

Inspection of George Abbot School

Woodruff Avenue, Guildford, Surrey GU1 1XX

Inspection dates: 10–11 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils happily attend George Abbot School. They respect their teachers and behave well in lessons. Pupils take their studying seriously and try to get the most out of their experiences at school. Teachers expect a lot from pupils.

High proportions of pupils are involved in a wide variety of clubs and after-school activities. Pupils enjoy going to sports clubs, performing arts clubs and music clubs. The recent school production gave many pupils the chance to practise and improve their performance skills. Pupils enjoy school.

Pupils understand the importance of helping each other to keep safe and keeping themselves safe. They feel that staff look after them well and understand that there is always someone to go to if they are worried about something. Bullying is rare. Staff deal with it well if it does happen.

Most pupils go into the school's sixth form where they have a wide choice of courses to choose from. Students achieve extremely well in the sixth form, and they play a big part in the life of the school. Students are positive role models for younger pupils. Many students mentor younger pupils in order to help them with their school work.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders reviewed the curriculum in 2015. They introduced a three-year key stage 4 curriculum so that pupils study GCSEs for three years. Currently, pupils in key stage 3 do not study all the national curriculum subjects in enough depth. This means that pupils do not have the essential knowledge of national curriculum subjects that they need by the end of key stage 3. For example, in history, pupils do not know enough about local history because they do not study it in depth. Leaders and trustees are aware of these curriculum limitations. They are beginning to put plans in place with the aim of deepening the curriculum in key stage 3.

Where the curriculum is well structured, pupils complete demanding work and achieve well. For example, in mathematics, pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding because the curriculum is very well planned, and teachers provide pupils with highly demanding work. However, in some subjects, pupils do not get enough opportunities to develop their extended writing. For example, in English, teachers have lower expectations for pupils. This means that some pupils, particularly boys and disadvantaged pupils, do not write high-quality responses or apply literary techniques as well as they could. As a result, by the end of key stage 4, pupils do not achieve as well in English as they do in other subjects.

Pupils behave very well in lessons. This ensures that pupils concentrate well. Around school, pupils generally behave sensibly. Pupils attend school regularly. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is still too low. Leaders have been working hard to improve this. As a result, disadvantaged pupils' attendance has recently begun to

improve. Staff meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Teachers are well informed about these pupils' needs. Consequently, teachers and teaching assistants make adjustments to their plans or provide extra help for these pupils if they need it.

Pupils are well cared for at George Abbot School. Staff conscientiously support pupils when they need help with academic or personal problems. Pupils experience a high-quality personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. For example, pupils receive useful advice from independent advisers about the career options open to them. Pupils are well prepared to move to appropriate destinations when they finish key stage 4. Similarly, students who leave the sixth form go on to ambitious destinations. Students thrive in the sixth form. They achieve extremely well because of the high-quality curriculum and strong relationships between students and teachers. Students with SEND are very well supported by staff. This means that these students achieve extremely well.

Leaders' plans to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils have recently gathered momentum in school. Staff understand these plans. Extra spending for disadvantaged pupils is spent increasingly well. Although their achievement has improved over the past two years, disadvantaged pupils do not do as well as other pupils nationally.

Leaders monitor standards within the school. They look at pupils' work, talk to pupils about their work and check on how well pupils understand what they are studying. However, leaders do not use the information they gather precisely enough. Consequently, leaders' improvement plans lack precision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that the right checks are made on staff before they start at school. They have also made sure that staff are fully aware of the safeguarding aspects of the staff code of conduct.

Staff receive detailed and regular safeguarding training. They are very clear about how to report concerns that they may have about children. Staff work well with other agencies. Leaders diligently follow concerns up if they do not get a timely response from other agencies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils in Year 7 to 9 have a narrow breadth of knowledge in some national curriculum subjects, such as history and modern foreign languages. Leaders, governors and trustees should ensure that pupils' depth of learning in key stage 3

improves so that they attain the essential knowledge they need in all national curriculum subjects before moving into key stage 4.

- The development of extended writing in key stages 3 and 4 is not as strong as it could be. Consequently, some pupils have few opportunities to develop their extended writing. Leaders should improve the implementation of the curriculum so that teachers provide pupils with consistently demanding work that ensures pupils develop their extended writing.
- Leaders do not routinely use what they find out from their quality assurance activities to precisely target their improvement strategies. They should sharpen the evaluation of quality assurance outcomes so that the implementation of the curriculum is strengthened further.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	136906
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10085501
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1973
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	470
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Fergal Roche
Headteacher	Kate Carriett
Website	www.georgeabbot.surrey.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- George Abbot School became a converter academy in July 2011. It is a member of the Guildford Education Partnership multi-academy trust.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and curriculum leaders, governors and trustees.
- On the first day of the inspection, we did deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, art and design, PSHE and history. This meant that, in each subject, inspectors met with curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at pupils' work.

- Inspectors considered the views of staff from two meetings with groups of staff and from the 136 staff who responded to Ofsted’s confidential questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of 342 parents who responded to the confidential Ofsted parental questionnaire and 322 parents who provided free-text responses.
- Inspectors considered the views of 1101 pupils who responded to Ofsted’s confidential pupils’ questionnaire.

Inspection team

Harry Ingham, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Colin Lankester	Ofsted Inspector
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Catherine Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Summerfield	Ofsted Inspector

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