

Inspection of a good school: McKee College House

73 Breck Road, Poulton, Lancashire FY6 7AQ

Inspection dates: 3–4 March 2020

Outcome

McKee College House continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils benefit from this very inclusive school. The pupils' online questionnaire showed that pupils enjoy coming to school. They would recommend it to others. Pupils who spoke with us were positive about their work in lessons and their experiences at McKee College. They like the smaller class sizes. They are encouraged to have a say in what subjects and courses they would like to follow so that they can be ambitious for the future.

Pupils spoke very positively about their teachers and teaching assistants. They appreciate the support given to improve their learning and behaviour. They feel safe and know that staff step in quickly when there are rare cases of bullying.

Pupils know that there are very high expectations about behaviour. Inspectors noted that pupils arrive promptly for lessons. They are smartly attired. Pupils respond well to staff instructions or requests. There are only few occasions when pupils break the school's code of conduct.

Pupils like the rewards and sanctions policy, which is a strength of the school. They understand the link between actions and consequences. Pupils queue sensibly to receive weekly rewards. These rewards are based upon the number of points they have earned for good learning or behaviour.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have high ambitions for pupils and plan the curriculum accordingly. Learning is sequenced and structured according to agreed intentions. Subject leaders work in teams so that there is a consistent approach to lesson planning. They make strong reference to the national curriculum and GCSE syllabuses in setting out curriculum intentions.

There is a consistent approach to assessing pupils' learning and social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH). Teachers pinpoint gaps in pupils' learning so that they catch up. Support is in place for pupils who become distracted from learning due to their SEMH

needs. Teachers make adaptations to their teaching to ensure equal access to learning for all pupils. There has been an increase in the number of pupils referred to the school since the last inspection. This has meant an increase, too, in the range of complex SEMH needs. Occasionally, staff do not always pick up on the needs of some pupils sufficiently well to ensure that they learn and behave to the best of their abilities.

Teachers make sure that pupils revisit previously taught work. For example, in mathematics, teachers use 'blast from the past' lesson starters to test pupils' mental arithmetic skills. The English and history leaders combine to ensure that reading and writing skills are used consistently across both subjects. Pupils develop and extend their subject vocabulary ranges over time. History themes appear in English lessons. Pupils studying history demonstrate a strong understanding of chronology, for example, when discussing the development of weaponry towards the end of the first world war. One pupil said that studying history has provided him with a 'skill set that will last [him] all [his] life'. In science, pupils are able to recall work they have completed previously in electricity. They use and apply taught skills to work scientifically, for example, when testing out a hypothesis.

Some pupils follow a vocational pathway towards the world of work. Other pupils focus upon a more academic pathway. All pupils are able to take GCSE or ASDAN courses. Pupils are motivated by the school's focus on 'beyond school'. At the Blakiston site, pupils are captivated by their lessons in construction, hospitality and nail manicure skills. Pupils achieve well. Last year, well over 90% of pupils progressed to further education, employment or training after they left school. Many pupils gained up to five GCSEs.

There has been a rise in short-term fixed exclusions over the past year. These have been due mostly to verbal abuse to staff. Leaders expect pupils to develop appropriate respect and manners if they wish to have future employment.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils partake in activities outside of school, such as theatre and museum trips. Some pupils benefit greatly from the armed forces provision provided in and out of school.

The headteacher gives strong direction. Staff spoken to say they are happy that their well-being is considered. They are keen to contribute to school improvement. There are strong partnerships with local secondary schools. As a result, pupils with SEMH needs are well cared for. The management committee is well informed and holds leaders to account. There is good capacity for the school to improve further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The procedures for staff recruitment are compliant with the most up-to-date guidance. The single central record operates across the three school sites. It contains all the required information and is up to date. Appropriate training in safer recruitment has been received by relevant staff and committee members.

Staff and committee members are knowledgeable. They have received regular training. This includes training in response to emerging safeguarding issues such as right-wing extremism. Staff are alert to warning signs. They hold scheduled meetings to share safeguarding concerns. Effective systems are in place to ensure that leaders can monitor and act upon any concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has become very popular and numbers have risen since the last inspection. There has also been an increase in the range and complexity of pupils with additional SEMH needs. This has led to the identification of gaps in staff knowledge of some of the complex needs that they now deal with. As a result, the ability of staff to respond to these needs to help pupils overcome their barriers to learning and achieve well is at times limited. Leaders need to further develop staff knowledge of more complex SEMH needs and effective strategies that help pupils succeed.

Background

When we have judged a pupil referral unit to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or standards may be declining then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 15–16 March 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	134367
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10111079
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	128
Appropriate authority	The management committee
Chair	Alf Yates
Headteacher	Andrew Murray
Website	www.mckee.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 March 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the school's numbers have more than doubled in size.
- The leadership team has increased since the last inspection to incorporate three additional assistant headteachers.
- Leaders make occasional use of 4teachmoto in Ribbleston as an alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

- We met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, three assistant headteachers and a range of staff, including subject leaders and support and staff. We met with three management committee members, including the vice chair of the management committee, a local authority representative and one assistant headteacher from a local secondary academy.
- We focused deeply on English, mathematics, science and history during the inspection. We also visited the Blakiston site to visit lessons covering vocational studies and the wider curriculum. We looked at the school's curriculum and related policies, and planning documents. We visited lessons and examined pupils'

workbooks. We also met with pupils and teachers to discuss pupils' learning in these subjects.

- We looked at the school's safeguarding arrangements and related policies. We focused upon how the school recruits staff, the quality of staff and governor training and how pupils are kept safe.

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Inspection team

Jon Ashley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jane Holmes

Ofsted Inspector

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