

Moat House

6 Lower Moat Close, Heaton Norris, Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 1SZ

Inspection dates 5–6 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- For all who are involved, high aspirations and deep commitment to the success and future well-being of students underpins the school's work to a profound extent. The highest expectations are found in every aspect of the school's work.
- Leaders, managers and governors ensure that the school meets their ambitions and the school maintains its high reputation among parents of students and the local authority.
- Leaders are sharply focused on students' progress and the quality of teaching and they are relentless in driving improvements. Governors are rigorous in fulfilling most of their roles and responsibilities but, as a relatively new body, they have not developed to the full their capacity to question and challenge the work of leaders.
- This very ambitious school has a long-established culture of excellent teaching and one in which students' personal and emotional development can flourish.
- The staff have a common and very strong sense of purpose. They are a powerful team whose enormous impact transforms students' lives. They and the headteacher are fully deserving of the prestigious national recognition awarded to them this year.
- The excellent curriculum offers a broad range of work and activities with exemplary opportunities to gain very relevant qualifications. The curriculum very ably aids students in their personal and emotional development, developing life skills and enriching their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Students' behaviour is outstanding. Teaching and the care and support for students have substantial impact on their attitudes to learning. Students' behaviour and attendance improve significantly during their time in the school. The views of the parents and carers consulted confirm this significant transformation in their children's response to school, learning and making progress.
- Students feel very safe. Safeguarding is managed superbly and staff have the high degree of knowledge and understanding to ensure that students stay safe. Where students are known or suspected of being vulnerable, staff are alert and primed to act should concerns arise.
- The Young Parents' Project ensures that students are extremely well prepared for leaving school and the next stage of their education. The continuing support for students after they leave, in relation to all of their needs, is outstanding.
- Teaching succeeds to an exceptional extent in bringing about outstanding achievement, against the odds. Students have much catching-up to do and little time to do it in. Teachers rise to the challenges commendably.
- The excellent relationships between staff and students open the way to learning and progress. Expert teaching, high expectations and challenging work ensure that students achieve outstanding results.
- Students are sharply focused on their academic objectives and fully engaged in pursuit of them. They make rapid and significant progress, underpinned by their determination to give themselves the best options for a better future.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five lessons, taught by four of the school's six teachers. A parenting session taught by the nursery manger was also observed. The headteacher joined the inspector in observing two of the five lessons seen.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, teachers, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector spoke with and met with students and found out their views of the school.
- The inspector looked at a range of the school's documents including information on students' progress, the school development plan, a summary of leaders' evaluation of the school's work, and policies and procedures for keeping students safe.
- There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) to enable the inspector to take account of these views. The views of carers spoken to, as well as recorded views of parents, were taken into account. The views of 14 staff who responded to their questionnaire were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Alan Lemon, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school provides education on one site for schoolgirls who live in Stockport who are either pregnant or are young mothers.
- There is an onsite nursery for their babies offering full- and part-time provision which is only open to mothers who attend Moat House. The nursery provision is inspected separately.
- The school can admit up to 20 students and the nursery is registered for 16 children.
- A very small proportion of disadvantaged students is supported through the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of students who have either a disability or special educational needs is very small. No students have a statement of special educational needs.
- The majority of students remain on the roll of their secondary schools while attending Moat House. The school uses no alternative provision for students.
- The local authority's Young Parents Project, based at Moat House, manages wide-ranging ongoing support for students on leaving school, their transfer to colleges in particular.
- In 2014 the school was nominated and awarded the Pearson Silver Teaching Award and went on to win the gold award for Outstanding School Team of the Year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that governors develop the necessary insight and skills to probe and challenge leadership more effectively about the work of the school and its improvement.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's excellent leadership provides far-reaching ambition, giving the inspiration and drive that has over many years kept Moat House at the highest level of performance and an outstanding school.
- The headteacher is very pleased with the amount and quality of support from the local authority. Support is essentially light-touch to this outstanding school. The local authority gives the school its expert overview, offers staff and governors much relevant training, advice and guidance and helps with links to schools and other providers.
- All staff make significant contributions to school leadership, particularly in developing provision for the care and support for students. Equally, they manage and improve the school's broad variety of work and activities. These succeed in capturing students' enthusiasm and, by doing so, make a very significant contribution to advancing equality of opportunity for all students.
- The curriculum is outstandingly tailored to students' needs. It has been developed very effectively by staff and actively engages students in learning and making progress. As a result, students enjoy and value their work. The curriculum makes an excellent contribution to preparing students to become good and effective parents. It is very relevant to preparing students for the future and life in modern Britain through excellent opportunities for academic achievement, good qualifications and progress in personal and emotional development. A wide variety of topics across the curriculum contributes very effectively to promoting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, encouraging positive attitudes towards and appreciation of the diversity of cultures and religions in Britain.
- The Young Parents' Project is outstandingly led and managed. As a result students are exceptionally well prepared on leaving to pursue further education and higher qualifications. The manager of the project plans meticulously so students move very smoothly towards independence. This ensures that they have around them all the financial and social support to which young mothers are entitled. A constant check is kept afterwards on each leaver and this significantly minimises the chances of failure.
- Every aspect of the management of the school's work is rigorous. Thorough checks are made on students' progress which drive aspirations for them to achieve standards which are high, and above those that early assessments had predicted. The thoroughness in managing assessments and tracking progress over time is very effective in enabling more students, including the few supported through the pupil premium, to achieve above expectations.
- Senior leaders provide consummate expertise in judging the quality of teaching and in determining the best ways in which it can improve. The evaluations of teaching are very accurate. This makes the performance management of teachers, and the objectives they have to better their teaching, a powerful process of improvement. Teachers' progress towards their objectives is rigorously tracked and linked firmly to their pay progression.
- Safeguarding is clearly understood to be significantly important among the school's responsibilities. Leaders and governors give it their highest priority. All safeguarding arrangements are meticulously managed and thorough records maintained. Leaders, governors and staff are comprehensively trained in keeping students and their babies safe. Staff are very alert and bring any concerns to immediate attention through the appropriate channels. Leaders keep safeguarding concerns under close and constant review and often play the leading role in multi-agency meetings.

■ The governance of the school:

Governors took over responsibility for the school from the local authority's management committee one year ago. In the past 12 months, they have overall very successfully developed their new roles, gaining a firm grip on the governing body's responsibilities. Governors have taken part in much training and have been very well supported by the local authority in preparing for their work. Governors bring a breadth of experience and expertise that enables them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively. The demanding task of questioning and challenging leaders about their performance is progressing but still developing. Key tasks for overseeing school resources and teaching and learning have been well delegated to committees of governors. In addition, individual governors have oversight of provisions, such as safeguarding and for students who are looked after by the local authority or who have special educational needs. Governors demonstrate a deep commitment to the effective management of the school and its continued success. They take close interest in the school's everyday work, visit regularly and take part in school events and training, most recently safeguarding. Beside the good quality of insights that governors gather for themselves, they are supplied with comprehensive information in the headteacher's regular reports. They are very well briefed regarding data on the school's performance, students' progress, the quality of teaching, the management of teachers' performance and their pay progression.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Conversations with students reveal the marked contrast between their previous school experiences and that at Moat House: 'At Moat House you want to learn. You look forward to going to school and you always get something out of a lesson.'
- Past refusal to go to school and reluctance to learn have been replaced with: faith that school is the right course; the self-confidence to tackle the challenges of learning and examinations; the enthusiasm to do the work required; and the solid commitment to achieving success.
- For most students there is a remarkable improvement in attendance over that seen at their previous schools. Authorised absence for maternity leave and health appointments is kept to a minimum and barely impacts on impressive academic outcomes achieved in the short time spent at the school.
- Relationships with staff are especially strong and this is the key to much of the success that students achieve. Considerable mutual respect opens windows into the adult world that students identify with and emulate. The very positive manner in which staff relate to each other and work together is a model greatly influencing students' outlook and their confidence to manage relationships at an adult level.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding.
- Students feel very safe and know that the school's rigorous procedures keep their babies safe.
- Students know the many different ways in which they can be bullied and how to combat these although, as they confirm, they have not experienced any of these at Moat House.
- Students develop very friendly and supportive relationships. Motherhood or its imminence is something they have in common and, when together, is the basis for warmth, regard and sharing on many levels, in particular strong emotional support for each other. This is reassuring for students and, as one commented, 'I feel better about myself.'
- The school makes a significant contribution to students' knowledge of keeping themselves and their babies safe and healthy. In their studies, they also learn about forms of discrimination such as racism and homophobia, sexual exploitation and the risks associated with using the internet and social media. In understanding these, students show a mature attitude towards risks and their avoidance.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching maintains the outstanding capacity identified at the previous inspection for promoting students' excellent attitudes to learning and academic progress. Leaders are constant in their drive to go on increasing this capacity. Teachers are highly motivated. They are very keen on developing expertise and their impact on students' learning, and they emulate the school's culture of high expectations.
- Teachers get to know students extremely well. Their interest, concern and close attention, which at first is unexpected and surprising to students, comes quickly to be appreciated and greatly valued by them. Excellent relationships develop. Students feel better about themselves and their prospects. They gain the confidence to go with determination for the challenging targets that teachers set.
- Rigour in gathering all the information available from referring schools, together with thorough assessment, secure the point at which each student is in their learning. Teachers tell students the GCSE grades they can expect as a result but also the higher grades they can achieve if they have ambition and work hard. Students willingly buy into this and, with outstanding teaching, most leave with those higher grades, notably in English, mathematics and science.
- Students of different abilities and talents, the most able and those who have special educational needs are given work which is planned precisely and challenges them.
- English and mathematics are taught with great expertise and with the fervour seen in the teaching of all the subjects. Teachers have developed their subject knowledge and this is strong across the curriculum to more than match all the GCSE and vocational course demands.
- Students are very effectively encouraged to read and write and are challenged extremely well to gain a deep understanding from reading and to express this in sophisticated language in their writing. Assessment in mathematics is excellent in picking up and filling in any previous gaps in students' knowledge and skills.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- All students, according to their academic capabilities and the length of time they attend Moat House, leave with GCSEs and vocational awards. Most leave having passed GCSE English and mathematics. Whatever their GCSE grades or levels in vocational studies, most students begin from low academic starting points and all students inject urgency into making up for lost time and gain the motivation and confidence to succeed. Leaders, staff and their amazing team-work, make it possible for students to achieve this.
- Almost all students make the progress expected from their starting points. For example, they get the GCSE grades they should have achieved despite not having made the expected progress in Key Stage 3. Most students do better than this, for example attaining anywhere between one and three grades above those predicted, including in English and mathematics.
- Teachers stretch the most able exceptionally well and they succeed in tackling tests in a wide range of subjects. For example, in 2014 some students performed extremely well in GCSE examinations, having very effectively picked up the threads from their disrupted education. The most able students attain the higher GCSE grades in English and mathematics as well as in their other subjects. In English, they draw a very good understanding from reading complex texts and write long, detailed analysis and reflections of what they have read.
- Very occasionally, early entry for GCSE is used where teachers see this as advantageous to students' achievement. This does not adversely affect students' overall performance but rather improves their opportunities for GCSE qualifications in the short time available.
- The few disadvantaged students supported through the pupil premium, as well as the few with special educational needs, are given extra help and their outcomes reflect the overall very positive picture of achievement. This shows that, taking into consideration their starting points, there is no attainment gap between these students and others. Too few students in the school are supported by the pupil premium to allow meaningful comparisons to be made with national data but these students make outstanding progress from their starting points.
- Students improve their reading, writing and mathematical skills with outstanding progress from hard, dedicated work.
- All students read regularly, choosing a variety of reading material such as novels, newspapers and magazines. Students who insist, on arrival, that they are not going to be made to read are very effectively persuaded. They give way and pick up a novel, quickly discovering the enjoyment and value of reading and it soon becomes natural to them. Students have the reading and writing skills they need for the future and, in particular, for further education.
- The gaps in students' mathematic abilities are tackled very effectively and all students confidently apply their knowledge and skills to solving problems. In a short time they master a broad range of mathematics and work very methodically.

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	106023
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	448137

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	14–17
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	10
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Butler
Headteacher	Kathy Burton
Date of previous school inspection	25 May 2010
Telephone number	0161 429 9015
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