

Moorside High School

Cellarhead Road, Werrington, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST9 0HP

Inspection dates

17–18 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and his dedicated leadership team have used robust systems to bring about improvements.
- Pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 4 in 2016 have placed the school in the top 5% of schools nationally.
- The good quality of teaching results in more pupils, especially less-able pupils who are disadvantaged, making good or better progress across the curriculum.
- Senior leaders rigorously evaluate the quality of teaching and put steps in place to support any identified underperformance.
- On occasion, some teaching lacks sufficient challenge because teachers do not use what they know about pupils well enough. This is especially so for the most able and most able disadvantaged pupils in mathematics.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They are very complimentary of the pastoral support they receive when they need it.
- Governors know the school well and have a clear view of what leaders need to do to improve further. Governors hold leaders to account effectively.
- Leaders have successfully improved pupils' literacy skills. However, pupils' numeracy skills need further development.
- The 16 to 19 programme of study is good. Students progress well academically and are supported through a highly effective enrichment programme.
- The school maintains strong relationships with parents, which has resulted in improved attendance figures. Leaders acknowledge that more needs to be done to improve the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who do not have an education, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Their personal development is supported well through a wide range of academic activities and off-site trips.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that pupils, especially the most able and most able disadvantaged pupils, make consistently strong progress in mathematics by ensuring that:
 - teachers take sufficient account of pupils' previous knowledge, skills and understanding when planning lessons
 - staff use their knowledge of pupils more effectively to challenge and support them appropriately in lessons
 - teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to build upon their numeracy skills.
- Make sure that there is a continued focus to further reduce the absence of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who do not have an education, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The senior leadership team has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It has well-focused plans in place and considerable improvement is evident in many areas of previous weakness. For example, GCSE outcomes in 2016 have placed this school in the top 5% of schools nationally.
- The local authority has a positive and supportive relationship with the school. For example, the local authority reviewed the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics. As a result of this review, the school received effective support and outcomes in mathematics are now improving.
- Middle leaders have accurate views of their subjects and robust monitoring of the quality of teaching and pupils' performance is in place. They work together to share best practice and support each other.
- Leaders use the extra funding they receive to effectively support disadvantaged pupils and those who need to catch up in Year 7. However, there remains a need for more support for the most able disadvantaged pupils in mathematics. Strategies include one-to-one support, mentoring, coaching, additional staff and extra help with school work, as well as targeted pastoral and family support. Consequently, pupils' outcomes and previous low attendance have improved. Attendance for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who do not have an education, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs is an ongoing focus for the school.
- Governors and leaders hold teachers to account by monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils' performance effectively. Leaders put targeted support in place where it is needed. This has improved the quality of teaching overall at the school.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff who met with inspectors are unanimous in their support for leaders and the positive direction in which the school is moving. Parent views and staff questionnaire responses were overwhelmingly positive about the school's leadership team and the behaviour of pupils at the school.
- Staff state that the training they receive has a positive impact on pupils' learning. In particular, newly qualified teachers say they appreciate the support given to them both professionally and in terms of being made to feel part of the school team.
- The curriculum is well planned and provides an appropriate range of subjects. Leaders regularly review the range and content of subjects. For example, leaders have recognised strengths in the English curriculum and used this expertise to improve pupils' literacy skills across the school.
- School's leaders now plan to ensure that the same successful actions taken to improve pupils' literacy skills are applied to pupils' development in numeracy. Plans are in place to enable pupils to apply their mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills across the curriculum.
- Pupils in the school's inclusion centre have a reduced curriculum and opportunities to attend off-site vocational studies in line with their needs. The centre provides a greater emphasis on basic skills and this helps pupils to succeed.

- Promoting pupils' personal development is a key aim of the school and one in which it is successful. A programme of personal development events throughout the year supplements subject teaching. For example, at the time of the inspection Year 8 pupils went on a 'sacred buildings' trip to Wolverhampton to visit three different places of worship. Activities like this contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of what it means to be a citizen in Britain today.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities is offered to pupils. Attendance at these events is variable, due partly to pupils needing to use public transport to and from school. As a result, many of these activities are now also offered during lunchtimes. Pupils value this and say the clubs enhance their learning.

Governance of the school

- The governors of the school have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and hold the headteacher and senior leaders to account robustly.
- Governors have a secure understanding of the externally published data which is used to judge the school's performance. For example, governors demonstrated they are fully aware that the outcomes for the most able and the most able pupils who are disadvantaged are below the national average in mathematics. Consequently, they have challenged school leaders in this area.
- Governors play a very active part in school life and visit the school regularly. They have an accurate view of teachers' and pupils' performance.
- Governors discharge their statutory duties with diligence. They carefully monitor the school's budget; they check that safeguarding arrangements are robust and they ensure that systems to manage teachers' performance focus on improving the quality of teaching.
- Governors have high expectations of the school's performance and are striving for a school in which pupils 'receive an outstanding education, thrive as human beings and become the best they can be'.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff work together to create a culture of safeguarding which is underpinned by regular training for all staff at the school. For example, a caretaker says his primary job is not to take care of the building but to ensure that everyone within it is safe.
- All pupils who spoke with inspectors, and those who completed the pupil online questionnaire, confirm that they feel safe in school. Almost all parents who completed the Parent View questionnaire confirmed that their child feels safe in school. Pupils have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They understand the risks surrounding online safety and social media. This was evident in discussions with inspectors, where all pupils could identify online risks and the preventative steps they take.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The overall quality of teaching is good across the school. Pupils benefit from teachers' secure subject knowledge.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and challenge them effectively in class to tackle the more difficult work presented to them. Pupils say they enjoy being challenged and value the support they receive when they need it. However, at times, teachers do not use the assessment information available to them effectively to plan lessons.
- Teachers use questions effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and support their understanding of a wide range of issues. For example, in some English lessons pupils were encouraged to take on different viewpoints about a chosen topic.
- Pupils receive detailed feedback to help them understand their mistakes and clarify how to make improvements to their own work. Pupils are encouraged, across the curriculum, to correct their spelling, punctuation and grammar. This focus is improving pupils' literacy awareness and skills.
- Pupils' pride in their learning is shown in their well-presented books. They are keen to receive praise and the school's rewards policy underpins good learning.
- Teaching in mathematics has improved and consequently outcomes for pupils have risen. For some pupil groups, such as the most able and the most able disadvantaged, teachers do not always take account of what pupils already know or can do. This results in these pupils not making rapid enough progress. Leaders are aware of this and have put well-focused support in place.
- Teachers foster good relationships with pupils and this results in a positive learning atmosphere in lessons. Pupils are eager to participate and are not afraid to make mistakes. For example, in a citizenship lesson the teacher encouraged pupils to stand by their opinions on capital punishment, saying, 'Never be afraid to share your views or opinions; they can always be changed, once you know all the facts.'
- The school has adapted its approach to assessment to take account of the new performance measures for schools. School leaders have kept parents well informed about these changes. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire feel that they receive valuable information about the progress of their children.
- The school has worked hard to improve the quality of literacy provision across the curriculum and this is now effectively embedded. Leaders are aware that more needs to be done to develop pupils' ability to apply their numeracy knowledge, reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Reading is promoted well. Pupils read ability-appropriate books during afternoon registration and keep a detailed record of what they have read. This information is shared effectively with the English department for them to build upon pupils' learning even further. Pupils told inspectors they enjoy reading often and from a wide range of books.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities say they appreciate the extra help they get in lessons as this enables them to make progress. They also appreciate the specialist one-to-one support they receive from staff.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The curriculum is planned carefully to ensure that pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe from a wide range of potential dangers, including those that might occur when using the internet.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school and have numerous opportunities to explore the cultures and traditions of other faiths. For example, Year 8 pupils visited three sacred buildings of different faiths in Wolverhampton. Governors, leaders and staff of the school are clear in their drive to educate pupils around the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.
- Regular development events provide time for issues to be explored in depth. For example, pupils' understanding of democracy was deepened when the school hosted EU referendum discussions last summer.
- The school works well with the leaders of the sixth form. For example, safeguarding information is shared effectively between colleagues, following robust procedures.
- Pupils wear their uniform with pride and look smart. Sixth form students wear business attire at the college. The school's buildings are free from litter and graffiti.
- Pupils have numerous opportunities to explore leadership positions through the school's pupil leadership scheme. Prefects, for example, support staff in ensuring that good behaviour around school is maintained and adopt a mentor role when younger pupils need support.
- Leaders say that the personal development of their pupils is at the heart of what they do daily. Pupils comment very favourably on the school's pastoral care, saying it provides 'support whenever we need it'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are friendly, courteous and polite. This was seen during the inspection when all inspectors commented on pupils holding doors open for them and making them feel welcome.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and learning time is rarely wasted. The vast majority of pupils who spoke with inspectors confirmed that the behaviour around school and in lessons is good.

- The proportion of groups of pupils who have been temporarily excluded once or more often is now decreasing. Leaders work hard with colleagues in the school's inclusion centre to prevent further exclusions. This has a positive impact on exclusion figures for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Arrangements to improve attendance figures for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have been tightened. As a result, fewer pupils now have days off school. Leaders are aware that more needs to be done to improve the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities as their absence limits the progress they make.
- The school's high expectations of behaviour, paired with a no-tolerance approach to swearing, have resulted in fewer incidents of poor behaviour across the school. The inclusion centre plays a vital part in correcting any behaviour that falls short of these high expectations.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision at Cedars College have attendance figures in line with their peers. Their progress and development is carefully tracked by school leaders. Thus, pupils attending this provision make good progress.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Since the last inspection, outcomes for pupils have improved. The school's progress data puts it firmly in the top 5% of schools nationally. Standards have been improving, and continue to do so, across the school. Pupils are making notably better progress.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils gaining good GCSE passes in English and mathematics increased. It was well above the national average in English. This represents good progress from pupils' starting points. School data, pupils' books and inspection evidence also confirm that the progress of pupils currently in the school is good.
- Results in many subjects in 2016 were well above the national average. These include science, English, humanities, religious education, information technology, product design and applied business.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress compared to others nationally. This is due to the support they receive from the school's special educational needs department. Allocated funding is therefore spent effectively.
- The progress of the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils in mathematics is below average. Leaders are aware of this and have put a clear action plan for improvement in place. Achievement information for current pupils at the school shows those actions are beginning to take effect.
- Differences in rates of progress between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are diminishing. This is a result of the effective use of the pupil premium, along with the improved consistency in the quality of teaching and specific tracking of disadvantaged pupils' progress.

- In 2016, pupils performed better at GCSE level in English than in mathematics. Inspection evidence confirms that teaching is stronger in English and is improving in mathematics. Where inconsistencies in teaching are identified, leaders take effective action to tackle this.
- High expectations of pupils are underpinned by challenging and aspirational academic targets. The vast majority of pupils know their targets and can explain what they have to do to achieve them.
- Outcomes in the sixth form are good. Results in all subjects are at least in line with national figures. Boys and girls achieve similar outcomes and disadvantaged students' outcomes have improved so that their progress is now similar to that of other students nationally.
- Pupils who need to catch up are supported effectively by 'catch-up form groups' in Year 7, where pupils receive additional support to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. These pupils make good gains in improving their reading ages.
- The school prepares pupils well for their next steps in education through effective careers advice. Pupils say they feel well prepared for their future and responses to pupil questionnaires further confirm this. Most pupils at key stage 4 move on to appropriate courses, such as sixth form, college or apprenticeships.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- This school has a smaller than average cohort of 39 sixth form students. This is due to the school sharing its 16 to 19 provision with two other secondary schools in a centre that is six miles away from Moorside High School, called the Moorlands Sixth Form College.
- The sixth form has many strengths. Leaders have high expectations of students and support them well through the transition from secondary school to sixth form.
- All requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes are met. Academic and vocational subjects are available and students are guided onto courses that match their interests, aspirations and academic ability.
- Current achievement information shows that students make good progress from their different starting points in most subjects.
- Leaders effectively monitor the quality of teaching at the college and put support in place where underperformance is identified.
- The vast majority of students continue with their studies from Year 12 to Year 13.
- Students are extremely complimentary and proud of their college and would recommend it wholeheartedly to other students.
- The attendance at the sixth form is high and students are supported well by the college leaders. Students feel safe at the college and dress in smart business attire to demonstrate their 'readiness for business-life after college'.

- Students speak highly of the out-of-lesson academic support they receive when needed. The highly effective enrichment programme 'Masters at Moorlands', which provides opportunities for students to visit universities, engage in work experience, provide community support and complete non-qualification activities, is very popular among students. This programme supports students very well for life after sixth form.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust. Staff at the school and the college effectively follow agreed channels of communication to share information about students.
- High-quality careers education is evident; consequently, all students who completed their courses in 2016 moved into higher education, employment or apprenticeships.
- All learners who start the sixth form without a good pass in English or mathematics are required to follow a course to improve their standard. Success rates on these courses are good.

School details

Unique reference number	124399
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10025196

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	792
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	39
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Goldstraw
Headteacher	Mr Simon Clarke
Telephone number	01782 551200
Website	www.moorside.staffs.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@moorside.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 January 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of information about governance on its website.
- The school is a smaller than average secondary school. It is over-subscribed.
- Most pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be disadvantaged is below the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The school has higher than national average proportions of pupils with special educational needs statements and/or education, health and care plans.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations set for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school works in partnership with Cedars to provide part-time alternative provision for a very small number of pupils in key stage 4.
- Sixth form provision is at the Moorlands Sixth Form College, which is six miles away. The centre is run jointly by the Painsley Catholic College, The Cheadle Academy and the Moorside High School and offers a wide range of academic and vocational courses for students.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in parts of 29 lessons and some of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors reviewed a range of pupils' work in books and folders.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and their attitudes to, and opinions about, their school. They held discussions with focus groups of pupils from all year groups and went on a learning walk with key stage 3 pupils. Inspectors observed pupils at morning break and lunchtime and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to them about the books they enjoy. Inspectors considered 38 responses to Parent View, 40 responses to the staff questionnaire and 37 pupil responses from Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, other leaders and four governors, including the chair of the governing body. A telephone conversation took place between the lead inspector and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised several documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, the school's records of the progress current pupils are making, as well as attendance and behaviour records.

Inspection team

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David Hermitt	Ofsted Inspector
Melanie Callaghan-Lewis	Ofsted Inspector

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