

Inspection of Morecambe Bay Academy

Dallam Avenue, Morecambe, Lancashire LA4 5BG

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 September 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The executive headteacher is John Cowper. This school is part of The Bay Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sally Kenyon, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Crewdson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Morecambe Bay Academy are happy, polite and respectful. They said that they feel part of a close-knit community where everyone is valued. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, forge positive relationships with each other and with staff. These relationships contribute well to a supportive environment where pupils feel safe. Pupils know that there is someone who they can turn to if they feel upset or worried.

Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), respond well to the high expectations that the school has of their conduct and achievement. Behaviour around the school is orderly. If pupils fall short of the school's expectations, staff follow a rigorous and consistent approach to address any incidents of misbehaviour effectively.

The school is clear and ambitious in its drive to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. The school motto, 'belong, believe, achieve', underpins pupils' positive attitudes to learning. In the main, pupils achieve well across the curriculum.

The number of clubs and trips on offer for pupils continues to grow. Students in the sixth form enjoy enrichment opportunities where they are encouraged to support charities and help in the local community. Pupils are proud of the opportunities that they have to become leaders or to help others by, for example, being reading partners or anti-bullying ambassadors.

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

In a short space of time, the school, together with support from the trust, has made substantial strides in improving the curriculum. The school has developed an increasingly ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those with SEND. For example, more pupils choose to learn a language in key stage 4. This is helping to increase the number of pupils studying the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects. Overall, current pupils learn the curriculum effectively and they achieve well. However, some older pupils have not benefited from the improvements to the curriculum. This is reflected in published outcomes.

The curriculum is well thought out and identifies the key knowledge that pupils, including students in the sixth form, need to learn. The school has broken down this knowledge into smaller steps, and topics are taught in a logical order. As a result, pupils successfully build upon and develop their knowledge over time.

For the most part, teachers deliver the curriculum with confidence and expertise. They explain new concepts to pupils with clarity. Teachers use assessment strategies skilfully to identify any gaps in pupils' understanding. This is helping pupils to build a rich body of subject knowledge across the curriculum.

The school has prioritised reading. For example, there is a spacious and inviting library for pupils to enjoy and visit regularly. Added to this, the school has introduced strategies to encourage pupils to read more widely and discuss in depth the books that they have read. These initiatives are helping pupils to increase their enjoyment of reading for pleasure.

The school's systems for identifying pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read are in their infancy. This means that a small proportion of older pupils have not received the timely support that they need to improve their reading knowledge. From time to time, this hinders how fully these pupils access the wider curriculum.

The school prioritises the early identification of pupils with SEND. The school shares strategies and relevant information with staff so that the needs of SEND pupils are met. Pupils with SEND spoke positively about the support that they receive from staff. The school has the same high aspirations for pupils with SEND as they do for everyone else.

Most pupils behave well. They treat staff with due regard, and they display positive attitudes towards their learning. Most pupils and students attend school regularly. The school works closely with parents and carers to remove any barriers that may affect pupils' rates of attendance. However, despite the school's efforts, some pupils do not attend school as often as they should. These pupils miss out on all that the school has to offer.

The school has a well-organised personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Pupils learn how to maintain healthy lifestyles and how to develop healthy relationships. The PSHE curriculum helps pupils to better understand the impact of their lifestyle choices. The careers programme raises pupils' aspirations and prepares them well for the next steps in their education. Students in the sixth form value the individualised careers input that expert staff provide, which suitably prepares them for adulthood.

The school is committed to engaging positively with pupils and their parents. For example, parents of pupils with SEND appreciate the opportunities to attend coffee mornings and workshops. Through these events, staff share information about how parents can better support their children's additional needs.

Trust leaders and governors share an ambitious vision for all pupils at the school. They have a thorough understanding of the school's priorities for further development. Trustees provide appropriate support to the school while holding it to account effectively.

Staff said that they feel listened to by leaders. They spoke enthusiastically about the changes that leaders have made to improve their workload. For example, the school has recently enhanced the support provided for subject leaders to enable them to further improve their curriculums.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A minority of pupils do not attend school as often as they should. This means that they miss out on important learning and a range of other opportunities provided by the school. The school should continue to support these pupils and their families to improve their rates of attendance.
- Some older pupils do not read as well as they should. This prevents some of these pupils from fully accessing the wider curriculum and learning well. As the school rolls out and embeds its reading strategy, it should ensure that older pupils' gaps in reading knowledge are identified and addressed quickly.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	147115
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10290357
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,050
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	164
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Crewdson
CEO of the trust	Sally Kenyon
Headteacher	John Cowper (executive headteacher), Jennifer Pardoe (head of school)
Website	www.morecambabayacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Bay Learning Trust.
- Morecambe Bay Academy converted to become an academy school in April 2019. When its predecessor school, Morecambe High School, was last inspected, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The school uses four registered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher, the head of school, other senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff. Inspectors also met with the CEO, trustees, and members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils and students from Years 7 to 13 about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation document, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, modern foreign languages, art and design, physical education and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subject areas.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Rebecca Sharples, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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David Roberts	Ofsted Inspector
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