

Moorbrook School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119866
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	358636
Inspection dates	18–19 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Marian Thomas

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	41
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Di Hodgson
Headteacher	Mrs Annette White, Sue Geldard
Date of previous school inspection	29 February 2008
School address	Ainslie Road Fulwood, Preston Lancashire PR2 3DB
Telephone number	01772 774752
Fax number	01772 713256
Email address	burser@moorbrook.lancs.sch.uk

Age group	11–16
Inspection dates	18–19 January 2011
Inspection number	358636

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector observed six lessons taught by four teachers and one higher level teaching assistant. Meetings were held with staff, students, the Chair of the Governing Body and a local authority adviser. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at the teachers' planning for lessons, leaders' development plans and examples of students' work. She also took into account the views of four parents and carers who returned questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas:

- the progress students make in developing their mathematical, English and social skills across all areas of the provision
- the impact of strategies used to manage students' behaviour
- how well the curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of students
- the effectiveness of the strategies to monitor students' attendance
- how well the governing body supports the school's work.

Information about the school

Moorbrook is a small special school. Students who attend all have a statement of special educational needs as they are experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are a few girls in the school. Very few students are looked after by the local authority and most students are from White British backgrounds. More than half of the students are known to be eligible for free school meals. Most of the students travel a considerable distance from home to the school.

Since the previous inspection, the school has undergone a turbulent period of significant change in the leadership and management team. Currently, the school has no permanent headteacher. Until the appointment of a new headteacher, the school is being led and managed by two associate headteachers who are employed by the local authority. The two associate headteachers took up their posts January 2011.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its students an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

The departure and absence of senior staff have resulted in a prolonged period of instability within the senior leadership team. As a result, the arrangements for students' personal and social development are insufficiently robust to have had any noticeable impact on improving their emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. The school is failing to meet students' specific needs and their inadequate academic progress is compounded by poor attendance and unacceptable behaviour. Students' achievement is inadequate and the school is not preparing them well enough to develop the skills necessary for the next stage in their education or later life. Additionally, safeguarding procedures are not robust and students do not receive sufficient support to enable them to keep themselves safe. Systems to record information are inadequate; files are out of date and disorganised.

The two associate headteachers have significant experience of working with students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties but have had too little time to bring about any improvements. Self-evaluation is at a very early stage of development. Leaders and managers have not yet been able to demonstrate the capacity to bring about the significant changes needed, particularly in ensuring that systems to improve behaviour and attendance are robust in order to secure improvement in outcomes for students in the longer term.

A small number of curriculum areas are well organised but overall, the curriculum is not adequately monitored and is insufficiently personalised to meet the needs of all students. Too little is done to motivate the majority of students to improve their achievement and attendance. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers and support staff are very committed to students' well-being and learning. However, while students make some short-term gains in their progress in lessons, this is not seen in their long-term achievement, due principally to the very high rate of absence.

The effectiveness of the care, guidance and support provided for students is inadequate. Students' behaviour outside the classroom is particularly poor, and at times poses a risk to other students and staff. The new behaviour management policy gives greater emphasis to students' gaining self-resilience, improving their self management skills and becoming increasingly responsible for their own behaviour. However, this has yet to show impact. Currently, students are finding it difficult to adapt to this change in approach, and in some instances, their behaviour has deteriorated. Work undertaken to encourage better

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

attendance has failed and most students do not attend regularly. This is because partnership work with external agencies is inadequate and there is a lack of monitoring of the procedures to check the effectiveness of strategies to improve attendance. The governing body is supportive of the school but currently offers an inadequate level of challenge to senior leaders. Links with the local community are weak and at times strained due to students' poor behaviour. Strategies to promote community cohesion lack planning and evaluation and students' spiritual development is inadequate as is their understanding of other cultures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the arrangements for safeguarding students by:
 - ensuring that systems for recording child protection information are robust and files are regularly updated and organised.
- Raise achievement and accelerate progress by:
 - tracking students' progress more closely over time
 - developing the curriculum so that it more closely matches students' needs
 - ensuring the support for vulnerable students is adequately targeted and has a positive impact on their learning and development.
- Improve students' behaviour and their social and emotional development so that they develop the personal and social skills they need for the future by:
 - embedding the new behaviour policy and procedures and ensuring that these are consistently applied by all staff
 - ensuring that students are clear about the expectations contained in the new policy and are given the support they need to develop self-resilience
 - ensuring individual students are sufficiently well supported both in and outside the classroom
 - reducing the number of exclusions
 - improving students' knowledge and understanding of life within a multi-ethnic society.
- Improve students' attendance to accelerate progress and help them gain the qualifications they need for the next steps of their education by:
 - ensuring systems for contacting absentees are consistently and methodically carried out
 - working closely with both parents and external agencies
 - monitoring the effectiveness of the procedures
 - supervising students' arrival at school and encouraging more to attend form-time breakfast club.
- Strengthen the leadership and management of the school by:
 - clarifying the vision, developing clear aims and setting high expectations for the school

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

- creating an effective senior leadership structure and developing the role of middle leaders throughout the school
- establishing a comprehensive system to monitor and evaluate the school's work
- ensuring the governing body challenges and holds the school to account for the effectiveness of its provision and students' outcomes.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Too few students attend regularly enough and therefore they do not make the progress needed to close the gap in attainment from their low levels on entry to the school. Students' progress and achievement over time are inadequate overall, and as a result, many do not achieve their potential during their time in the school. A few students obtain more than one qualification. A proportion similar to that of other special schools goes on to further education, employment and training. In the lessons where teaching is satisfactory or better, students who attend regularly make satisfactory and sometimes better progress than their peers in mainstream school. The school's data and work in books show that over time, progress improves and students meet their targets.

Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is inadequate. Most of the students have low self-esteem and are slow to develop independent skills. Students do not have a clear understanding of what constitutes safe behaviour, particularly outside the classroom, and have not yet come to terms with the expectations of the new behaviour policy. The school has started to hold a weekly assembly for all students but lunchtimes have to be tightly supervised and often lead to disruptive behaviour. There have been many short-term exclusions within the past year. One parent expressed their unhappiness that a school intended to help students with behavioural difficulties, was unable to improve their child's attendance and sent them home frequently. However, since the start of the current term, under the new leadership, there has been a small reduction in the numbers of exclusions, although the school recognises that there is a lot more still to be done. Students have a satisfactory knowledge of how to live healthy lifestyles and a minority enjoy the sporting opportunities offered.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	4
Pupils' behaviour	4
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	4
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching seen at the time of the inspection was satisfactory overall. In the best lessons, teachers skillfully supported their students and learning progressed well. Teaching assistants are integral to the teaching teams and play a very important part in encouraging students' learning. However, learning is inadequate overall because too few pupils attend often enough. At times staff were finding implementation of the new behaviour management strategies difficult as some students reacted quite negatively to the changes and this slowed the learning. Students' work is regularly marked and appropriate feedback is given which provides them with clear direction to improve. Teachers monitor individual students' progress satisfactorily, and oral feedback is used effectively to engage and encourage them to do better. Despite the turbulence and recent changes, staff continue to support each other well and morale is improving slowly.

The curriculum has an academic focus but provides too few opportunities for work-based learning. While the academic focus gives emphasis to developing core literacy and numeracy skills, it fails to offer a sufficiently personalised approach for all students. In one or two cases, work-based learning has been effective in increasing students' interest and as a result, their attendance has improved significantly. Subject teachers often work in isolation as curriculum links are not in place. Curriculum monitoring is at an early stage of development.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The school has yet to establish successful links with external agencies in order to support students whose circumstances have made them vulnerable. As a result, support for these students is inadequately targeted and this has a negative impact on their learning and development. The work of the school's counsellor is appreciated by students. Overall, staff are regarded by students as approachable. One student commented, 'Staff here listen to me'. Nevertheless, strategies to support students' behaviour are ineffective and efforts to increase attendance have failed. Procedures for contacting absentees are inconsistent and not systematically carried out. Form time, first thing in the morning, is not compulsory and a minority of the students arriving by taxi choose to go to the shops rather than attend these sessions.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	4

How effective are leadership and management?

Some stability in leadership is now being offered through the local authority's support but this is not permanent. The current associate headteachers have a wealth of experience and have already identified key areas for improvement within the school's development plan. However, there are many areas for improvement and the aims and direction of the school are not yet clearly set out. This is having a negative impact on school improvement. The role of middle managers is not yet clearly defined and the school's management team is not strong enough to drive and secure improvements.

Systems for evaluating the effectiveness of the school's policies and provision have yet to be established. The school's effectiveness to promote equality of opportunity is inadequate with particular shortcomings in helping students improve their behaviour, attendance and emotional development. Although teachers track individual students' progress satisfactorily, senior leaders do not have a robust system that provides a clear analysis of students' achievement over time.

The governing body has remained constant throughout the changes in the leadership team. It recognises that, although governors have supported the school, they have offered insufficient challenge to school leaders. The Chair of the Governing Body has been instrumental in eliciting help from the local authority and the governing body has taken an approach to recruiting a new headteacher. It recognises that it has to offer considerably more challenge in the future and take a more active role in holding the school to account in order to secure better outcomes for students. Safeguarding procedures do not meet requirements. Systems do not support students sufficiently well and as a result, a small minority continue to make unsafe choices such as leaving the premises during school time.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Relationships with parents are satisfactory and are slowly improving through the work of the parent and student support officer. However, currently, the school does not plan or evaluate its contribution to promoting community cohesion and as a result, students' knowledge and understanding of life within a multi-ethnic society are inadequate. Outcomes for students are inadequate, as is the school's deployment of resources. As a result, it provides inadequate value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Views of parents and carers

The four parents who returned questionnaires either agreed or strongly agreed with the 13 statements about the school's work and its impact on their children. Only one concern was raised which related to the attendance of a student; the senior leaders are fully aware of this.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Moorbrook School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 4 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 41 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	3	75	1	25	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	1	25	3	75	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	1	25	3	75	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	0	0	2	50	1	25	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	2	50	2	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	1	25	3	75	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	0	0	4	100	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	0	0	4	100	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	0	0	4	100	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	1	25	3	75	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	1	25	3	75	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	1	25	3	75	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	0	0	4	100	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 January 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Moorbrook School, Preston, PR2 3DB

Thank you for the welcome that I received from you when I visited the school recently. Thanks go especially to the students who met with me to share their views about your school. The inspection judged that the school has a long way to go before it can ensure you are learning all that you need to be well prepared for the next steps in your education or employment. Consequently, it requires 'special measures'. This means that the senior leadership team and other staff will be asked to improve things and inspectors will return at regular intervals in the future to check that the school is improving. Many of you are not making enough progress and achieving all that you can. Much more can be achieved by many of you and I have asked those who are responsible for leading and managing the school to do a number of things:

- give greater attention to measuring your progress to help you keep on track and do better; I have also asked that the curriculum is developed to make sure the courses on offer meet your needs.
- ensure that you understand the new behaviour policy and that staff use this consistently; I have asked that staff give you the support you need to help you improve your behaviour and to be able to take more responsibility for your own actions
- improve your attendance by monitoring how often you attend more closely to ensure you develop the necessary skills for your future education or employment
- make the leadership and management of the school more effective so that staff know what is going well and what is needed to improve the school further.

This is a lot of work for the school staff. You can all do a great deal to help your school along this road, particularly by behaving better, attending every day, working hard, and achieving as much as you can. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Marian Thomas

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.