

Moatbridge School

Eltham Palace Road, Eltham, London, SE9 SLX

Inspection dates 30 September–1 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Past turbulence at senior level has hindered the school's efforts to sustain and improve the good quality of education found at the time of the last inspection.
- Not all students make the best progress possible in improving their basic skills. Achievement in mathematics is weaker than in English. This is because recent initiatives from the now stable senior team have not yet had time to embed fully into the daily work of the school.
- Teaching requires improvement as it is not yet consistently good in its impact on students' learning in some key subjects.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning do not always support their progress in making up lost ground in their learning. They disengage too readily when the tasks do not catch their interest and too often do not take pride in the presentation of their work.
- The curriculum requires improvement as not all subjects contribute equally effectively to promoting the recovery of students' reading and writing skills.
- New procedures to collect information on students' progress are not fully understood by all staff nor always used effectively in planning learning that builds carefully on earlier achievements.

The school has the following strengths:

- The headteacher and governors have managed well the many challenges facing the school in the interval between successive inspections. As a result of the well-considered recruitment of senior staff, they have ensured that the school is securely positioned to move forward.
- Students improve their attendance when compared with that in their former schools.
- Students say that they know the staff will always listen to them and help them both outside and within school.
- Students feel safe and have confidence in the adults around them. Staff manage behaviour mostly successfully and know the students well.
- Students have greater access to a wider range of worthwhile external accreditation than previously. Outcomes in art are very successful.
- Fixed-term exclusions are reducing rapidly as a result of new whole-school sanctions and rewards. There are no permanent exclusions.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in five part-lessons and undertook a learning walk. All but one visit to a lesson was jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, governors and a group of students. In addition, the inspector also listened to some students reading.
- Telephone conversations were held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a number of documents, including the school's information about students' progress, planning and monitoring documents, safeguarding information and students' work.
- There were no responses to the online Parent View questionnaire. The inspector took account of the school's own survey of parents' and carers' views. There were 28 returns. The nine responses to the staff inspection questionnaire were also considered.

Inspection team

Sheila Nolan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Moatbridge, a small special school, is currently attended by 37 boys. All have education, health and care plans or statements of special educational needs, depending on the year group.
- The students' needs relate to behavioural, emotional, and social difficulties but most have complex needs, including autistic spectrum conditions and a range of other barriers to learning. Many have speech and language difficulties and attention deficit hyperactivity disorders.
- Two students are looked after by the local authority. An above-average number of students, two thirds, are known to be eligible for the additional government funding known as the pupil premium. The school is not in receipt of Year 7 catch-up funding.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds. A small minority come from other ethnic groups but none speaks English as an additional language.
- Typically, just under a half of the students join the school after Year 7.
- The school uses alternative provision for two students. They are placed with ASD-Learning, a private provider. One pupil is placed in a provision that is at some distance from the school and nearer to his home. Both students remain on the school roll.
- The school has a counsellor for three days a week and access to other therapists. Currently, provision for speech and language therapy is one day per week.
- Year 10 and 11 students spend a day a week off site at Shooters Hill College and at the Ilderton Project and the Archways Project. Year 11 were off site on the second day of the inspection because of college placements.
- There are no early entries for GCSE examinations other than in physical education but other accreditation is accessed as fits the students' programme.
- Since the last inspection, there has been some turbulence in the staffing at senior level. This has now stabilised with the recent appointment of a substantive deputy headteacher and an assistant headteacher. Both have been in post since September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and its impact on the students' rates of progress by:
 - ensuring all teaching gives high priority to making sure that students have good opportunities to enhance their reading skills
 - ensuring that staff take into account students' reading and writing skills in all subject areas when planning learning
 - developing students' handwriting skills consistently across the curriculum
 - making sure that all staff demonstrate good handwriting and take note of their presentation of written work both on boards and in the students' workbooks
 - reviewing lesson planning, particularly in mathematics, so that it builds very carefully on students' earlier learning
 - supporting teachers even further in the way that they present ideas, skills and activities so that students have greater access to practical resources throughout the day.
 - ensuring that guidance to students on how to improve their work is carefully matched to the needs of each student and that clear records are in place to show their development.
- Develop leadership and management by:
 - providing more in-depth training for key subject leaders in how to contribute to whole-school improvement
 - taking forward plans to adapt the curriculum, especially for Year 7, to fill in the gaps in their previous learning before pursuing more difficult concepts and tasks
 - using more regular evaluations of teaching and learning to provide professional training specific to the development of individual members of staff
 - underpinning the validity of whole-school checks on students' progress by developing expectations for all staff of what classroom teachers and support staff are expected to record on students' learning in

lessons.

- Continue to find imaginative ways to support students' independent positive behaviour patterns by:
 - identifying times and areas which are hot spots for interrupting learning
 - taking robust action to manage these occurrences.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Past turbulence at senior level has meant that there was too little support for the long-serving headteacher in his work to sustain the previous good quality of education and move the school forward. The safety and security of the students was a clear priority and was successfully maintained. Less attention was given to ensuring consistency in whole-school systems, particularly with regard to developing the quality of teaching and the curriculum.
- The now stable senior team of three staff are working successfully together to embed a range of initiatives. Whole-school systems and procedures to develop teaching, measure students' progress rigorously and find ways forward to match the curriculum better to the needs of the students are well underway. It is too early, however, to see the full impact of these efforts in the day-to-day work of the school.
- The work to develop teaching and share the existing good practice is in process. Systems to manage the performance of staff are robust. However, outside of these procedures, there are missed opportunities to use the outcomes of the daily monitoring of the school to best advantage in planning training activities for staff. As a result, the quality of teaching is not consistently good.
- Much recent work on the curriculum has concentrated on extending the range of accreditation available to the students by the end of Year 11. In this the school has been successful. However, too little has been done to address the very poor literacy skills of students when they first join the school. The beginning of some good work in reading recovery is underway in English but has not been extended sufficiently to involve other subject areas. The school recognises that it has much more to do to nurture Year 7 students and give them the essential skills they need to access a full secondary curriculum.
- The impact of additional funding has been most marked in the reduction in the number of students who fall out of education at the end of Year 11. The use of the funding has been less effective in addressing the gaps in the basic skills of younger students and helping them to catch up.
- Students' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is a high priority for the school. Students make good gains in their understanding of the impact of their actions on others. They develop a realisation of the worth of those with traditions other than their own and in reaching beyond the immediate material gains they might wish for. They learn to celebrate festivals from many traditions and appreciate rituals and customs from a range of cultures. The school places a strong emphasis on the British values of fairness, tolerance and the rule of law. The school's sanctions and rewards policy, alongside the behaviour management work, prepares the students soundly for life in modern Britain and for economic independence.
- The school reaches out to the families of the students, even when they are hard to reach. The most recent information evening was attended by 28 family representatives. Parents and carers were very positive and expressed satisfaction with the school. All considered that the young people had made good progress in behaviour management and attendance while at Moatbridge.
- The school works very seriously at ensuring equal access to many services for all its students. However, the curriculum, at this point in time, does not always ensure that all students have enough support for their literacy skills to allow them to benefit fully from what the school has to offer. Discrimination in its many forms are not tolerated and this is understood well by staff and students.
- The local authority supports the school effectively in many ways, particularly with regard to personnel issues and financial support. They form good relationships with the school and broker support where possible. However, although the school has a part-time counsellor, the provision of a speech and language therapist is more challenging and the time available to the school is not enough to effectively meet the needs of the students.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body is well aware of the strengths and areas for development at the school. Governors are working closely with the school on its future development, both as a stand-alone institution and within the local authority's plans for providing for special needs students. Governors know how the students achieve and have been instrumental in pushing for a wider range of accreditation to be available to the students, for example. Governors have knowledge of the quality of teaching, gathered from regular visits as well as reports, and have set a clear expectation that this must be linked to teachers' pay. Inspection evidence indicates that all recent instances of salary progression have been underpinned by clear evidence of good performance in the classroom. Governors understand well the way in which staff performance is managed, including its link with targets.

- The school budget is monitored closely to ensure good value for money. Governors are aware of how additional funding, such as that for disadvantaged pupils, has been used. All statutory duties, including that to ensure that students are safe, are managed well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement.
- Although a number of students do successfully adjust their social behaviour and attend school much more regularly than previously, attitudes to learning still require improvement. Many are still unable to motivate themselves to concentrate on work, particularly in some subjects.
- Although the number of fixed-term exclusions is reducing rapidly since the establishment of internal exclusions, there are still too many instances where students miss lesson time because of poor behaviour. Sometimes too much lesson time is lost by the need for 'time-out' although the students see this as a positive element of the school in helping them to control their emotions.
- There are still too many incidents of poor language, unkind comments and reactions to their peers, and verbal and minor physical assaults on staff by students. On the positive side, however, students do build warm working relationships with adults within the school and know that there is someone who listens to them and will help them both inside and outside of school.
- In some lessons, students listen carefully to the teacher and act on their instructions. For example, in a design and technology session students respected the expertise of the staff member and were willing to take advice. Students speak positively of their placements in college and work-related projects and most of the older students have a good idea of their next steps in training and education.
- The helpful citizenship programme, alongside the good careers education and guidance work, helps significantly in promoting the students' feelings of self-worth and moral and social development. Spiritual and cultural development is fostered well through the display of their work in art and through the celebration of festivals from all cultures.
- Behaviour is not yet good because of the incidents of disruption to learning within the school day. Also despite improvements in attendance, the overall figures are lower than those for special schools.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students are well aware of the dangers of the internet and there has been appropriate training to help them keep safe and be aware of cyber and other types of bullying. This does not always prevent them, however, from hurtful comments to their peers.
- The majority of students improve their rates of attendance at Moatbridge. The school staff go that extra mile to ensure that students who are absent are safe. They know students' personal circumstances very well and are sympathetic as well as robust when dealing with safeguarding and attendance.
- The students who are educated in alternative provisions are carefully tracked so that they are safe. The school receives regular information about their attendance and visits them regularly.
- Recruitment processes are robust and all the statutory checks are in place. The school site is secure. Logs of incidents are recorded accurately. Child protection training is up to date.
- Procedures and systems to train staff new to the school are rigorous. Staff feel supported by senior managers who have high visibility around the school throughout the day.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good as not all staff are skilled enough at finding helpful approaches to learning that engages the students. Some teaching does not expect enough of the students or does not take enough account of students' literacy skills and reading ages in planning the work.
- The work planned for students does not always consider well how to build on earlier learning. It does not always manage the recall of essential facts or find creative ways to stimulate interest and encourage good recording of success. Not all staff pay sufficient attention to modelling how to present work well and to developing students' handwriting, accurate drawing and measuring skills. As a result, presentation of work is not a high enough priority for either some staff or students.
- Support staff make a valuable contribution to the learning of the students. They are particularly adept at

helping to manage behaviour patterns so that students can settle to learning. They know the students well and make useful records of incidents and progress.

- The management of behaviour is a strength in many classrooms but there is still too much variability in the amount of learning time lost across subjects and at different times of the school day.
- Senior leaders are aware of where teaching needs to improve. Teachers know what is expected of them even if not all are able to respond quickly enough and develop the skills needed to improve rapidly.
- Students' written work is regularly marked but the guidance to students on how to improve is not always genuinely helpful. Where staff adhere to the school's approach to marking, as in English, students show far greater interest in their progress because they can see continuity and good achievement.
- The small daily steps in learning that increase students' self-esteem and confidence are at times masked in some subjects. This is because teachers' records of students' progress are not always recorded in the same depth across all subjects. They sometimes rely too heavily on written work and tests and miss the opportunity to employ a range of recording devices. In some subjects such as art, food technology and design and technology, for example, work demonstrates good practice in helping students to make progress.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students' attainment in reading is very low overall and handwriting skills are often poor. Not enough attention has been given to helping students to read in the interval since the last inspection. Although this is an area currently in-hand in English, there are too few opportunities for students to read at their correct level across the curriculum. This affects students' ability to interpret examination questions and has an impact on their outcomes at the end of Year 11.
- To date, students' progress, as seen in the school's records and in accreditation at the end of Year 11, is not fast enough to make up the ground lost in learning in their previous institutions. Nevertheless, all students are now entered for a greater range of worthwhile external accreditation than previously. Although all students are now entered for GCSE or the equivalent in English and mathematics, the highest results obtained fall below a grade C.
- Able students within the school are often hindered in their progress in key subjects because of complex conditions and challenging social circumstances. As a result, they do not regularly make the progress of which they are capable overall but occasionally show flourishes in their workbooks and folders. Students on alternative provision placements make steady progress.
- Disadvantaged students benefit from the impact of additional funding. This is most notable in the decline in the number of students failing to make a successful move to the next stage of education or training at the end of Year 11. Otherwise, rates of progress for these students are much dependant on their particular circumstances, similar to their peers. It is not possible to quantify significant differences.
- Students are most successful in art with two thirds of those entered in 2014 gaining a grade C or better in GCSE examinations. Students also achieve examination success in physical education and citizenship, sometimes in Year 10. This is a credit to these areas, particularly given the poor fine motor skills of some students when they join in Year 7.
- Many students achieve well in Entry Level examinations but mainly at Level 1. Students generally make the best progress where work is supported by practical resources that make concrete the ideas and concepts that they are expected to grasp.
- Evidence of progress and attainment in books and folders across the school is of variable quality. There are no particular patterns to the relative rates of progress of students who are looked after. Improvements in social skills and circumstances and the management of their behaviour are the key factors driving the students' progress. The school is successful in winning over students with difficult histories to engage in education, at least to some extent.

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	100204
Local authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	447891

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	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	32
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Woods
Headteacher	Michael Byron
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 November 2013
Telephone number	020 8850 8081
Fax number	020 8850 0987
Email address	headteacher@moatbridgebd.greenwich.sch.uk

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