

Abbotsholme





What is different about an education at Abbotsholme?

- ★ Our pupils are confident, resilient, independent and adaptable. They are high achievers, but not at the expense of other people.
- ★ For us, the heart, the hand and the head are all equally important.
- ★ Difference is not only respected but celebrated.
- ★ We have very few school rules, relying on a behavioural charter which provides principles for all to follow.
- ★ We provide a learning environment where all are encouraged to do their best, and where most pupils exceed their own academic expectations.
- ★ The fact that we are a deliberately small school means that each pupil benefits from a bespoke education.
- ★ In the words of Dr Cecil Reddie, our founder, we aim to teach the pupils 'to love the beautiful and the good'.

Are we just what you have been looking for?

Read on, and learn more about us.



Summer Gathering always closes at the graveside of Dr Cecil Reddie

What really makes us different is our colour; although I don't mean the colour of our hair or skin. I don't mean the colour of our clothes. What I mean is the colour of our soul and the colour of our spirit. Cecil Reddie chose our distinctive school colours - aubergine, paprika and avocado - because he was passionate, imaginative and emotional about colour; and he believed that these three best captured what he felt about the Abbotsholme estate. He was right. Just look out of my study window on a late summer's evening.

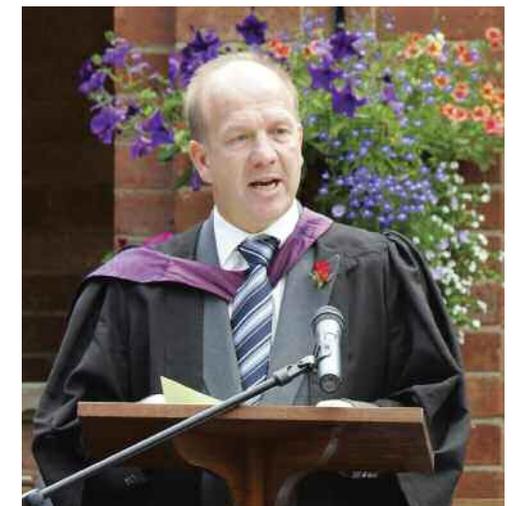
What an array of colours I see in front of me in the Roseyard every Summer Gathering, with the range and variety of colours representing the range and variety of staff, pupils and parents at Abbotsholme! We are bright, even vibrant, and we are certainly never dull. Sometimes we may clash, but usually we complement. Some of our colour inevitably drains away when people leave, but new additions to the Abbotsholme paint box always bring their own unique colour.

It has been a great year: Abbotsholme - this rainbow school with its endless spectrum of colour - is, according to the ISI inspectors, 'outstanding, emotionally healthy and spiritually colourful'. How can we fail, therefore, to be inspirational?

Glad Day, Love and Duty.

Steve Fairclough
Headmaster

Extract from the Headmaster's speech
at Summer Gathering 2011



An Introduction to the School

When Abbotsholme was founded by Dr Cecil Reddie in 1889, he called it 'The New School'. Conventional education, he believed, tended to limit and restrict what a child could become, rather than release the immense potential within each individual. We still believe exactly the same today, which is why what we offer, and how we offer it, is just that bit different from other schools.

Take, for example, our entrance procedure. How much can one really learn about a youngster from a written entrance exam? All children applying to Abbotsholme have a full-day assessment instead, allowing us time to get to know them, and giving them the opportunity to meet the staff and pupils.

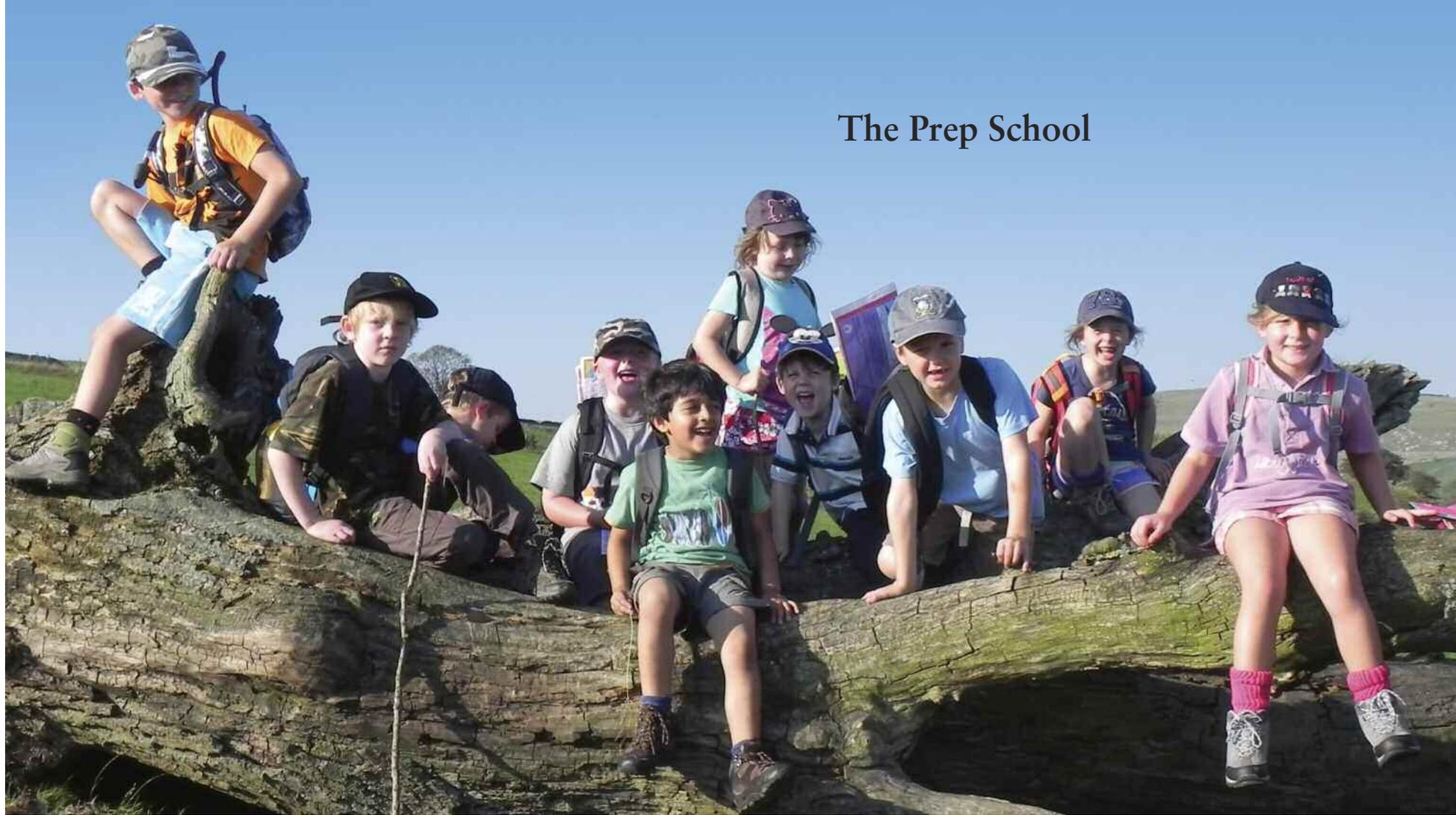
It is important for us to know if a child is right for Abbotsholme, as only those who are open to adventure, challenge, being given responsibility and trust, and those who are willing to push themselves that little bit further will really thrive at Abbotsholme.



The stimulating educational environment we provide is obviously ideal for those youngsters who are particularly gifted academically. Interestingly, however, those who find academic work more of a challenge benefit equally.

We offer real support to each of our pupils. This might be in the form of help given by the specialists in the Dyslexia Department if a youngster is dyslexic or dyspraxic, for example, but it could equally be in the form of the extension tasks which are provided for a youngster who has a special gift or talent.

The important thing is that we know that all of our children are individuals with individual needs. Consequently, they are cared for as such.



The Prep School



If education is a journey, then the Abbotsholme journey begins in our Prep School which provides a safe, friendly place for our youngest pupils.

The staff work closely as a team, creating a strong sense of family. We know each of the children well as individuals and can recognise their different talents. Our pupils feel secure and well cared for, and they know that they matter.

We expect the children to show kindness and consideration to others, and consequently they do. They are all encouraged to develop a strong sense of personal responsibility, and their behaviour is excellent.

Our children are happy and well-motivated, and they thrive.



In the first year they spend with us, we concentrate on their first proper steps in Literacy and Numeracy. Children start to learn about their world, beginning with the wonderful school estate which is right outside their door: We encourage them to learn for themselves and to explore, always guided by experienced teachers.

In the Infant years, the children become much more proficient in the basic skills. The foundations of a good education are laid here, and the emphasis is on ensuring that all children become increasingly numerate and literate through lessons which are fun.





In the Junior years, lessons gradually become more formal. Some subjects, such as Science, Music, PE, Art and Languages, are taught by specialist staff in the Senior School.

At Abbotsholme, we make the most of our 170 acres of fields, copses and dingles and of our extensive games pitches. The children in the Prep School play many sports, and all are able to take part in a vast range of exciting outdoor pursuits such as camping, hiking, canoeing, den-building and rock-climbing. They grow vegetables on their allotments, help to care for the animals on the school farm, and have the opportunity to ride.

It is our firmly-held belief that the learning which takes place outdoors is just as important as that which takes place within the classroom.



Years 7, 8 and 9

For Years 7, 8 and 9, there is a deliberately wide curriculum which all children follow, and we are not constrained by the demands of the National Curriculum. Everyone must try everything on offer. This way, no doors are closed to them, and children begin to acquire skills and expertise in everything from Science to rock-climbing, ICT to Agriculture and Food Technology to Drama.

Everyone is good at something, and at Abbotsholme we give the pupils ample opportunity to find out what that is. Our 11, 12 and 13 year olds may be members of the Senior School, but their lives are full of fun, adventure and challenge, with a wide variety of activities within every school day. This way, despite the pressures which popular culture exerts on so many young people, at Abbotsholme we hope to make childhood last a little longer.

At Abbotsholme, they can be themselves, growing, developing and learning in small classes at their own speed.





Years 10 and 11

At Abbotsholme we do not do exams for the sake of doing exams, but in Year 10, life inevitably begins to focus on the forthcoming GCSEs. Most pupils take nine subjects at the end of Year 11, but some will take more and some will take fewer. It all depends on the individual.

Everyone is examined in the core subjects, but there is an individual approach to the curriculum beyond that, with options selected from various blocks of subject choices.

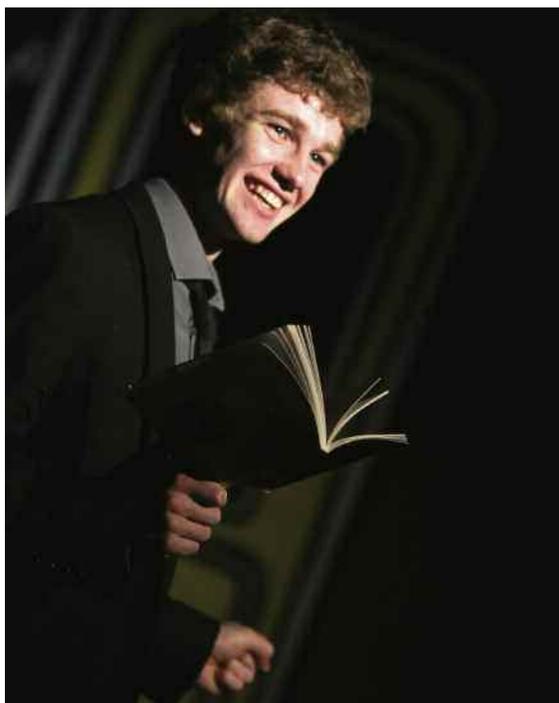


The balance between academic and non-academic subjects is still carefully maintained, however, and pupils will still be involved in all kinds of sporting, outdoor, recreational and creative pursuits as part of their normal school life. Activities on offer during the school day include playing in the orchestra, going cross-country running, rehearsing for the school play, riding, looking after the farm animals or using the indoor climbing wall.

At weekends, there are all kinds of cultural, sporting, recreational and outdoor-based trips. Then, in the holidays they can, for example, join a conservation project in South America, mountaineer in the Himalayas or be a member of a sports team on an international tour.

The democratic ethos of the school ensures that their views are listened to and respected, and by now, our pupils have evolved into confident, assured individuals who relate well to the younger pupils, to their peers and to the staff. They respect the opinions of other people, and respond well to being given responsibility. They are good competitors who play hard and enjoy winning, whilst realising that winning is not everything.





The Sixth Form

To be a Sixth Former at Abbotsholme is to be a part of something very special. Every Sixth Former has his or her own individual curriculum to follow, with subjects selected from the wide range of A Level, B Tech and non-academic subjects that are available. Sixth Formers can, therefore, specialise in whichever field they choose, always guided by a personal tutor.

Our Sixth Form is small, which means that class sizes are small, so teachers have far more time to spend on each individual. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful, but also full of real warmth and friendliness.

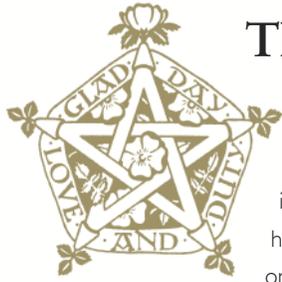
Academically, our pupils excel, with the vast majority attending their first-choice university.

In a small Sixth Form, everyone can make a real difference, and there are countless ways in which our youngsters are encouraged to take a lead, both at school and in the wider world.

The possibilities for adventure, responsibility and challenge at this stage are limitless. All will go camping, and experience a wide range of outdoor pursuits. All will be trained to deliver lambs on the school farm. All will be members of duty teams. All will have the opportunity to take part in overseas service projects, gain a Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award, run a house choir, be the Farm Manager, speak at a formal dinner, be a 'buddy' to a younger pupil, or represent the school at a prestigious international conference.

A very high proportion of our Sixth Formers opt to board in our log-cabin village which offers true independence yet provides total security. There could not be a better preparation for adult life.





The Abbotsholme Star

The Abbotsholme five-pointed star is a powerful ancient symbol which, it was claimed, protected the bearer from harm. It is King Solomon's star. Sir Gawain, one of the most noble of King Arthur's knights, wore it on his breastplate. It is a star with no beginning and no end, and it is this which gives it its strength.

When he chose it as the emblem for his school, Dr Cecil Reddie, our founding headmaster, saw it as a representation of a human being, *'with the head aspiring to the spiritual, but rooted in earth, with one arm reaching out to things in creative action and one to fellow human beings, and with one foot in the stream of time, one in the natural world of space'*.

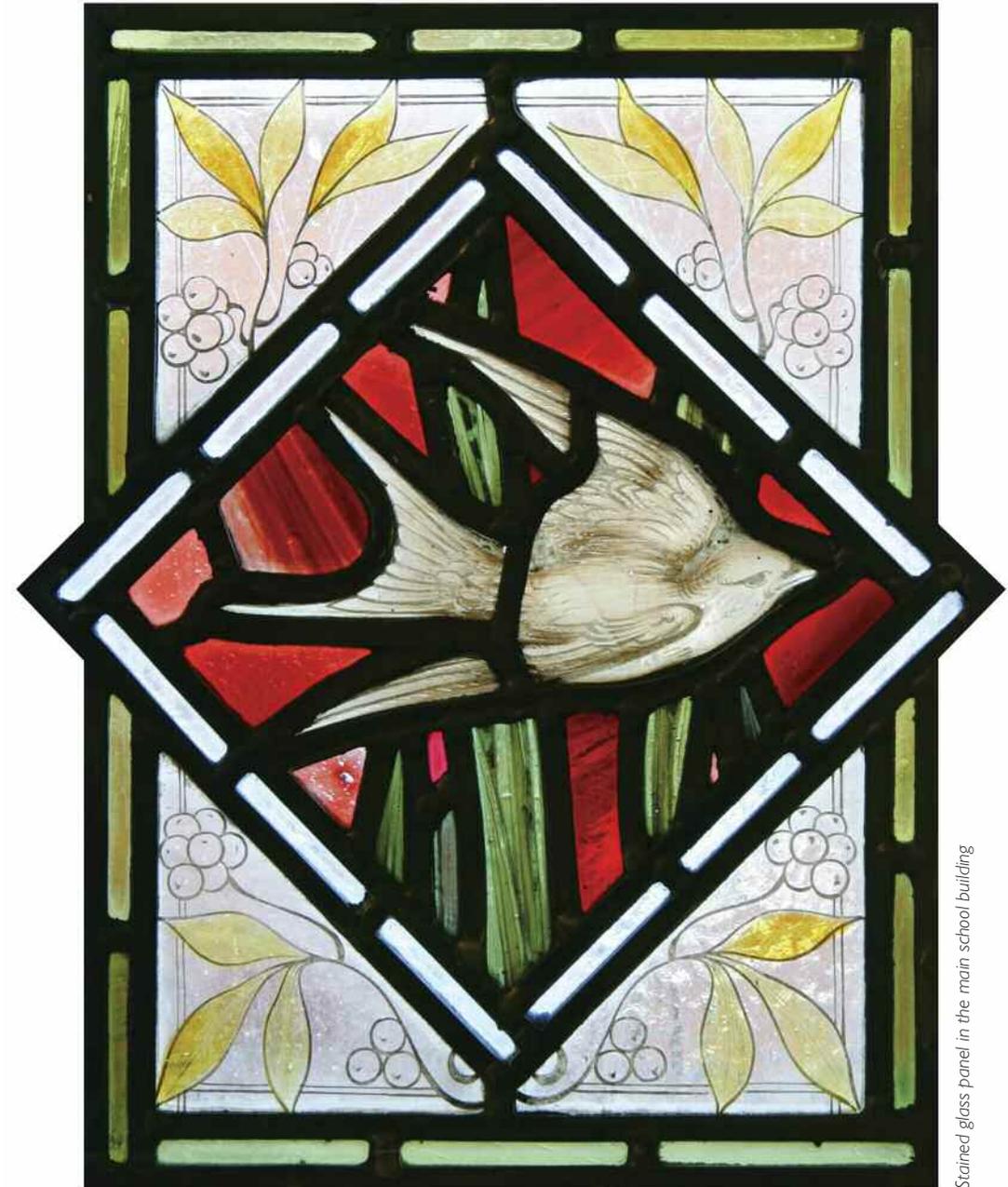
For us today, the five points of the star point to the five qualities required of all of Abbotsholme's pupils and members of staff. These are Honesty, Integrity, Courage, Respect and Humility, and they form the basis of our Behavioural Charter.

The words which are written between the points of the star are the school's motto, 'Glad Day, Love and Duty', a motto which it can be difficult to explain.

The inspiration for these words comes from the artist, poet and visionary William Blake, whose influence pervades the school. Most significantly, our memorial in Chapel to the fallen of World War One is based closely on Blake's 'Glad Day.'

For Dr Reddie, it was vital that his pupils developed a sense of duty, both to their friends within the small world of Abbotsholme and to the world outside school. They would only do this, however, if they could learn to love other people. As he says in his 'Aims of the School', *'When we have learned to love, we shall strive to hand on to others all we have ourselves attained. And we shall discover the greatest mystery of all, that mathematically as we give away our life, our life grows wider and more intense.'*

Glad Day, Love and Duty is a motto for the heart as much as it is for the head.

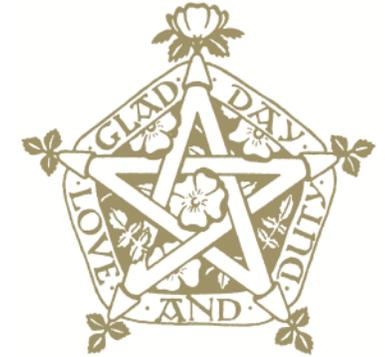


Stained glass panel in the main school building

Everyone at Abbotsholme has a story to tell, and on the following pages are just a few of those stories.

Every story is unique. Yours will be, too.

OUR ABBOTSHOLME STORIES



I am the kind of person who likes to get out and about and do things, particularly exciting things. I really enjoy getting muddy! In Outdoor Education sessions, we use the school grounds for orienteering, den-building, climbing, abseiling and walking. We even play hide-and-seek in the woods which is great fun.

Every year, we have three whole days away in the autumn for Hikes and in the summer for Camps. Long walks can be a challenge on Hikes, but it is good to be with your friends, and you help each other. It's a very friendly atmosphere. Camps are great because you get to sleep in a tent away from school. You go rock-scrambling and kayaking, and get to try many new things.

When I first saw Rockholme, the school's new indoor rock-climbing wall, I was like, 'Wow! I have to get on that!' I just love climbing, and now I belong to a climbing club.

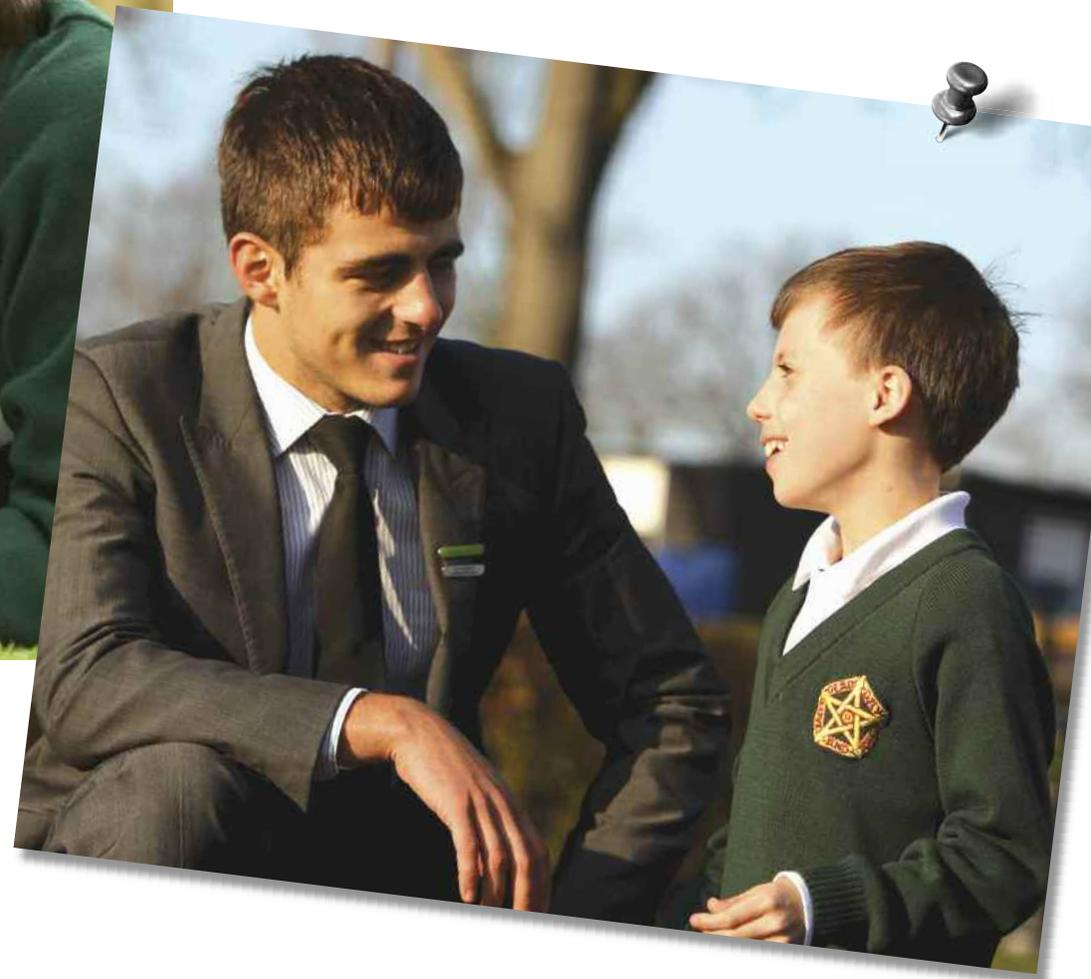
Lessons are interesting, particularly when we do experiments in Science. I also like feeding the calves, and I'm looking forward to looking after the rabbits when I'm in Year 6. There is lots of variety. Sometimes we are taught in our own classrooms, but at other times we go to different parts of school such as the Art Block or the Music Block. My favourite subject is definitely Outdoor Education, though. I like the challenge!

Elsie Year 4





We each have a senior 'buddy', and having this scheme helps you to get to know the older pupils. I like the fact that they come and talk to us and can play with us at break time, and during our reading weeks, they read with us.



It's really hard to say exactly what the best thing is about Abbotsholme as there are so many best things. One thing that is really good is that you are given choices. For instance, in Art lessons, we are given lots of freedom. I enjoy making things in clay, and I can choose what I make.

I love playing the drums and the saxophone, and I have lessons in the Music Block. Each term, we have the chance to perform to pupils and parents in lunchtime concerts. I sing as well, and last year, my brother and sisters and I sang at the Abbotsholme Summer Ball. Being a pupil here has helped me to grow in confidence, and when I perform I have no nerves.

I love the fact that I have so many friends at Abbotsholme. I am looking forward to going on to the Senior School in the future, and perhaps taking part in Round Square activities and visiting different countries.

Huxley Year 5



Sport at Abbotsholme is great. My favourite thing about playing sport is definitely the matches. I love the way we put together in a match what we have learned in training. We play to win, although I also like to learn from my opponents! I play rugby in the autumn term, and lots of my friends play football in the spring term. My favourite sport is cricket in the summer term, but we also have an after-school cricket club that meets in the Sports Hall two evenings a week all year, so I can even improve my cricket skills in the dark evenings. At the moment I play for the U13s, but I'm looking forward to playing for the First Teams when I'm a bit older.

Abbotsholme teaches you that playing as part of a team helps you to build trust in your team-mates, so that in match situations you work together well. The school has also given me a greater understanding of how to play games well. I now play for local rugby and cricket teams, too, in my free time at weekends.

I have also been in three school plays, including 'The Arabian Nights' and 'A Christmas Carol'. School work is fine. I like the lessons – and I really like getting good marks for my assignments. I suppose I am quite a competitive person!

Henry Year 8





I love the fact that I can board here and so can my horse. My parents decided that having Cassie with me would make it a home from home, and they were quite right!

Every day, I get up very early so that I can muck out her stable in the Equestrian Centre. I love this time of the day as some of the other boarders are there, too, and we chat and laugh as we work. I am a member of the Abbotsholme Equestrian Team, and competing for the school fills me with pride when we attend events. We are all very different ages, but we have one thing in common: our passion for horses and riding. In the spring, we hope to take part in cross-country events which I'm really looking forward to, then in the summer, when the evenings are lighter, I'll be able to take Cassie out for rides on the school estate. The riding staff are brilliant at teaching, and they make the training and lessons fun. They also organise the exams that we take. I am presently working through my Stage One BHS exam.



I have boarded since I was in Year 7. It's like one long sleep-over, but a bit stricter. Abbotsholme is great as there are so many opportunities to do things in the outdoors. I come from a farming family, so I really enjoy the fact that I can work with the animals here. I'm also good at netball, though, and I play for the UI4 team. Maths and Languages are my favourite classroom subjects, and I work hard. I want to do well.

Abbotsholme is the perfect school for me. It's a small school where everyone looks after each other, and everyone gets on. It's so awesome having your friends and your own horse at school with you, and I love being part of a really special team.

Dominique Year 9





Outdoor Education is my life, and without Abbotsholme I would never have experienced all that I have. It's certainly not all that I do, though, and I really enjoy lots of other things at school. My favourite GCSE subjects are Technology and Drama, and I have helped backstage with many school plays. I also go down to the Prep School on a regular basis to help to teach modern foreign languages. I have completed my Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award, and am working on my Silver. I'm one of the Electric Car team, and I'm also a member of the school choir.

Abbotsholme has created the person I am today, and I can proudly say that I am an Abbotsholmian.



Sarah Year 10



I came to Abbotsholme from a school where we all had to fit in with what was expected, and when I first arrived at Abbotsholme I was quiet and lacked confidence. I had no idea how much that would change! The Outdoor Education programme has helped me with my self-esteem and fitness, has provided me with many different skills, and has changed me for the better. I no longer feel confined. I am now confident enough to break away from the stereotypical roles that girls are sometimes offered. Stereotypes? Not here. Not at Abbotsholme.

The Outdoor Education programme offers kayaking, caving, abseiling, rock-scrambling, canoeing, climbing, gorging, orienteering and just about everything else! Not only can you take part in these activities in school time, you can also sign up to the many adventurous trips that are run in term-time and in the holidays. I have been on every trip on offer, including a canoe expedition in Sweden and a rock-climbing trip to Spain.





When I started at Abbotsholme in Year 7, I couldn't get over how exciting everything was. There were so many different things to do, including lots of things that I'd never had the chance to try before, such as canoeing and driving an electric car. Five years and many races later, I've risen to the position of Manager of the Electric Car team of about fourteen people. It's a real responsibility as I have to organise everyone and sort out who drives when and where. I also have to monitor the drivers and the cars on race-days to make sure that we are running at our optimum speed. We race at venues such as Silverstone and Goodwood, and are up against big teams such as Bentley and Jaguar.



I'm happy at Abbotsholme for lots of reasons. I'm dyslexic, and at my last school they said that I wouldn't get above a D grade for my English GCSE, but I've had so much help with all aspects of my writing that I am predicted to get at least a C grade. Maths is no problem at all, though, and I intend to do Maths and Science A Levels when I join the Sixth Form. Already I've got As and A*s in my Year 10 GCSE Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Biology

modules. I really enjoy the fact that we

don't just learn in a classroom. I love the trips we go on, and as part of my Environmental and Land Based Science GCSE, I've been involved with the farm and even helped deliver lambs. I have completed my Bronze D of E, too, and nearly finished my Silver.

We all do sports in games lessons but we don't have to be in sports' teams, so I spend my Wednesday afternoons stripping cars down and rebuilding them. This way, I have learned a great deal about basic engineering and electrics. At the moment, I am involved in the design and construction of two new lighter and faster cars that we are building from scratch, so my life at Abbotsholme is still very exciting.



Ben Year 11



At weekends, there is plenty to do on site, but I have also been on many interesting trips. We've been to cities such as London and Oxford and to theme parks, as well as going on regular shopping trips to local towns.

Although I come from Germany and so am studying in a foreign language, the teachers have made sure that I have had no difficulty with the academic work. I like the educational system so much, in fact, that I am applying to study Psychology at a British university, and I have already received several offers.

I have had so many opportunities here that I would not have had in my previous boarding school in Germany. At Abbotsholme, for example, we play much more sport, and I have really enjoyed being in the rounders and hockey teams. I have also been made a School Prefect, and I am extremely proud of the trust that the school has put in me.



Agnes Upper Sixth



What I love about boarding, especially in the Sixth Form, is that we are encouraged to live and work independently, particularly in the evenings and at weekends. This gives us skills that will be very useful at university and beyond. The school trusts us to organise ourselves, but we still have houseparents to supervise us and to be there in support if needed. Abbotsholme is a family-orientated school which suits me very well as I don't like being on my own very much. It is a small friendly, community, and there is always someone around who will make you smile or laugh. I have been a boarder at Abbotsholme for the duration of my Sixth Form, and currently I live in the cabins which are small chalet-type buildings that house four or five students. As a boarder, I have the choice of whether I eat in the school dining hall in the evenings or cook for myself in the cabin in our well-equipped kitchen.





Being an Abbotsholmian is to be part of a family, and because of this we are able to become confident, positive, respectful human beings.

I joined in Year 7 as a quiet, shy, self-conscious young lad, but it wasn't long before I became fully involved in everything Abbotsholme had to offer. I am now a keen climber; I have trekked in Nepal to Everest base camp, and wild-camped and canoed in Sweden. I have taken part in the Devizes to Westminster Race (which at 125 miles is one of the longest canoe marathons in Europe), and in an eight-hour caving session in an old, disused slate mine. I have been part of the winning Round Square adventure race team for two consecutive years, and have also contributed to Round Square Conferences. Abbotsholme has taught me not only how to do these things but also how to succeed.

As a boarder, I have found that my houseparents have always been like parents. They have been there for me when I've needed someone to talk to, and supportive of everything I have done. Abbotsholme is my second home.



My goal is to become a vet and I hope I will be able to study at Nottingham University Veterinary School. Under the guidance of my teachers, I am working hard to get the best academic grades I can, and I know that my years of experience on the school farm – including helping to raise calves, looking after the bought cattle, injecting sheep and delivering lambs, as well as all of the daily routine work – will prove invaluable, too.

Throughout my seven years here, Abbotsholme has trusted me, and allowed me to be myself. It has taught me to push boundaries, and to challenge myself

to aim as high as I can. This year, I have been Head of School, a fantastic experience which has brought out the very best in me.

Although I will inevitably leave Abbotsholme, Abbotsholme will never leave me.

Joe Upper Sixth





Come and visit us

At Abbotsholme, we have a simple vision that the school should have a greater purpose beyond preparing students for university and the work place.

In the words of one of our Year 11 pupils

Abbotsholme is more of a family than a school. It is a home.

In the words of the 2011 ISI inspection report, we

develop resourceful, resilient and confident young people who demonstrate kindness to one another and a strong spirit of adventure.

Come and visit us, and judge for yourself.



