



ABBOTSHOLME

AN EDUCATION FOR LIFE





A tradition of
individuality, excellence
and community

HEADMASTER'S INTRODUCTION

"Welcome to Abbotsholme, a leading day and boarding Independent School for boys and girls aged 2-18.

Abbotsholme's tradition of individuality, excellence and community is reflected in the character and disposition of our pupils. At Abbotsholme, we inspire our pupils to be the best version of themselves. We prize learning as a 'total picture' aimed at providing a balance between a pupil's intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Our pupils do well academically, excel on the games field, make inspiring music, develop creativity and challenge themselves on the farm or through our extensive outdoor education programme.

Our vision is that pupils leave Abbotsholme as responsible and socially aware young individuals, able to face a demanding world with confidence and a zest for life. We would wish to know that they were happy with themselves and with their lives; successful in their personal and professional endeavours, whilst remaining sensitive to the needs of others. We want all of our pupils not only to succeed, whatever their unique talents or abilities, but also to feel successful.

Our school values of Courage, Honesty, Humility, Integrity and Respect are reflected in the contributions our pupils make each year to the wider global community through the many charitable endeavours they undertake. These acts of compassion and generosity help to enrich the lives of others as well as themselves, demonstrating clear fulfilment of the 'education for life' promise.

Education at Abbotsholme is an ever-evolving process which stimulates the unique qualities and aptitudes of individual students. It provides a depth of curriculum and activities which recognise that no two pupils are the same, something which our highly qualified and tremendously dedicated staff acknowledge and support wholeheartedly."

Simon Ruscoe-Price joined Abbotsholme as Headmaster in April 2020 after a highly successful and varied career in education as a school leader, leadership mentor, teacher trainer, and as a pioneer of education reform across the globe. His understanding of progressive education and his passion for child-centred learning practice nurtures a culture of excellence. He is resolute in fostering the innate diversity of talent in each pupil and encouraging pupils and staff to develop self-efficacy to be their best at all times and in all that they do.



BACKGROUND, HISTORY & CULTURE

Originally called 'The New School', Abbotsholme was established in 1889 by the visionary Cecil Reddie as an experiment for his progressive educational philosophies and theories, demonstrated through a balanced curriculum of conventional academic study, physical exercise, manual labour, recreation and arts. Pioneering in its day, this avant-garde approach enjoyed a strong following by a number of Reddie's creative-minded contemporaries, and was influential in the foundation of other many other schools sharing a common belief in experiential and empirical learning, critical thinking and, importantly, a personalised approach.

Abbotsholme's main building is a stunning red-brick Arts & Crafts edifice, with many original features throughout. The school's location and its glorious site, with abundant grounds and working estate farm, provided ample opportunity for Reddie's philosophies to be tried and tested, and have allowed pupils to indulge in a phenomenal range of outdoor activities from the school's early days and into the 21st century.

The school has always been non-sectarian, though it broadly follows Christian principles and ethos which remain central to the school's character. The Chapel, with its original jewel-like stained glass, is a significant historic asset, featuring numerous motifs and fascinating imagery which have become intrinsic to the Abbotsholme story.

Originally a boys' school with the curriculum designed to 'prepare boys for public service', Abbotsholme became coeducational in 1969. Reddie retired in 1927, but his endeavours remain very evident in the well-rounded education we provide, and the charming, considerate young men and women who have enjoyed and continue to benefit from an Abbotsholme education.

Today, we all delight in our many unique traditions, such as our biannual whole-school trek to 'Reddie's Field' to acknowledge the contribution of the founder, all of which help maintain the legend of our wonderful school for future generations.

The 'amphitheatre' style of our magnificent, atmospheric Chapel makes it ideal for performances, lectures and celebrations







At Abbotsholme,
‘An Education for Life’
is more than just a motto

AN EDUCATION FOR LIFE

Building on Reddie’s early ideas, Abbotsholme aims to prepare its pupils for the whole of life – to be able to respond to life’s challenges and opportunities – by giving them a balanced education through a strong academic curriculum and an extensive range of extra-curricular activities in an inspiring setting.

We fully acknowledge the importance of balance between academic and physical endeavours with personal and social development; the breadth and diversity of talent in each pupil is learnt and cultivated so that pupils are encouraged appropriately and supported to be the best version of themselves.

Abbotsholme aims to provide:

Knowledge to help everyone achieve and succeed to the best of their individual academic ability;

An understanding of the natural environment and the importance of protecting it;

Physical and intellectual challenges which build strength and test courage, as well as providing a stimulating and enjoyable experience;

Cultural and social enrichment to widen perspective and to develop awareness of our responsibilities to others.

We are well-structured to fulfil these aims. A remarkable pool of outstanding teaching, coaching and pastoral staff ensures that each child’s needs and aspirations are met. Abbotsholme is coeducational and we operate a non-selective recruitment policy so that the community and the environment are harmonious and well-balanced.

Education is offered from Nursery through to Sixth Form, providing a healthy continuity for the children, and an opportunity for Abbotsholme to measure progress and help each child to fulfil their aspirations. Beyond the school years, our thriving alumni association, ‘The Old Abbotsholmians’ Club’, fosters important links with former pupils and the broader community through annual reunions, dinners, events and sports.

Abbotsholme is a member of Round Square, a network of 200 schools in 50 countries which provides an exceptional opportunity for our pupils to enjoy and benefit from international exchange visits, and to expand their knowledge across a range of disciplines.



ACADEMIC

Whatever gifts a pupil may possess in other areas, a sound academic education and excellent examination results in core subjects are invaluable in an increasingly competitive world.

Abbotsholme's most recent ISI inspection identifies fulfilment of our objective to have a 'strong academic curriculum', and pupils have a positive and rewarding attitude towards learning. This healthy culture develops exponentially, so that success for our younger pupils may be built naturally upon the achievements of their forebears. Success builds success.

Small class sizes are universally recognised as being positive to the teaching and learning process, with close, individual attention the accepted norm at Abbotsholme. Children learn at different rates and, through this one-on-one focus, our staff monitor progress continually to ensure that appropriate extra help can be given whenever required. Gifted individuals will be presented with challenges to ensure their minds and intellect are nourished and tested. Projects such as our Electric Car Challenge encourage pupils to think creatively in order to achieve a measurable result and a rewarding conclusion.

From an early age we encourage curiosity and questioning, and the subsequent healthy classroom dynamic contributes towards fostering a confident but modest attitude in our pupils, and helps us all – pupils and teachers – to achieve our educational goals and, eventually, our life goals.

Life is competitive and, increasingly, employers are expecting intellect and academic ability to be demonstrated beyond a list of exam results. Abbotsholme puts emphasis on critical thinking – learning to solve problems through analysis – which provides the 'real life skills' so valued by employers today, and ensuring Abbotsholmians stand out from the crowd in a competitive environment.

Pastoral care, small classes and significant one-on-one attention help children to achieve their very best academic attainment in a highly supportive environment







Extensive grounds and beautiful playing fields are complemented by our synthetic pitch to allow training and matches all year round.

The nearby Peak District National Park opens the door to hiking, camping and outdoor adventures, beloved by generations of Abbotsholmians



SPORT & OUTDOOR OPPORTUNITIES

Abbotsholme's 'education for life' philosophy has been our foundation for over a century, and never has our programme of sport and outdoor opportunities been richer and more rewarding than today, complementing other areas of intellectual and creative endeavour to achieve a healthy mind and a healthy body.

We value sport in broader terms as a means of developing self-awareness and confidence, but also empathy and humility, recognising that we all have different talents and face different challenges. Sport teaches respect, and it forces quick decision-making – sometimes under pressure – and skills which can be applied to help overcome many of life's subsequent social and intellectual challenges.

Interests and trends in sport and physical activity are ever-changing and evolving, and Abbotsholme works tirelessly to ensure that we offer the very best and most rewarding experiences for our pupils of all ages. Assisted by our superb synthetic pitch, we offer all the usual indoor and outdoor sports such as cricket, football, hockey, tennis and many more, all of which are enjoyed equally both by boys and girls. We are always exploring new opportunities to extend the sports provision through appropriate, targeted investment, and we organise training camps and tours for our hockey and cricket players which are immensely popular and successful.

Pupils of all ages enjoy 'Rockholme' – our challenging climbing wall/installation, which acts a valuable bridge to an enjoyable life of outdoor adventure. For our senior pupils, the journey continues with activities such as kayaking, bushcraft, rock scrambling, orienteering and caving, while the annual three-day hikes in October are enjoyed by the whole school.

All pupils work towards a Duke of Edinburgh Award – Bronze from Year 9, Silver in Key Stage 4 and Gold in the Sixth Form – a tremendous adventure whose challenges add a valuable new dimension to school life, and help to develop an understanding and an appreciation of the wider world.

We have our farm, but we also run an on-site Equestrian Centre with horses and ponies appropriately selected for pupils' use and enjoyment. We enjoy success at competition level, and our horses and facilities provide a tremendous opportunity to develop an interest in a variety of disciplines.

THE ARTS

Abbotsholme has a long history of outstanding creativity, with self-expression and artistic interpretation at the heart of the school's long journey. Visual Art, Music and the Performing Arts – although different disciplines – give our pupils the chance to explore and express their individuality from an early age, and make an invaluable contribution to our rich curriculum within and beyond the classroom.

For our young artists, a light and airy studio in the senior school provides the perfect environment for exploring new materials, ideas and processes to encourage and facilitate expression through a variety of visual media in two and three dimensions. Pupils will study works from numerous artists, learning about their historical context, and eventually become able to make judgements about the aesthetic merit and qualities of a work of art through their command of the appropriate critical vocabulary.

We have our own photographic studio, where pupils can explore digital and film processes, learn about lighting and composition in a professional-type environment, and explore post-production and retouching techniques to take their photography a stage further.

Pupils are encouraged to learn a musical instrument at an early age, and many will continue with this to GCSE level and beyond. There are plenty of opportunities to perform to enthusiastic audiences within and beyond the school, either individually, in a concert, or as part of a Performing Arts presentation.

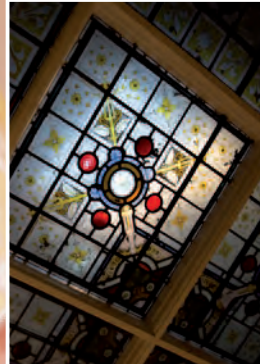
Dance, Music, Drama and Art converge several times each year in our superbly-equipped theatre, with shows from Broadway and beyond given the full-on Abbotsholme treatment, with audiences often invited in to watch the students perform.

The frequent trips to galleries, concerts and stage performances contribute significantly to our young artists' appreciation of their area of study, while the regular visits and lectures from visiting professionals always inspire our young students.

A wealth of facilities, generous space and abundant sources of stimulation help pupils to develop confidence and individuality through self-discovery and self-expression











Children of all ages love the boarding experience at Abbotsholme, where opportunities abound for academic and personal development, and friendships blossom in an atmosphere of adventure and joie de vivre



BOARDING

The boarding provision and associated pastoral care at Abbotsholme is excellent, and those who choose this option will enjoy a truly memorable educational experience enhanced by a superb range of opportunities beyond the conventional curriculum. Mindful that it is their home for much of the year, we listen carefully to boarders' feedback to ensure we continually provide the best possible experience for all. As a result, boarding is an attractive choice even for those who live within commuting distance, with around one third of pupils choosing to board either on a full, weekly or flexi basis. Our boarding population, comprising children from across the UK and from 10 different countries, helps to shape the culturally rich and wonderfully diverse community of which Abbotsholme is rightly proud.

Boarding is provided with rooms configured to accommodate the different ages and genders in the most appropriate way. The younger girls love to personalise their own space within the three shared rooms of the idyllic 'Flaxfield House', which provides a reassuring, homely environment and gives access to a wonderful range of outdoor facilities which are located nearby. Our senior girls live in 'Orchard House' offering well-balanced accommodation to facilitate study and relaxation within a highly supportive framework as they work towards GCSEs.

'Cedarholme' is the home for our boys, accommodating those from Years 5–9 in one area downstairs and Years 10 and 11 upstairs, with plenty of opportunity for joint activity as appropriate. As with the girls, the environment is designed to ensure that the boys are able to relax with friends, or to concentrate on their studies in a quieter space.

Sixth Formers live as a small community in 'Barnfield', comprising a group of highly attractive and well-equipped log cabins, providing the students with an environment which is more appropriate for, and sympathetic to, their age and maturity. Although the Sixth Formers' increased autonomy and independence is respected and encouraged, every student can be confident of access to the highest degree of appropriate pastoral care as a matter of course.

With the phenomenal breadth of extra-curricular opportunities available, boarding at Abbotsholme can be a positive, life-changing and enhancing experience for all. There are wonderful opportunities every day within the school and around our 140-acre site, and at weekends we organise trips further afield to enrich, inspire and entertain our young charges.

FARM & ESTATE

A 70-acre working farm, equestrian centre and country estate form part of Abbotsholme's overall 140-acre site, and are integral to the 'education for life' ideal which we espouse. The largely arable farm has been running as part of Abbotsholme since the school was founded in 1889 and helps to maintain our strong and congenial relationship with the farming and wider community.

The line between 'the farm' and 'the school' is intentionally vague, so that pupils understand the synergic relationship between the nature and the broader societal environment.

All pupils play an active role in rural life at the school and, from Year 10, they can choose to study Agriculture and Estate Management or Equestrian as part of a tailored programme. From Year 7–9 pupils study towards a Level 1 BTEC in Agriculture; in Years 10 and 11 they can choose to study Level 2, with an option to achieve Level 3 in the Sixth Form.

The curriculum provides invaluable opportunities for the teaching of environmental sustainability for all pupils through outdoor education, working with animals, clay pigeon shooting, beekeeping or gardening, which helps develop their understanding of the natural world and the environment. Our kitchens provide healthy meals with produce direct from our own farm, helping us convey the 'farm to fork' story and inculcate the importance of animal welfare.

The BHS-approved Equestrian Centre is located close to the heart of the school and offers an additional sporting dimension which is enjoyed by pupils of all ages, some of whom choose to take the opportunity to study towards a BTEC Level 2 during Years 10 and 11 or BTEC level 3 during Years 12 and 13. There is also an opportunity to undertake BHS qualifications alongside the BTEC. The outdoor manège facilitates tuition throughout the year, with private or shared lessons available on the school's horses and ponies either purely for pleasure, or towards competition. Subject to availability, we also offer pupils the chance to stable their own horse at school, so that the continuity of the relationship with their equine friend can be maintained.

An environment offering some balance
and relief from the pressures of the
increasingly technologically-centred
21st century







Abbotsholme offers
children the chance of
some wonderfully rich,
happy and memorable
schooldays



NURSERY & PREP

An Abbotsholme 'education for life' begins in our Nursery at age 2, with an eye-opening range of opportunities, experiences and resources which will inspire and help individual character to develop. Located in its own light and bright classrooms within the Prep School, the Nursery is a happy and vibrant introduction to Abbotsholme, and whose young pupils are a key aspect of our community.

Continuity of education is highly beneficial to children's development, and our experienced staff work hard to ensure that the transition to Reception at age 5 is as seamless as possible for pupils and parents. The environment – and many faces – will be familiar as the journey continues into the Prep, where children quickly settle into a new, dynamic way of life.

Small class sizes are a feature of Abbotsholme, where individual focus allows each child's progress to be measured and monitored in order to ensure steady development in all areas during these crucial, formative years. We provide tremendous variety in our stimulating curriculum to encourage a thirst for knowledge and a love of the learning processes – listening, reading, researching, discussing and experiencing. Important academic aspects of the curriculum are enjoyed and contextualised through empirical learning and our extensive outdoor education programme.

The breadth of academic, sports, arts and outdoor opportunities expands immensely as pupils progress through the Prep, where their increasing confidence encourages the children to try new things on an extra-curricular basis. We offer numerous enrichment opportunities to enjoy with friends and classmates, and to help ensure that their time in Abbotsholme's Prep will be remembered fondly.

Subjects of study become more specialised as children prepare for transition to Senior School. We engage regularly with parents through newsletters, bulletins and in person at our frequent events, and we encourage them to participate appropriately in their child's education by monitoring homework, attending relevant activities (such as performances, parents' meetings etc) to help each child achieve their individual best.

In time, Prep pupils begin organically to adopt our values, becoming respectful, confident and happy, with strong morals and developing leadership skills, so that by the time they enter Senior School in Year 7 they are fully prepared for the challenge of this next phase of their lives.

SENIOR SCHOOL

For pupils progressing from our Prep School the transition to Year 7 marks an important milestone in the Abbotsholme journey, while those children joining us from other schools feel reassured by our culture of friendliness, cooperation and encouragement from pupils and staff alike. Pastoral support is of paramount importance, ensuring that pupils feel happy and engaged, and confident in all aspects of their school life, socially and academically. The coeducational nature of our community contributes positively to the harmonious environment we enjoy, and the well-balanced character engendered in our pupils.

We encourage independence, determination and ambition, but recognise that each child is unique and that their rates of progress will vary and differ. Our Learning Development Team is intrinsic to the Abbotsholme method for those who need a helping hand along the way, or for whom an extra challenge is appropriate.

The curriculum is broad, with our 'education for life' philosophy providing some welcome variety as the academic demands gain momentum. Intellectual stimulus applied through our individualised 'Stretch & Challenge' programme ensures that pupils' development is allowed to flourish and progress beyond examination level.

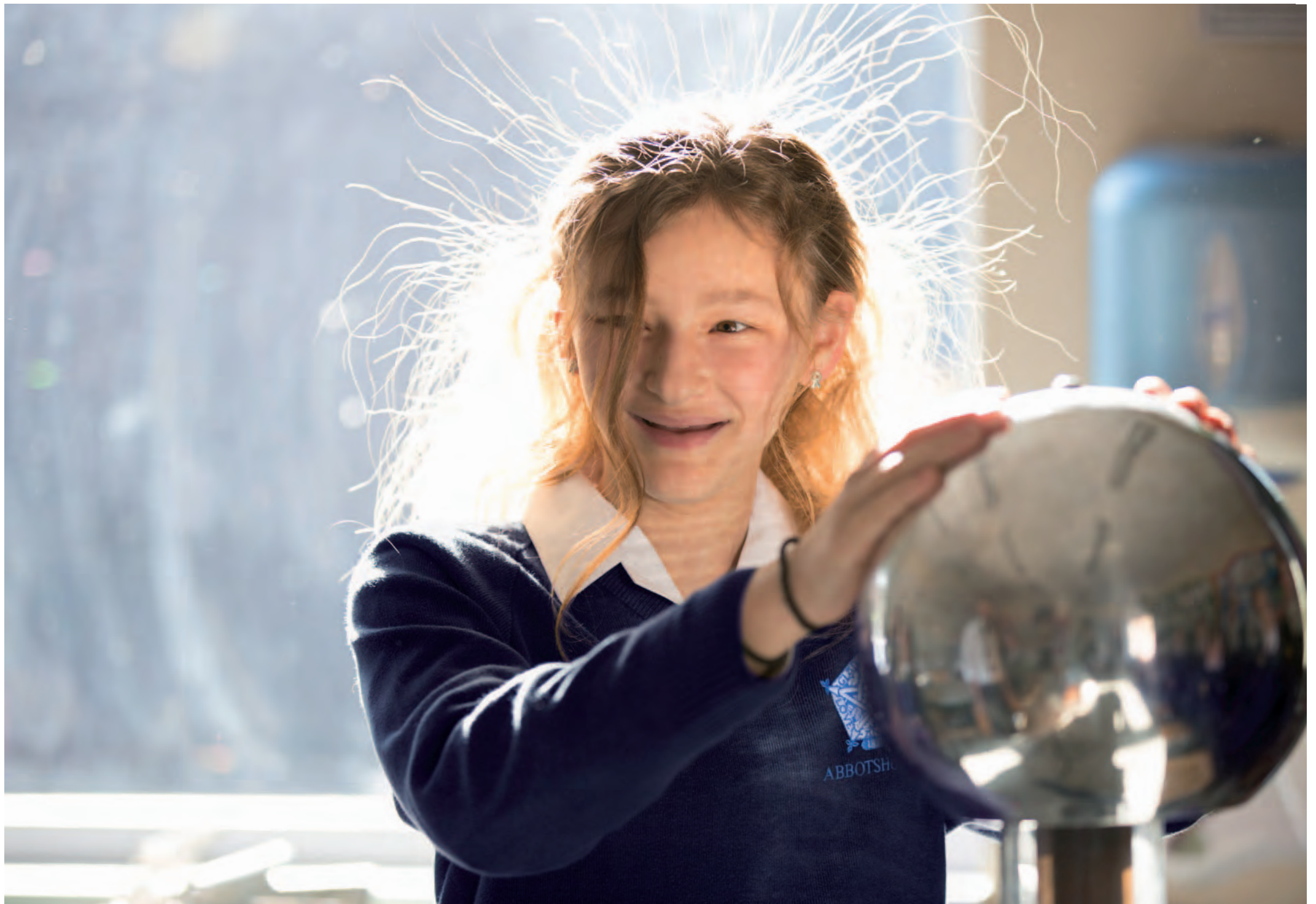
Many organised trips associated with the curriculum reinforce the theory that the best learning progress is achieved through stimulation and experience, and contribute to an enjoyable and memorable education for all.

Physical activity enjoyed via our imaginative outdoor education programme helps to instil a healthy attitude for life in all our pupils. We believe in 'sport for all', but also accept that some pupils are more gifted or more dedicated to particular sports – be it table tennis or cricket – and encouragement is given appropriately through our various programmes to help pupils to achieve their best personally, or at competition level.

Subject choices are necessary in Year 10; we offer an excellent range for study at GCSE level, and careful monitoring, encouragement and tuition help to ensure that each child achieves their very best at exam time so that doors remain open for future decisions relating to education and careers.

Studies necessarily become more intensive, but increased opportunities for sport, art and extra-curricular pursuits ensure that a healthy and fruitful balance is maintained







A 'community within a community',
the Sixth Form is full of wonderful
characters; individuals of gravitas, humour,
intellect, sporting and artistic prowess,
who each leave their mark at Abbotsholme

SIXTH FORM

Most pupils stay with us post-GCSE to study A Levels and BTECs, though the physical, social and intellectual aspects of the Year 12 and 13 environment will differ immensely from that of Senior School. Sixth Formers enjoy the increased level of independence and self-reliance which help bridge the transition to adulthood. Sitting adjacent to the main school building, the Sixth Form Centre accommodates our A Level students together in a distinct space.

We recognise that students are here through choice and a new degree of maturity is evident as they take more control and more responsibility for achieving their goals for the next stage of their young lives, with help and guidance at all stages from specialist staff. We provide an exceptional programme of Careers education (which actually begins in Year 8) so that when the time comes to finalise their subject choices, targets have been achieved and options are clear.

We offer a broad range of A Level subjects, plus BTEC options in Sport, Agriculture and the Performing Arts for a more practical, 'project management' approach. The small class sizes ensure that students enjoy an exceptional level of individual attention to help them achieve their best possible results, and their first-choice university for the majority who choose this option.

In addition to a range of A Levels and BTECs, every student can undertake an EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) in a subject of their choosing, either to complement their studies, or perhaps something entirely new. Whether a boarder or a day student, Abbotsholme provides the environment and the resources to enable study extensively beyond the curriculum – for those who choose to do so – or to take advantage of the many recreational opportunities to provide occasional relief from the rigours of study and help develop an interesting, likeable and broad-minded character.



LOCATION

Abbotsholme's magnificent estate lies in a beautiful, rural location on the Staffordshire/ Derbyshire border in the heart of central England, just a few miles from the important Peak District National Park which is highly prized as a feature of our outdoor education programme.

Although in a countryside setting, Abbotsholme enjoys easy access to the neighbouring towns of Stoke-on-Trent, Derby, Nottingham, Burton upon Trent and Birmingham, whose industrial heritage is renowned world-wide.

Transport links are excellent, with Birmingham International Airport a little over an hour's drive away, and the major road network within easy reach. Uttoxeter is just six miles south; famed for its racecourse, it is also the location of a convenient railway station with nationwide links.

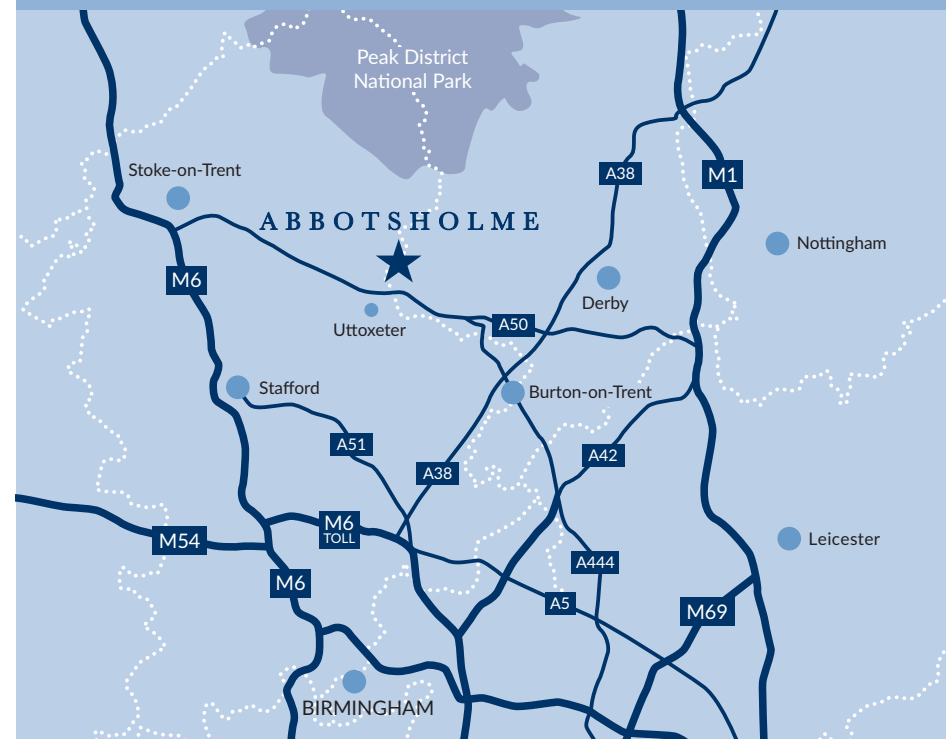
Our geographical location enables us to reach all parts of the country with relative ease, so that a museum trip to London, for example, is a formality which can enrich the academic educational experience. Importantly, we are also able to enjoy frequent visits from authors, artists and other professionals who bring perspective to the pupils' academic, artistic and sporting endeavours.

If you would like to visit or find out more about our remarkable, historic school, please contact Admissions on 01889 590217 or email enquiries@abbotsholme.co.uk

For parents and pupils who would like to visit, we can provide a one-to-one tour during the school day, with an opportunity to meet the Headteacher, pupils and staff. For those who live further afield we are happy to arrange a virtual meeting via Skype or FaceTime in the first instance, to answer any questions you may have.

You are also welcome to attend our Open Events for group tours and family visits, so please check our website for upcoming dates.

A picturesque location
in the heart of England,
enjoying easy access
across the nation







ABBOTSHOLME

INDEPENDENT BOARDING & DAY SCHOOL FOR BOYS & GIRLS AGED 2-18

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