

Press Release

THE ABBEY



A Very Special School

Ofsted Inspector Concludes: *"The Abbey School provides an outstanding education"*

During a 2-day Ofsted inspection earlier this month, The Abbey School was assessed on 29 aspects; the inspector awarded 28 grade 1 judgements (grade 1= "outstanding").

There is one category for which no special school can achieve higher than grade 4; that is 'the standards reached by learners' – simply because the students' achievements are compared with those of every secondary student in the country, including those in mainstream schools.

Headteacher, Mr Chris Gardiner, who has been leading the school for the last 4 years, was delighted with this well-deserved outcome:

This is an awesome result! It has taken hundreds of extra hours, dedication and professionalism not just by me but the entire team. We are so proud of the students who conducted themselves so well during the inspection and were keen to demonstrate what they do at school and the outstanding progress they make".

Among other things, the inspector praised the relationships between students and staff, work with parents/carers, behaviour management, the excellent teaching (*"staff have very high expectations" and "students achieve exceptionally well"*), student self-confidence and the caring ethos. Also highlighted were the strong and beneficial links with outside agencies, work placements, therapists, part-time courses at local colleges, practical training and enrichment activities which help promote the development of students' personal and social as well as academic and vocational skills.

"The curriculum is outstanding because teachers tailor activities very successfully to students' needs, abilities and aspirations"

The Abbey School, Menin Way, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 8QG
Headteacher: Mr Chris Gardiner M.B.E., Cert. Ed., Dip. Sp. Ed., N.P.Q.H.
Tel: 01252 725059
Email: info@abbey.surrey.sch.uk
Website: www.abbey.surrey.sch.uk

The Abbey is one of Surrey's 7 special secondary schools for children with learning difficulties and other needs. Following the Local Education Authority's Special Educational Needs Review 2003/4, the school was allocated £0.8 million for a 6-classroom extension because the school accommodation was not deemed "fit for purpose". The additional classrooms have meant that students can be organised into more appropriate and focused teaching and learning groups and the curriculum extended.

Judicious management of the school budget by management and governors combined with a concerted fund-raising campaign meant that it was also possible to refurbish and upgrade most of the original school building including therapy facilities and a library as well as classrooms. The school re-opened as a Secondary only school in September 2007 with a complete facelift, thanks to the generosity of local charities and businesses, including the Children with Special Needs Foundation who have raised £36,000 worth of sponsorship and donations for state-of-the art ICT and media equipment as well as science and food technology equipment , Farnham Lions who raised over £7,000 through their annual charity golf day to stock the school library and the Dempster Trust who provided a grant to equip the Design & Technology suite. The extensive use which has been made of the ICT facilities, for example, and the demonstrable benefits were highlighted in the Ofsted report. Furthermore, the new sports pitch, which is the result of a £40K grant from the Football Foundation, the UK's largest sports charity, and support from Surrey County Council, has enhanced opportunities for the development of physical skills and the adoption of a healthy life-style which Ofsted acknowledged is part of the Abbey school experience.

"It just goes to show what can be achieved by talented, inspirational teachers and teaching assistants for motivated students, given the right resources and leadership, dedication and hard work. I know it is most gratifying for all involved with the school and those in the local community who have supported the school so generously that the inspector recognised that the students really enjoy school and are successful in moving to either college or employment after the Abbey."

Mr Andrew Melbourne, Chair of Governors

The Abbey School, Menin Way, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 8QG
Headteacher: Mr Chris Gardiner M.B.E., Cert. Ed., Dip. Sp. Ed., N.P.Q.H.
Tel: 01252 725059
Email: info@abbey.surrey.sch.uk
Website: www.abbey.surrey.sch.uk