extremely positively. There is a strong rapport in all classes

and positive relationships are supported through humour and mutual respect.

In the best lessons teachers ask questions that help pupils to think and express their ideas. With such small classes, teachers are able to target their teaching so that individual needs can be taken into account and each pupil challenged at the right level. Teachers are aware of their pupils who are on the special educational needs or the gifted and talented registers, and how they are to be supported. Assessment is regular and generally in line with the school's clear policy, although on occasions opportunities are missed to say how work might be improved, or time is not allowed for improvements to be made. All of the independent school standards are met.

### **Quality of curriculum**

### **Good**

The quality of the curriculum is good and it provides a wide range of ways in which pupils are supported to make good progress. In particular, it is effective in promoting high standards in reading, writing, communication and mathematics. The programme of personal, social and health education is very well organised and includes helping pupils prepare for their future economic well-being. However, there are also many opportunities to benefit from the wider curriculum, such as in the arts. Sometimes skilled outside teachers reinforce the skills available in the school, as in music. This is successful and encourages wide participation and a confidence in performance. Physical education is not neglected, with the school making full use of its heated indoor swimming pool in lessons and in after-school clubs, as well as encouraging community use. Despite its small size the school is very successful in swimming competitions against other schools in which many pupils compete, helping promote a healthy lifestyle. From the start in Nursery and Reception, the early years teachers promote learning and children's social, physical and economic well-being. The children are eager to learn and the strong enjoyment of their various activities is then maintained throughout the school.

The curriculum is well organised and detailed schemes of work are based firmly on the requirements of the National Curriculum. This, together with detailed lesson planning, enables pupils of all ages and ability to be challenged and supported in making good progress as they move through the school. Small class sizes enable teachers to meet individual needs effectively. Formal learning is reinforced by a good range of clubs and activities, including trips and visits, that are well-suited to the pupils' needs and which are extremely popular and well-supported.

### **Pupils' welfare, health and safety**

### **Outstanding**

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for under the highly effective direction of the head of pastoral care, whose responsibilities include the upkeep of the single central register. This contains details of all staff and clear evidence that all necessary checks are completed prior to appointment and are recorded as required on a single central register. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are detailed and implemented extremely effectively. This includes the procedures for appointing and training staff, which are fully compliant with legislation and of a very high standard. Staff have a detailed understanding of their roles in ensuring the safety of pupils and receive regular training to keep them up to date. Pupils say they feel very safe and they appreciate the part played by staff who always act as positive role models in a very happy learning community, where all are valued as individuals.

All of the independent school regulations are met. All the required policies are very firmly in place, including those for health and safety, for the prevention of bullying, discipline, first aid, recruitment and child protection. They are extremely thorough, rigorously implemented and subject to annual review. Where appropriate they are understood and supported by pupils, such as the behaviour policy. A clear process of rewards and sanctions underpins what is a highly positive aspect of school life that does much to support high attainment. There have been no exclusions and the sanctions book for recording serious incidents remains empty since the last inspection. Pupils are aware of bullying in all its forms, including that based on prejudice or intolerance and

why it is never acceptable. The school actively promotes equality of opportunity and seeks to ensure there is no discrimination. Pupils develop strong friendships and positive relationships between themselves and with adults in school.

## Leadership and management

## Good

The headteacher, who is also the proprietor, has a clear vision of education and is keen to promote excellence and sustain the highest levels of achievement. The nature of the leadership team has evolved since the last inspection, and roles and responsibilities are to an extent still evolving. However, the leaders make an effective team that is highly ambitious for the school, its staff and its pupils. The role of the assistant headteachers is now more crucially involved in the process of school improvement. As a result, teachers are better supported and achievement has improved further since the last inspection.

Leaders play a positive role in supporting staff so that they are in the strongest position to support their pupils. There is a commitment to promoting professional development that currently sees several staff undertaking additional education degrees to support their work. Procedures encourage the monitoring and support for staff, including opportunities for peer-observation of good practice. Where there is a specific need, such as developing confidence in using performance data, positive support is in place to secure improvement. The school knows itself well and is able to show that it meets all the independent school regulations. It is looking to develop further, while the school administrator ensures that there is a healthy financial situation in which resources are targeted primarily at providing effective education. The school works hard to promote effective links with parents and carers. Their support is overwhelming, although not universal. Where there were areas of disquiet these were looked into by inspectors but not substantiated, such as the view that there is some bullying in the school.

All the necessary information is made available to parents, carers and others. This includes details of the complaints procedure, although no formal complaints have been made. The premises and accommodation support effective education and although the building makes full access very difficult, since it is a listed building dating back to 1820, the school has an eye for its duties under the 2010 Equality Act to maximise access. Arrangements for pupils who are taken ill, including the maintenance of first-aid boxes, are appropriate.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113566
<b>Inspection number</b>	422704
<b>DfE registration number</b>	880/6000

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School status</b>	Independent
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	101
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	31
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Mrs S Greinig
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs S Greinig
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 May 2010
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£6,000 – £7,800
<b>Telephone number</b>	01803 327868
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