

Moorbrook School

Ainslie Road, Fulwood, Preston, Lancashire, PR2 3DB

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The proportions of students making the expected amount of progress in English and mathematics are too low in Key Stage 4. Throughout the school students make too little progress in some other areas of study.
- Teaching is not consistently good with some that is inadequate.
- Some staff have not received training in how to support the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Some courses of study and the associated tasks are not well matched to students' needs, interests and abilities. Opportunities to learn do not always include interesting and appropriate activities.
- Some students do not come to school regularly. Others sometimes miss lessons, even when they are in school.
- Occasionally, low-level disruption occurs in classes. Staff do not always manage behaviour effectively. Some staff have low expectations of achievement and behaviour.
- Systems for managing behaviour are not always applied uniformly by staff.
- Students do not always treat others with respect. Some have a limited understanding of the wider world and how to demonstrate tolerance of those who are different.
- The systems used by leaders and managers, including the governing body, for knowing the strengths and weaknesses of the school have been insufficiently robust until recently. This lead to improvements being slow.

The school has the following strengths

- The progress made by students in English and mathematics is improving. Achievement is good by the end of Key Stage 3.
- All students gain externally accredited qualifications before leaving school.
- Some teaching is good or outstanding.
- Students are safe in school and their behaviour is better than in the past.
- Many students report that they enjoy school and appreciate the work of the staff.
- Students' rates of attendance have improved considerably since the last inspection.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, are more effective. As a result teaching and students' achievements are improving.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed four lessons and four parts of lessons jointly with the headteacher. He spoke with students at break times and during lessons. The inspector listened to students read when they did so as part of their lessons.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other senior teachers, two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. A telephone conversation was made between the inspector and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- There were no responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and no parents were available to speak with during the inspection. There were 16 staff inspection questionnaires returned.
- The inspector visited four alternative education provisions away from the school site.
- School policies and other important documents were scrutinised concerning the safeguarding of students, their progress and attendance. Records relating to students' behaviour, teachers' planning and meetings of the governing body were also studied.

Inspection team

Terry McKenzie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Moorbrook School is located in a residential district of Preston. It can admit up to 46 boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 16 who have a statement of special educational needs in respect of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some have additional learning difficulties and disabilities associated with communication difficulties and autistic spectrum conditions.
- Almost all students begin here at the start of Year 7 and continue to the end of Year 11. Currently, all students are boys, almost all of whom are of White British origin.
- Almost all students are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. At the time of inspection the Year 11 students had left school.
- Currently, students can attend at any of four alternative education providers. These providers are: The Preston Vocational Centre; 4Techmoto (Preston); North Lancashire Training Group (Accrington); and Cast North (Sollom).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - leaders check the quality of teaching more regularly with clear advice being given to teachers on how to improve
 - learning activities planned are always interesting and appropriate to meet students' different needs
 - teachers take better account of students individual needs, interests and abilities
 - approaches to teaching and learning result in better behaviour during lessons.
- Raise achievement particularly, in Key Stage 4, by ensuring that:
 - teachers in all subjects have high expectations of students
 - the courses provided are better matched to the needs, interests and abilities of students
 - training is provided for staff so they can all provide better support in promoting students' literacy and numeracy skills throughout the school.
- Improve students' behaviour and safety by:
 - reviewing the behaviour policy and ensuring that all staff implement it fully
 - ensuring students learn to respect each other more
 - working more effectively with parents to raise the rates of attendance to be closer to the expected level.
- Improve students' spiritual and moral, social and cultural development by:
 - ensuring they are more polite and respectful towards each other
 - helping them to acquire more tolerant attitudes towards others who may be different from themselves
 - providing experiences that widen their horizons with contact with others from a range of backgrounds.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring the system for gathering information about how well the school is doing is more effective and that findings are acted upon more swiftly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because the improvements that have been made in the school have not been fully effective in Key Stage 4. As a result those who left last year and those leaving this year gain qualifications at lower than the expected level. Furthermore, the breadth of their qualifications is relatively limited even though most complete accredited courses in English and mathematics.
- Almost all students begin at Moorbrook with levels of attainment well-below national averages for their age. Nevertheless, all groups of students in Key Stage 3 make good progress, including those few who are not eligible for free school meals and those who have additional learning difficulties.
- Students' achievements in Key Stage 3 have risen rapidly in the last two years and are now good. By the end of Year 9 most are on track to make the expected progress in English and mathematics.
- In Key Stage 4 the more able and more motivated students make the greatest progress in their learning. This is because the courses arranged contain more academic study. However, there are fewer opportunities for the less able and less motivated students to do well.
- Some disaffected students have opportunities to learn at off-site provision where they mostly do well. A few have gained useful vocational qualifications that enable them to move on to the next stage of their education, training or employment more successfully than they otherwise would. Largely through the use of the education provision away from school, leaders ensure that all are included in learning, none are discriminated against and equal opportunities are provided.
- A recent innovation has been the use of a whole-school reading session. Reading is carefully managed and progress is checked. Students are tested for their reading and spelling ages when they begin school. Reading materials are carefully matched to their levels of ability and interests. Subsequent tests indicate that students are making rapid progress in their reading, particularly in Key Stage 3. During the inspection students were seen reading confidently from the materials used in class. Occasionally, the reading materials provided for them are not as well matched as they could be to students' levels of ability.
- In some lessons, great care is taken to ensure the accuracy of students' writing. As a result some quickly develop their skills in the written language and begin to express themselves more fluently through the written word.
- The pupil premium funding is used to target additional support to those entitled to benefit from it. In English and mathematics this support has proved very effective in enhancing students' progress.
- Where courses and activities are closely matched to students' needs, interests and levels of ability, they enjoy their learning and achieve well. An example of this was seen when a Year 7 class were enthusiastically making burgers. In this lesson they were thoroughly involved in the activities, were polite to each other and to staff and their behaviour was good.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is improving but remains too variable in quality.
- In Key Stage 4, willing students are supported by the teacher whilst those who are less motivated are not so well involved and some students learn too little. Students learn less well and more slowly when staff are less successful in managing behaviour and any interruption to learning. Progress slows when teachers' expectations of students, particularly evident in Key Stage 4, are too low.
- When progress is faster teachers take good account of the widely differing needs, interests and abilities of students so that all can succeed. Students do well when there are good relationships between staff and students and they have a good attitude to learning.

- Since the last inspection, improved teaching for Key Stage 3 students, particularly in English and mathematics, has resulted in good progress being made in these subjects. The work that students do in Key Stage 3 indicates that they make steady improvements in most subjects. Teachers generally pay close attention in their marking to the quality and presentation of students' work. In a set of humanities exercise books seen it was clear that the teacher expected high standards of work from students and they responded by correcting their work and producing neat copies.
- With older students, teachers encourage question and answer sessions about the subject matter. An example of this was in an English lesson in which students were studying Steinbeck's book *Of Mice and Men*. All were skilfully challenged by the teacher to analyse the nature of a character through using terms such as 'flirty' and 'vulnerable'.
- Teaching assistants are mostly deployed well but on occasions they spend too long in managing behaviour instead of supporting learning. Many teaching assistants have completed courses in the use of phonics (the sounds that letters make) so that students can be supported in developing their reading skills. However, some staff have not undertaken this training so there is no certainty that all students will receive the same quality of support.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Lessons are sometimes disturbed by the poor behaviour of a minority of students. On these occasions staff are not always successful in dealing with any disruptive behaviour quickly and efficiently. As a result students sometimes then leave the classroom only to return to possibly cause yet more difficulties. On occasions, students demonstrate challenging and inappropriate behaviour towards staff and a lack of respect towards their peers.
- However, the majority of students have a good attitude to their learning for most of the time.
- Despite the occasional poor responses from some students, behaviour is improving. The number of serious incidents, restraints and exclusions has diminished in the last two years. A local authority representative and members of the governing body judge that behaviour is improving. Outside of lessons the majority are polite and welcoming. Most treat each other with respect and behave well.
- The behaviour of students who attend the off-site educational provision is usually good because they find that the courses and activities suit them well. Some said that this is not always the case in the school and the findings of the inspector support this view.
- Leaders know that they must ensure students are more respectful towards each other and that they need to acquire more tolerant attitudes towards others who may be different from themselves. They are aware of the need to provide experiences that widen their horizons with contact with others from a range of backgrounds.
- Many, but not all students, when asked by the inspector, stated that they enjoyed coming to school. The majority attend well but some are too often absent. Leaders know that they must work more effectively with parents to raise the rates of attendance.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. As a result students report that they feel safe in school. Good safeguarding procedures ensure they are kept safe. Incidents of bullying occur occasionally but students spoken to reported that issues are generally resolved by staff quickly. The robust anti-bullying policy provides plenty of helpful support for staff.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The headteacher and senior leaders are improving the school. However, leadership and management are not good because actions taken since the last inspection have not had a good enough impact on improving students' progress and behaviour. New ways of finding out about how well the school is doing are now providing leaders with a better understanding of its strengths and of areas needing improvement. As a result the school plans for the future are

rapidly becoming of much better quality.

- A significant improvement since the last inspection has been in the improvements in English and mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 3. The improvements are partly due to the wise spending of the pupil premium funding to purchase additional resources to help students improve their literacy and numeracy skills. They are also due to the good work of senior and middle leaders in providing some students with additional support to help them fill in gaps in their learning and to improve their reading, writing and number work.
- Leaders have not acted quickly enough in helping less motivated older students; some courses are not well matched to their needs, interests and abilities. The successful placements off-site are a step in the right direction in remedying this situation, for they encourage students to attend and take part in learning.
- The headteacher's actions have improved students' behaviour since the last inspection. The number of serious incidents, restraints and exclusions has dropped significantly. However, the school does not ensure that the current behaviour-management plan is fully implemented or is successful in eliminating low-level disruption.
- Students' rates of attendance have increased in the last two years. The recent appointment of a home-school liaison officer has had a very positive effect in establishing better relationships between school and parents. It is helping to ensure that reluctant attendees come to school more frequently.
- The local authority recognises the school's strengths and areas which need improving. The school received additional support from local authority advanced skills teachers until the summer of 2012 but has received less support recently. The local authority considers that the school has entered a period of rapid improvement due to better leadership and governance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - A restructured governing body is providing improved challenge and support to school leaders and managers. However, the effectiveness of their work was diminished when they did not always receive the best quality information about how the school operates. It is only recently that governors have been able to hold leaders fully to account with better information about students' attainments and progress. Similarly, members have overseen the arrangements for the review of teachers' work and how it is related to pay; but until recently the information provided lacked sufficient detail about the quality of teaching. Governors have ensured that the headteacher has been set specific targets designed to improve his performance and that of the school. The governing body carries out its statutory duties and ensures that all of the requirements for safeguarding are met.

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	119866
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	430600

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	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Hodgson
Headteacher	Mick Ironmonger
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2012
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