

Moorside High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124399
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	359657
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Robert Barbour HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	785
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Goldstraw
Headteacher	Mazda Jenkin
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2008
School address	Cellarhead Road Werrington, Stoke-on-Trent ST9 0HP
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Thirty lessons were observed, taught by 29 different teachers. Inspectors also made a number of briefer visits to lessons and held meetings with students, staff and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, including 158 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, and questionnaires completed by staff and students.

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

- What has been the impact of the training programme for middle managers?
- How effective have leaders and managers been in raising standards in target subjects?
- What impact have recent initiatives had on the provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- Why has there been an apparent decline in the effectiveness of the sixth form since the last inspection?

Information about the school

Moorside High School is a smaller than average secondary school located on the edge of the Staffordshire Moorlands. A majority of the students live outside the catchment area in the nearby city of Stoke-on-Trent. Sixth form provision is at the Moorlands Sixth Form Centre, seven miles away in Cheadle. This centre is run jointly by three schools in collaboration. Moorside High School has a below average proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The students are overwhelmingly of White British background. The school is a specialist school for science. It holds the Inclusion Quality Mark, Healthy Schools Status, the Sports Mark and the Eco Award. It has full Dyslexia Friendly status, and it has full International Schools status.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Moorside High School is a good school that is continuing to improve. Results in GCSE examinations are significantly better than the national average and students make good progress during their time at the school. Leaders and managers have an outstanding track record over the past two years:

Substantial training for middle managers has enabled subject leaders to be effective in ensuring that teaching in their areas is good and that students are making good progress.

A strategic management team, including governors, led a sustained programme to develop the quality of teaching. This used rigorous self-evaluation and enabled the sharing of best practice between teachers.

The data relating to student progress are now well understood and used by all teachers. Students also have a good idea of their progress and what they need to do to improve.

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are outstanding. As one parent commented: 'My daughter has a particular learning difficulty, and nothing has been too much trouble for the staff.' Students whose circumstances that may make them very vulnerable have received particularly effective support. Although attendance was above average at the last inspection, school leaders have continued to make this a priority so that attendance is now high and the proportion of students whose attendance is poor is very small and decreasing.

Teaching at the school is good. Where it is most successful, students experience a rich variety of tasks and the opportunity to take an active part in their learning. In a small minority of lessons, however, students are only expected to be passive learners for too much of the time and so risk losing interest and becoming distracted.

The school's specialist science status is very successful. A high proportion of students achieve two or more GCSE grades at A* to C in science, and numbers taking A-level are rising. The science department runs clubs and trips out of school and its links with local primary schools are effective and much appreciated.

Leaders and managers know the school very well and the quality of their self-evaluation is very good. Since the previous inspection, the effectiveness of the main part of the school has improved significantly. However in the sixth form centre the tracking of student progress was less sharp and targets were less rigorous so results in A level in 2010 were disappointing. School leaders have strengthened the management in the centre, and the quality of the sixth form is currently good, although at the previous inspection it was outstanding. Overall, the school's capacity for further sustained improvement is good.

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

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching throughout the school by:
 - enabling students to take more responsibility for their own learning
 - increasing the proportion of lessons where students take an active and leading role in their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students enter the school in Year 7 with attainment that is slightly above the national average. They enjoy their learning and make good progress in lessons. Students show an interest in moral issues, discussing fair trade in their citizenship lessons and organ donation in biology. In religious education students approached moral issues through the lens of 'What would Jesus do?' Students work well together in groups: in science, students enjoyed consolidating their learning by answering questions set in the style of a television quiz show. In an outstanding Year 11 history lesson small groups of students explored source material together on the rise of Hitler and discussed its significance. In this activity, they were also required to take further responsibility by changing groups and explaining their evidence to other students. In some other lessons opportunities to foster this sort of accountability were missed. Against the national trend boys succeed just as well as girls against many GCSE measures as a result of the good teaching and excellent pastoral care in the school. Students from ethnic minorities also make good progress.

Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress. A variety of students with needs including dyslexia and moderate learning difficulties successfully explored graphs using information and communication technology, engaged in practical cookery and took a full part in class discussions. On some occasions however the support they receive is too focused on helping them to complete tasks rather than really engage and understand them.

Students feel safe in school, and have a good understanding of how to stay safe in society using the internet, on roads and with issues surrounding drugs and alcohol. They behave well, and appreciate the school's anti-bullying policy, which some described as 'tough'. Students are proud of their school, and enjoy acting as ambassadors for the school when they support primary schools as sports leaders. Their good basic skills and high attendance help to prepare them for the world of work. They keep healthy, and appreciate the range of sports opportunities available.

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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

Teachers know their students well, monitor their progress and usually prepare engaging lessons with a range of interesting activities. Good use is made of students working in pairs and small groups, as well as whole class work. In an outstanding Year 9 German lesson, the teacher combined very clear objectives with song, music and role play activities that enabled students to make excellent progress. However sometimes teachers do not engage students actively enough and they find it hard to concentrate.

The curriculum is wide, especially in Years 10 and 11, with more choices in vocational areas. These are particularly appealing to students needing more practical experience. There are good links with colleges and other providers. Students take advantage of a good range of extracurricular activities.

The care, guidance and support that students receive are a particular strength of the school. These are founded on an excellent knowledge of the students, both as individuals and in terms of academic progress. The role of the form tutor has developed as a mentor to make sure that each student fulfils his or her potential. Students who have substantial needs speak powerfully of the determined and consistent support that they have received. Other students describe their high levels of confidence in the availability and quality of the care and support provided.

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 the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers have been extremely successful in establishing an ethos in the school of high professional expectations. The performance of teachers is monitored closely and they are provided with a range of high quality opportunities to develop their practice. There is strong evidence that the quality of teaching has improved significantly over the past two years. Middle managers are also now consistently effective in monitoring and evaluation, and take full accountability for their faculty areas. The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and development needs, and they were involved in the steering group of the main programme to improve teaching. Through both its main meetings and its committees, the governing body exercises effective oversight of the school.

Leaders and managers have a good partnership with two other schools in running the sixth form centre. They played a full part with their partners in establishing an enhanced management structure for the centre, and for more rigorous monitoring and evaluation.

Leaders and managers analyse data carefully, and take many factors into account including gender and socio-economic background. The relatively high achievement of boys demonstrates the actions taken to make the curriculum more engaging for them. Leaders and managers take their responsibilities to keep students safe seriously, with strong administrative procedures complementing the care and concern for the welfare of individual students. The promotion of community cohesion is good. The school has undertaken a thoughtful analysis of community needs and is meeting these through, for example, a 'Silver Surfer' club. The international community aspects are well met through the school's links with a Chinese school, but awareness of multi-cultural communities more locally is less well developed.

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

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

The combined sixth form centre has provided students at Moorside with a broad range of opportunities, far greater than would be available to them in a small school sixth form. There is a wide curriculum and an excellent range of enrichment activities. However, results in 2010 in the centre showed students doing less well overall than their previous attainment would have indicated. The three schools that are partners in the centre were quick to identify the need for a broader management structure that would capture the wider expertise of the host schools and their experience in raising standards. As a result systems for tracking student progress and for monitoring teaching have become challenging and robust. Current data show that progress is again good and that leadership of the centre is effective. The students from Moorside are enthusiastic about the quality of the education they are receiving, including the high-quality of advice and guidance.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account: Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

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

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers responded positively to the questionnaire. In particular the proportion who felt that the school met their child's particular needs was much higher than the national average for this question. Inspectors also found that the care, guidance and support provided by the school are outstanding. There were few written comments; there was a mixture of positive and negative comments, but no pattern to the small number of negative comments that were made.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Moorside High 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 inspection team received 158 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 785 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	23	112	71	7	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	50	32	103	65	4	3	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	41	26	108	68	9	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	30	101	64	7	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	49	31	100	63	4	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	22	96	61	25	16	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	18	110	70	16	10	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)	34	22	104	66	5	3	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	21	118	75	6	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	49	31	93	59	9	6	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	18	95	60	9	6	4	3
The school is led and managed effectively	33	21	112	71	4	3	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	30	105	66	4	3	2	1

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.



18 March 2011

Dear students

Inspection of Moorside High School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST9 0HP

Thank you for your help and taking time to talk to us during the recent inspection. I am writing to tell you about our main findings.

Moorside High School is a good school. A particular strength is the high quality of pastoral care and mentoring that you receive. You are taught well and make good progress. We were pleased to see that your attendance is much higher than at most schools. We have recommended that teachers can improve the quality of teaching still further by involving you in active ways in more of your lessons.

We noted that you are proud of your school, and enjoy acting as ambassadors for the school, for example when you visit primary schools as sports leaders. You told us you feel safe, and feel that you learn a lot at school. We were pleased to see that you found that the anti-bullying policy to be effective. The skills you are receiving are preparing you well for the world of work.

The headteacher and her colleagues are determined that you should achieve your very best and they are working hard to make this happen. You can play your part by maintaining your good attendance, behaviour and hard work.

Yours sincerely

Robert Barbour

Her Majesty's Inspector

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