

Inspection of Mo Mowlam Academy

Corporation Road, Redcar, TS10 1PA

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 January 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are valued as individuals. Staff encourage them to aim high. By the time they leave, pupils gain a good grounding in English, mathematics, science and vocational subjects. This helps them to succeed in their next steps. However, their knowledge in some academic subjects, such as history and geography, is not as well developed.

Staff are attuned to the specific learning needs of each pupil. They go the 'extra mile' to meet these needs. One parent echoed the views of many, commenting, 'I feel like since my child has gone to Mo Mowlam, he has come on leaps and bounds.'

Pupils are safe in school. They feel secure around the school site. The atmosphere in school is generally positive. The effective careers programme enables pupils to gradually build confidence. For example, pupils make several visits to colleges in the local area. Younger pupils benefit from the individual support they receive, which includes working with staff in the 'sensory room'.

There is little bullying in school. Staff are alert to how pupils relate to each other. They are on hand to assist pupils if they are struggling to socialise positively. Sometimes, pupils are intimidated by the language used by other pupils.

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

The education and nurture that the school provides for its pupils has a positive impact on them. In 2021, all pupils leaving in Year 11 progressed to education, training or employment.

The curriculum is generally strong and ambitious. In key stage 4, it includes some GCSE-level qualifications and carefully chosen vocational qualifications. Leaders have made sure that in key stages 2 and 3, pupils study a broad range of subjects. Pupils deepen their subject-specific knowledge and skills in English, mathematics and science. For example, in science they gain the knowledge that they need to carry out scientific enquiries. In English, the curriculum ensures that pupils embed key grammatical knowledge. Pupils revisit important knowledge about sentence construction. This means that they can use complex sentences in their own writing. The curriculum in mathematics, science and English is better developed than the curriculum in some non-core subjects. Developments in these subjects have been hindered by COVID-19 working restrictions.

Leaders have put a well-planned phonics programme in place for pupils who need to learn the sounds that letters make. The majority of these pupils are in key stage 2. Any older pupils who need assistance in learning to read receive effective help. Books used for pupils to practise their reading are closely matched to their capabilities in phonics.

The assessments that pupils take when they join the school provide teachers with useful information. Teachers use this information to adapt their teaching so that it better meets pupils' individual requirements. Teachers use information from termly assessments to track pupils' progress towards targets. In secondary, these are GCSE targets, and in primary, they are end-of-key stage 2 targets. This approach is problematic. It does not support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to remember subject content in the long term.

Staff feel tremendously well supported by senior leaders and the principal. Leaders ensure that staff have the expertise they need to assist pupils with behavioural needs. As a result, the atmosphere in school is generally calm. On occasions when some pupils' emotions get the better of them, the behaviour support team work well with these pupils. This minimises the amount of class-time that they miss.

There is a well-planned programme of study focused on pupils' personal development. The programme includes spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. For instance, pupils raise funds for charities. Pupils learn the importance of kindness and other positive attributes. Pupils do not understand how their verbal communication can have positive and negative effects on others.

The school is well supported by leaders from the multi-academy trust (MAT). Subject leaders from other schools in the MAT are assisting senior leaders in developing the curriculum in some subjects. They are also helping to strengthen subject leadership in subjects where this is less well developed. MAT Leaders and trustees have high standards. They thoughtfully evaluate how well the school is meeting these standards.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders, including MAT leaders, insist that safeguarding is given top priority. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) has excellent knowledge about every pupil's individual circumstance. She uses her expertise to ensure that any referrals to the local authority are detailed. She carefully checks that pupils receive the support they need from welfare services.

The DSL and other leaders keep very close tabs on the safety and well-being of pupils who do not attend school. They make home visits to pupils whose attendance is low and carefully check the safety of pupils who attend alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned or sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear that leaders have already taken action to plan next year's curriculum and to train staff in how to deliver it. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

- Termly assessments used to track pupils' progress towards target grades do not assist pupils in remembering subject-specific knowledge. They are also not suitable for pupils with SEND because they do not accurately assess whether pupils have learned the content of the taught curriculum. Leaders should develop current approaches to summative assessment and progress tracking. New approaches need to reliably show whether pupils have embedded subject-specific knowledge in their long-term memories. This would better support pupils with SEND in making progress. It would also assist leaders and teachers in evaluating whether the curriculum is having the intended impact.
- Some pupils use derogatory language, which makes a number of pupils feel uncomfortable and anxious. Pupils with leadership roles do not always model positive communication to their peers. This means that they do not make a strong positive difference to the pupil community. Leaders need to ensure that pupils better understand the effect that their language can have on others. This would have a positive impact on the pupils around them. Pupils with leadership roles need better training in communication, enabling them to become more effective role models for their peers and younger pupils.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	146953
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	10206819
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Walker
Principal	Rachel Glover
Website	www.horizonstrust.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Mo Mowlam Academy is an average-sized special academy for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Mo Mowlam Academy became part the Horizons Specialist Academy Trust in 2019. It moved to a new site in 2021. In September 2021, the school roll rose by 40%.
- There are many more boys than girls in all classes and in all year groups.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is well above average.
- The school is an all-through school. There are no pupils currently on roll in key stage 1 or early years.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

- The school uses seven alternative provision settings: Educ8, Hopefields Education, NACRO, Redcar & Cleveland Training Centre, Evolve Sports Academy, Reintegrated Education Solutions, and Brambles Farm Community Centre.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Meetings were held with the principal and senior leaders from both phases as well as the vice-principal responsible for curriculum development. Inspectors held separate meetings with leaders responsible for careers, alternative provision placements, pupils with SEND, and behaviour. The chair of the trustees, along with the chief executive officer (CEO) for the MAT, the vice-CEO, a number of other trustees and MAT leaders met with an inspector. Meetings were also held with representatives from the academy advisory council.
- Inspectors spoke separately with a group of boys and a group of girls. They also spoke informally with pupils at breaktimes. Inspectors spoke with taxi drivers who take pupils to and from school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, including early reading, science, PSHE and art and design, in both the primary and secondary phases. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed documentation relating to the school's curriculum, along with the school's own evaluation and its development plans. Inspectors also sampled education, health and care plans for four pupils, as well as internal plans detailing to the individual support the pupils require. A meeting was also held with a small sample of leaders from subjects where deep dives were not undertaken, including the primary phase mathematics leader.
- Inspectors reviewed eight comments made by parents on free text in Ofsted Parent View, as well as responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey. They considered 25 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff and ten responses to the pupils' survey.
- The single central record was checked. Two meetings were held with the designated safeguarding lead. An inspector also reviewed records of safeguarding concerns and referrals.

Inspection team

Sarah Hubbard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annali Crawford

Her Majesty's Inspector

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