

Moorbridge

Earsdon Road, Shiremoor, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE27 0HJ

Inspection dates

19–20 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Following arrival, students usually settle quickly, make good progress and achieve well. All move to further education, training and employment at the end of Year 11.
- Almost all Year 11 students in 2012 gained GCSE qualifications or the equivalent. Close to one-third of students gained 5 A* to C passes including English and mathematics.
- Teaching is good and students benefit from some imaginative and thought-provoking lessons which are outstanding. The very large majority of lessons capture student's interest well.
- Students feel safe and happy and enjoy their life in the friendly, family atmosphere.
- The exceptional and vibrant leadership of the headteacher makes certain that the quality of teaching is good and constantly improving. She is ably supported by a committed and talented team of staff.
- Students' behaviour is good with high levels of commitment to their learning frequently displayed. Older students' behaviour is often impeccable. Students value their excellent relationships with staff.
- In discussions, parents rightly praise the high quality of care; 'students feel understood and happy'; 'no child is stigmatised here'.
- Senior leaders, in close collaboration with the local authority, check performance carefully and make staff accountable for their performance in positive ways.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is yet outstanding. In a few lessons, teachers do not use students' progress information relentlessly enough to closely match activities to their individual ability, needs and interest.
- Occasionally mundane teaching methods, which lack essential spark, make insufficient demands on students in lessons.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed to provide students with clear written guidance for improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 13 lessons. Three of these lessons were observed alongside the headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to lessons to check the quality of what is provided for students and to talk to students about their views and opinions.
- The inspection team held discussions with: students, members of the management committee, school staff, including leaders and managers and a local authority school development partner.
- The inspection team met with three parents. There was insufficient response to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to make a contribution to the inspection.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation, including the school's records of student's current progress, records from the observation of lessons, student's books, self-evaluation and the school's improvement planning. Records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding were also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Clive Petts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Pauline Pitman

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Moorbridge is school provision for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 students. It provides individualised programmes of learning and support to young people who have a range of vulnerabilities and specific needs.
- Students who attend are either at risk of exclusion from mainstream school or are vulnerable young women or who are anxious students unable to cope in mainstream. All have complex social and emotional needs or who have behavioural difficulties. Most students have a history of persistent absence and non-attendance. Moorbridge forms part of the local authority's alternative provision.
- All students are supported through school action plus or have a statement of special educational need, which is high compared to the national average. Five students are currently in the care of the local authority.
- The staff provide a breakfast each morning for students.
- Students are dual registered, remaining on the roll of their mainstream school. At the time of the inspection, there were 32 Key Stage 4 pupils and 31 Key Stage 3 students. Almost all students are White British. None are at the early stages of learning English.
- More than one in three students are eligible for pupil premium funding (which is provided by the government to support the learning of pupils who are known to be entitled to free school meals, in the care of the local authority or the children of members of the armed forces). None is eligible for the Year 7 catch-up pupil premium.
- The headteacher took up an acting appointment in Easter 2012, which was made substantive in January 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching, so that students can learn exceptionally well in many subjects by:
 - sharing existing imaginative and thought-provoking practice to stimulate and engage the interest of all students
 - ensuring that teachers take more care to match activities closely to the ability and interests of individual students
 - further raising expectations of what students can achieve, in both Key Stage 3 and 4
 - making certain that all teachers' marking provides students with a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of students arrive with skills and experience well below that expected for their age. Good teaching and the high quality of care, help and support ensures students achieve well. For almost all students, there is a considerable improvement in their attendance, attitudes, aspirations and willingness to learn.
- For the vast majority of students, gaps in their knowledge and understanding are narrowed quickly with those in mainstream. This includes those students entitled to pupil premium funding. In 2012, almost all students gained five or more GCSE A* to C qualifications or GCSE equivalents. Close to one-third of students gained five GCSE A* to C passes including English and mathematics, confirming the year on year improvement since the previous inspection. In individual cases, progress is rapid and achievement high.
- Students who are anxious or who have complex needs settle happily and confidently. Those at risk of exclusion from their mainstream school, who arrive in Years 7 to 9, are skilfully and patiently managed and most settle well, despite their often complex needs. Students' abilities and needs are assessed accurately and quickly on arrival. Students work hard to make up for lost time in their learning, especially in their literacy and numeracy.
- A broad range of interesting subjects, including creative activities, capture students' interest well. For example, using photography in imaginative ways to shape urban landscapes. In another lesson students were observed reading about and considering the plight of poor families in trying to provide healthy meals for their children. This underpins their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The knowledge and skills of those students with special educational needs and those supported by pupil premium funding are equal to their classmates. This is the consequence of accurate individual learning plans which inform the effective classroom support well.
- The emphasis upon developing a wide range of courses on the school site is proving to be effective, despite shortcomings in the amount of available space. In GCSE or GCSE equivalent science, information and communication technology, photography and health and social care attainment is rising year on year. This is due to the enthusiastic teaching which encourages students to think critically, make decisions and justify their thinking, often in interesting practical scenarios.
- In lessons for vulnerable young women, emphasis is placed firmly on raising aspirations, building confidence and boosting self-image. Successful and sensitively delivered lessons and support give them the skills to develop and achieve a safe, healthy, enjoyable and independent lifestyle.

The quality of teaching is good

- The overall quality of teaching is good with a few lessons which are inspiring and extremely thought-provoking. Occasionally inconsistencies in the level of demand and challenge, result in a lack of the essential drive necessary to really lift student performance.
- A key strength of the teaching is the staff skill in generating a friendly and happy classroom atmosphere. Specialist support staff and teaching assistants are often highly skilled encouraging and guiding students, although occasionally they can do too much for them. As one parent remarked, 'all staff go above and beyond their duty'.
- When progress in lessons is quickest and achievement highest:
 - imaginative, practical approaches and tasks trigger students' thinking exceptionally well
 - activities are closely matched to students' abilities constantly adding to their earlier learning
 - skilled questioning continuously checks and tests students' knowledge and understanding
 - positive and warm relationships are maintained even when students are defensive or are reluctant to cooperate.

- In lessons when progress is inconsistent:
 - teaching methods are sometimes mundane and too much is done for students
 - activities are not always closely enough matched to individual needs
 - questioning does not constantly check and stretch students' thinking
 - expectations of what students can achieve, such as in their layout and presentation of their work, are not always high enough.
- The firm focus on speaking, listening, reading and writing for younger students is having a decisive impact on students' willingness to work and confidence in lessons. Occasionally, insufficient emphasis is placed upon extending the accuracy and quality of writing skills in all subjects.
- When achievement is highest and lessons briskly paced, interesting styles of teaching add to the vitality of learning and students are prompted to apply their skills to a range of activities.
- Marking is frequently completed and is helpful and constructive. Students are given challenging targets to help them improve to the next level but the quality of the written guidance which provides well-defined steps for improvement is variable.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is good with some that is exemplary. While during the inspection there were occasional occurrences of inappropriate behaviour, this was often linked to the arrival of a younger student or a student's unwillingness to work hard in lessons. Many students come to the school because of their behaviour. For that reason, the positive, friendly atmosphere, which is evident throughout the day, speaks volumes for the success improving students' attitudes towards each other and in their lessons.
- The breakfast club provided by the staff ensures that the start of the day is happy and welcoming. Students help each other and are polite and helpful to adults. Staff manage students extremely sensitively, firmly and effectively.
- In discussions, students state that they feel safe and well-looked after. Like their parents, they add that they do not see bullying as an issue. Students appreciate that staff always find time to listen to any worry or concern they may have. Their achievement is regularly celebrated and rewards used in meaningful ways, such as at an end of term visit to the local beach to surf after earlier practice at an indoor centre. Sanctions are used in fair and balanced ways.
- Students whose needs are complex or whose circumstances might make them vulnerable are expertly and sensitively managed. Consequently, they are happy and are able to achieve at least well.
- Attendance improves markedly for almost all students, but can at times vary in individual cases. Students appreciate the encouragement that they receive to attend regularly. For a large majority of students, attendance is regular and persistent absence significantly reduced in the last two years.

The leadership and management are good

- In the successful drive to improve, the headteacher has led a strong team of staff resolutely. Increasingly outward looking leaders and managers are continuously adding to the school's strengths. All are focused upon ensuring that all students can achieve success whatever their individual set of circumstances or backgrounds.
- The headteacher is giving a clear direction in raising students' performance regardless of their starting points. Expectations of what students can achieve academically have been raised considerably since the previous inspection. Robust and constantly developing systems are in place to check students' and school performance. The findings, including those from the close monitoring of teaching, help to accurately identify areas where further improvement is needed.

- Teaching is well-led and managed with staff training closely linked to the effective checking of lesson quality. Potentially challenging behaviour is very effectively managed so that all students can work and learn in a harmonious environment. Attendance rates improve. Consequently, the quality of teaching and learning is continually improving. An effective system of staff performance management is in place with targets for improvement securely linked to rewards and incentives.
- Students of all ages, including those with complex needs, are thoughtfully included in all activities, such as in the end of term rewards. No students are discriminated against. The curriculum is carefully tailored to meet the abilities and needs of all students. The school is highly successful meeting the personal needs of students. This helps to reinforce the good achievement and the success ensuring all are well prepared for the next stage of education, training and employment.
- The strong ethos and family atmosphere contribute much to the students' excellent moral and social and good spiritual and cultural development. For example, the frequent informal visits of the local community police officer ensure that students of all backgrounds are aware of how to keep themselves safe and be free of intimidation. Collaboration with parents is exceptional.
- Increasingly strong links with secondary schools and the local authority are helping to increase the success rate of returning students to their mainstream school. Effective partnership working with support agencies, such as mental health services, provides students with ready access to specialist support and advice.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements, with much best practice underpinning the high quality of care and support provided for pupils and excellent child-protection procedures.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The management committee is effective, supportive and challenges both the school and the local authority in positive ways. They check the quality of teaching and understand the essential links to the quality of learning, achievement and attendance for all groups of students. Bolstered by appropriate training and briefings, the management committee display an accurate view of current school performance and staff effectiveness. They manage finance efficiently, understand the underlying principle for using pupil premium funding and check its impact. They systematically check that the actions taken by the school are working effectively.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	108565
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	400991

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	63
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Wilson
Headteacher	Karen Croskery
Date of previous school inspection	18 November 2009
Telephone number	0191 6436170
Fax number	0191 6436171
Email address	hazel.johnson@northtyneside.gov.uk

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