

## School inspection report

24 to 26 June 2025

### **Abbotsford Preparatory School**

211 Flixton Road

Urmston

Manchester

M41 5PR

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

## Contents

<b>SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS .....	4
<b>SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....</b>	<b>5</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE .....	6
<b>SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....	8
<b>SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING .....</b>	<b>9</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING .....	10
<b>SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.....</b>	<b>11</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY .....	12
<b>SAFEGUARDING .....</b>	<b>13</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING .....	13
<b>SCHOOL DETAILS .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>INSPECTION DETAILS .....</b>	<b>16</b>

## Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders successfully promote a clear vision for the school. They constantly review and reflect on the quality of teaching to provide an appropriate preparation for both admission to, and success at, selective senior and secondary schools. This is accomplished in a caring and nurturing atmosphere where pupils feel safe and secure.
2. Leaders have secure knowledge of the Standards and ensure that all policies are up to date and in line with statutory guidance. They implement these policies effectively and promote pupils' wellbeing throughout the school.
3. Leaders typically ensure that all required information is provided to parents including regular comprehensive reports on pupil progress. However, at the start of the inspection the school website did not contain all inspection reports since 2015. Leaders rectified this before the end of the inspection.
4. Leaders of the early years maintain a purposeful environment and promote effective teaching which provides children with suitable learning opportunities and prepares them well for Year 1.
5. Teaching across the school enables pupils to articulate and discuss ideas confidently with peers and staff. Teaching enables pupils across the school, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to make good progress from their starting points. However, teachers feedback to pupils does not always give them a clear understanding about how to improve their work and learning.
6. Leaders promote pupils' attitudes of tolerance and respect, and their personal development effectively. Pupils display high levels of self-confidence and consideration for their peers.
7. The school's behaviour management and anti-bullying strategies are effective. Leaders and staff communicate and model high behavioural expectations and encourage pupils to regulate their own behaviour. Leaders make effective use of reward systems alongside proportionate responses to the rare incidents of poor behaviour. Positive relationships are evident between pupils and with adults, creating a courteous and supportive culture.
8. In the early years, leaders promote a tranquil environment where expectations for behaviour are communicated effectively and understood by children. Adults within the setting encourage participation and turn-taking along with an appreciation of others, and of people's differences.
9. Leaders promote respect for others through aspects of the curriculum and through the pastoral care provided by staff. Pupils learn about many diverse cultures and develop a sense of inclusion, and respect for people's identities.
10. Safeguarding arrangements are effective and in line with current statutory requirements. The school responds effectively to any safeguarding concerns that arise.

## The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

## Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that all required inspection reports are consistently published on the school website
- ensure that feedback provided to pupils gives them a clear understanding of how to improve their work and learning further.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities effectively and apply their good knowledge and skills to promote pupils' wellbeing and ensure that all Standards are met. Leaders use their in-depth knowledge of the school and the pupils to inform their effective self-evaluation, including their systematic strategic leadership of teaching. They actively monitor and support teaching through regular observations, using their findings to recognise effective practice and to provide staff with constructive advice about their next steps.
12. Senior leaders have a definite strategic vision for the school which is reflected in whole-school policies, daily routines and staff culture. They communicate the school's ethos and aims clearly and effectively to all stakeholders.
13. Leaders work closely with external agencies to fully support pupils' wellbeing. Leaders liaise with experts in the local authority, particularly in areas of safeguarding and the implementation of the early years framework.
14. Leadership of the early years is effective. Leaders ensure that staff in the early years setting have a clear understanding of the early years framework, and support children's progress across all seven areas of learning and development effectively.
15. The proprietor, supported by advisory governors, maintains effective oversight of the school. They provide challenge and support where needed, including through scrutiny of key documentation and of the effectiveness of the implementation of the school's ethos and development plans.
16. The school complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders carefully implement a suitable accessibility plan to ensure that all groups of pupils can access the school premises and curriculum.
17. Leaders have an effective understanding of risk management and mitigate risk with care. Risk assessments are detailed, up to date, and specify appropriate measures to reduce or remove the risks which have been identified, including those relating to educational trips and visits, the premises and activities undertaken by pupils. Daily checks around the school site help to ensure that risks are minimised. Leaders assess potential local risks to the safety of pupils with regard to radicalisation and extremism and put in place appropriate measures to reduce these through a comprehensive risk assessment.
18. Leaders typically provide parents with all the information required. The school provides parents with regular comprehensive written reports about their child's academic attainment and progress. However, not all inspection reports since 2015 were published on the school website at the start of the inspection. Leaders rectified this during the inspection.
19. Leaders are proactive in listening to parents and pupils in order to promote open dialogue and reduce the risk of any escalation of concerns that may arise. Leaders implement a suitable written complaints policy effectively and keep an appropriate log of any complaints received.

## The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

**20. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

21. Leaders implement a wide-ranging curriculum appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of the pupils and which goes beyond the age-related expectations of the national curriculum. Leaders plan the curriculum to enable pupils to develop their subject knowledge and skills in depth, particularly in mathematics, reflecting the school's high expectations. The curriculum is enhanced by specialist teaching of modern foreign languages, physical education and music.
22. Pupils make good academic progress, particularly in mathematics and English, and the effective focus on the core subjects assists progress in other areas of the curriculum. Preparation for entrance examinations for both selective maintained and independent schools is planned effectively into the curriculum and pupils achieve high rates of success in these examinations.
23. Teaching across the school utilises strong subject knowledge to inform effective questioning and discussions which motivate pupils to think carefully and enable pupils to confidently articulate ideas with peers and adults alike. Lessons feature effective use of resources and are efficiently structured to promote challenge, progress and pupils' interest. When appropriate, staff make effective use of a range of areas in the outdoor environment to promote and extend learning. Teachers adjust their teaching strategies and levels of support or challenge to take account of pupils' prior attainment.
24. Staff in the early years develop children's communication and language skills well, including by modelling vocabulary and encouraging children to expand upon their ideas and use expressive language. Staff match their provision and teaching to children's developmental needs, with opportunities for independent child-initiated learning complemented by adult-led teaching, ensuring the children make good progress from their starting points.
25. Leaders implement a comprehensive assessment framework. They utilise data analysis in the core subjects to track pupils' progress, both at an individual level and for groups, to ascertain any patterns of progress relating to pupils' prior attainment. Leaders regularly review this tracking to understand areas of higher progress and to adjust the curriculum and teaching when their analysis suggests the need, such as by amending the time allocated for different areas of learning or to implement changes to planning or teaching strategies.
26. Written feedback to pupils includes positive affirmation of pupils' achievements, which supports their understanding of these. However, feedback to pupils is less effective in ensuring that pupils understand how to improve their learning and work further.
27. When required, staff provide effective support for pupils who have SEND. The leader of provision for pupils who have SEND works with staff to develop appropriate teaching strategies and support plans to meet pupils' individual needs and promote their good progress.
28. Leaders and staff provide pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) with effective support when required, and track their academic attainment to ensure that they make good progress. Leaders ensure that class teachers and support staff are trained to use baseline data effectively to inform planning and to adapt teaching to meet pupils' language development needs.
29. There is an extensive and inclusive range of recreational activities available both informally at breaktimes and lunchtimes and through clubs such as rock band, art and skiing. A number of these

clubs are led by external experts who provide pupils with the opportunity to go beyond their curricular learning to improve their skills and enhance their knowledge.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation**

**30. All the relevant Standards are met.**



## Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

31. Leaders and staff promote tolerance, emotional support and personal development in line with the school's aims. They provide pupils with effective pastoral care and interact positively with pupils to enhance their sense of value, and to model respect and courtesy. For example, each day starts with leaders greeting pupils individually. Pupils develop their self-confidence as a result of such positive affirmation. Recognition and reward systems, such as the use of 'star jars' and 'Dojo points', promote positive behaviour, enhance self-esteem, and support pupils in feeling acknowledged and valued.
32. Leaders use the appropriate personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme to support pupils' mental and emotional wellbeing effectively. Within this programme, and elsewhere in the curriculum, pupils learn about online safety, managing emotions, respectful relationships and how to seek help when needed.
33. There is a well-planned relationships education programme. The long-term and medium-term planning ensures age-appropriate content, such as about changes to the human body and different types of healthy and respectful relationships. Staff make thoughtful adaptations for pupils who have SEND and younger learners to ensure that teaching meets their needs. The school informs parents appropriately about the content of the relationships programme.
34. Leaders implement effective behaviour management and anti-bullying strategies. School leaders manage behaviour and bullying through a clear, positive approach that prioritises reinforcement of desired attitudes and behaviour and individual support for pupils when required. The PHSE programme includes understanding the value of positive behaviour and, when required, leaders make effective use of behaviour plans and proportionate responses to the more serious incidents. Positive relationships between teachers and pupils and among pupils themselves create a respectful and supportive learning environment and promote good behaviour effectively.
35. The religious education programme teaches pupils about the major world faiths and develops their understanding of the importance that faith can have in people's lives. Assemblies and presentations provide pupils with opportunities for spiritual reflection.
36. In the early years leaders promote a calm and orderly environment where expectations for behaviour are clear and communicated consistently. Staff support children's emotional development and their ability to recognise and regulate their feelings.
37. The school encourages pupils to support their own physical wellbeing, both through the curriculum and during breaktime. Weekly swimming lessons, physical education (PE) lessons and extra-curricular clubs provide many opportunities for pupils throughout the school to develop physical skills, such as co-ordination, as well as teamwork and leadership. Pupils learn about the importance of exercise and a nutritious diet.
38. The school maintains admission and attendance registers in line with current statutory guidance. Leaders regularly monitor patterns of attendance and appropriately inform the local authority of any pupils whose absenteeism is concerning or who join or leave the school at non-standard transition points.

39. There is a robust system in place to support pupils' health and safety throughout the school. The premises are well maintained through a systematic process of checks and servicing, including of fire safety equipment. There are regular fire evacuation drills to ensure that pupils know what to do in an emergency.
40. Clear procedures for medical care are in place. Staff receive appropriate first aid training, including paediatric first aid training for those in the early years. Designated staff administer first aid and medication to pupils effectively when required. First aid kits and defibrillators are strategically placed throughout the school and suitable medical facilities are in place.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing**

- 41. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

42. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern British society. They show an age-appropriate understanding of democratic processes through opportunities to vote for a variety of representative councils. The teaching of British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance, is woven into assemblies and the curriculum. For example, the PSHE programme includes the topic 'British society'. Pupils experience lessons on themes such as global citizenship, and visit institutions such as the House of Lords to develop their understanding of how democracy works in England.
43. In the early years, staff encourage children's participation and turn-taking during play, and teach children to be courteous to each other. Children learn how to share activities and resources and are taught about the importance of treating others with kindness. Staff encourage children to contribute positively to the community.
44. Leaders and staff model respect for others and educate pupils about the importance of mutual respect. Pupils learn about a diverse range of cultures, identities and experiences. In the early years, children learn about different cultures and the wider world through their topic work. Pupils learn about themes such as neurodiversity and the importance of respecting people's protected characteristics, such as race and belief. They develop inclusive attitudes and respect for others' identities and needs. The pupil-led international council actively promotes the understanding of other cultures.
45. The school develops pupils' sense of right and wrong effectively. Pupils learn about moral principles, such as trust, fairness, honesty, kindness and respect, and the differences that these make.
46. The school develops pupils' sense of responsibility towards others effectively. Young children engage in activities such as providing bird feeders for the use of the local community. Pupils visit local care homes and regularly select a range of charities to support, such as food banks and animal welfare organisations. Pupils develop their sense of responsibility towards the environment through the work of the school's eco council.
47. The mathematics and PSHE programmes of study develop pupils' understanding of economic matters. Pupils learn about budgeting and financial planning. The annual business enterprise project enables pupils to work collaboratively to pitch business ideas, budget for these, purchase materials, and attempt to generate profit from their enterprises. This project helps pupils develop economic understanding and promotes entrepreneurial thinking.
48. Leaders develop pupils' early understanding of the world of work effectively, including through a regular careers week and through opportunities for pupils to hear local professionals discuss their work and ask questions about it.
49. Leaders prepare pupils effectively for transition to the next stages of learning. Staff enable children to move towards more formal approaches to learning as they progress through the early years and into Year 1. The school provides guidance to older pupils about likely expectations once they enter senior or secondary school. Former pupils visit the school to help current pupils understand the challenges and opportunities that exist beyond the end of Year 6.

**The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society**

**50. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Safeguarding

51. Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective and that there is a proactive safeguarding culture throughout the school. All staff receiving suitable training on safeguarding issues and reporting safeguarding concerns, starting at their induction to the school and refreshed at least annually. This training includes updates to local and national contextual risks to pupils. Staff understand how to report any low-level concerns or allegations about adults, should they arise.
52. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and safeguarding team respond effectively to any safeguarding concerns that are raised. They liaise with relevant external agencies and refer concerns on to the appropriate safeguarding partners when required. The DSL maintains suitable and detailed safeguarding records that are securely stored. The DSL attends regular meetings with external agencies so that the school's knowledge of contextual risks remains current.
53. Leaders are trained in safer recruitment and oversee all recruitment processes. All pre-appointment checks required by statutory guidance are carried out appropriately and recorded accurately in a suitable and well-maintained single central record of appointments (SCR).
54. The school teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Robust internet filtering and monitoring systems are in place and leaders ensure that filtering arrangements are tested frequently in line with statutory guidance. Leaders and staff encourage pupils to share any worries that they might have, including through approaching trusted adults or using 'worry boxes' to express any concerns.
55. The proprietor maintains effective oversight of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures and ensures that safeguarding arrangements and all pre-appointment checks are in line with current statutory guidance.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

56. All the relevant Standards are met.

## School details

<b>School</b>	Abbotsford Preparatory School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	358/6012
<b>Address</b>	Abbotsford Preparatory School 211 Flixton Road Urmston Manchester M41 5PR
<b>Phone number</b>	0161 748 3261
<b>Email address</b>	secretary@abbotsfordprepschool.co.uk
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.abbotsfordprepschool.co.uk">www.abbotsfordprepschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Proprietor</b>	Mr Ali Khan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Catherine Howard
<b>Age range</b>	0 to 11
<b>Number of pupils</b>	131
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 March to 1 April 2022

## Information about the school

57. Abbotsford Preparatory School is an independent co-educational preparatory day school. The school was founded in Urmston in 1908 and moved to its present site in 1997. In June 2013 it became part of Alpha Schools North, a company wholly owned by its proprietor. The proprietor, supported by a team of advisory governors, oversees the school and manages financial and strategic matters, with the day-to-day management of the school being the responsibility of the headteacher.
58. The school includes a registered early years setting, known as 'Little Gems'. This provision is inspected separately by Ofsted and was not included in this inspection. There are 27 children in the non-registered early years setting comprising one Nursery and one Reception class.
59. The school has identified 16 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are no pupils in the school who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
60. The school has identified English as an additional language for ten pupils.
61. The school states its aims are to encourage and enable children to step into the world with confidence, take pleasure in the learning process, prepare for the future, and achieve personal success and fulfilment in all areas of school life.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

24 to 26 June 2025

62. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

63. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the proprietor
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

64. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.



**How are association independent schools in England inspected?**

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **[www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)**.

**Independent Schools Inspectorate**

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

For more information, please visit [isi.net](http://isi.net)