

# Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Moat House

6 Lower Moat Close, Heaton Norris, Stockport, Cheshire SK4 1SZ

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Inspection dates:

12 and 13 November 2024

## **Outcome**

Moat House has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils join this school at some of the most challenging times in their lives. Some pupils are returning to education after a lengthy gap. Most have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school enables them to thrive. The support pupils and sixth-form students receive here enables them to re-engage with their education successfully. Their lives are turned around.

The school maintains the highest ambition for its pupils. It helps them develop self-esteem and aspire for their future lives. Staff provide a safe and nurturing environment. This creates an exceptionally strong sense of community and helps the school be a calm, happy place. Respect and kindness are the norm here.

Pupils quickly build trusting relationships with staff. Despite any previous difficulties, they steadily build up their attendance at school.

The school is determined to prepare pupils well for their futures. Staff work closely with other professionals to ensure pupils receive the help they need to lead independent lives. For some, this includes learning to care for their new babies. The progress pupils make in their social and emotional learning sets them up very well for adulthood. They achieve well and successfully move on to further education or employment.

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

The school ensures that all pupils follow an ambitious curriculum, regardless of when they join the school or how long they stay. This curriculum combines academic subjects with a programme of vocational, social and emotional learning. Students who join the school after the age of 16 follow a curriculum designed to compensate for any education they have missed. They benefit from being able to complete their studies towards a range of

formal qualifications, including GCSEs. Most pupils and students gain the knowledge and skills that they need to be successful in their future lives.

Staff recognise that pupils at this school need a different approach to that found in a mainstream school. The school assesses pupils' individual starting points thoroughly. It also identifies any additional needs or barriers to learning that pupils may have. This information helps staff to shape the curriculum carefully around the needs of each pupil.

Teachers are specialists in their subjects. They identify the knowledge pupils need to learn and when it should be taught. This ensures that pupils build new learning on top of what they already know. Staff keep a close eye on how well pupils are learning. This helps pupils to revisit any knowledge that they have not gained securely.

The school has raised the profile of reading. Staff choose texts which encourage pupils to read more often. This helps pupils develop a rich vocabulary and learn more about the world around them. Staff know how to help any pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read. Pupils who arrive with gaps in their reading knowledge benefit from this help. They catch up to their peers quickly.

When they join the school, pupils build up their study time gradually. During this transition period, staff get to know pupils extremely well. They use a wide range of strategies to support pupils to attend frequently. From low starting points, most pupils' levels of attendance improve considerably over time.

The school considers pupils' personal development to be paramount. Pupils learn how to form positive relationships and to avoid unhealthy ones. They also learn to be accepting of each other's differences and to treat other people with respect. Staff help pupils to engage positively in a range of social settings, for example by going trampolining together and by sharing meals around a communal table. Added to this, pupils receive an individual programme of careers information that helps them to build aspirations for their futures. These experiences prepare pupils very well for life beyond school.

Governors are passionate advocates for the school. They draw on a wide range of expertise to support and challenge the school's work. This ensures leaders' decisions are taken in the best interests of pupils. However, the ways in which the school reflects on its effectiveness rely heavily on staff's knowledge of individual pupils. At times, this approach misses the bigger picture. The school is sometimes unaware of which of its actions have the greatest impact. In the past, this has hindered governors from being as strategic as they could be.

Staff are exceptionally proud to work at the school. Although their workload is sometimes high, the school supports them to manage it well.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some of the school's processes to evaluate the impact of its work do not provide a clear enough overview of how effective the school is. This sometimes hinders leaders and governors from identifying the improvement strategies that will make the biggest difference for pupils. The school should review its approach to quality assurance to ensure that this provides the most useful information to continue to drive the improvement of the school.

## Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in March 2019.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106023
<b>Local authority</b>	Stockport
<b>Inspection number</b>	10348000
<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	13 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Girls
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	12
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	6
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lucy Cooney
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.moathouse.stockport.sch.uk">www.moathouse.stockport.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	5 and 6 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Places at this school are commissioned by the local authority for pupils who have struggled to access education in mainstream settings. Most pupils are dual registered with a mainstream school. Almost all pupils at the school have SEND. A large proportion have an education, health and care plan.
- The school also provides education for pupils who are pregnant or who are young parents.
- At the same premises, the governing body operates a nursery for children aged up to two years old. The nursery provides care for the children of pupils at the school. This provision is registered with Ofsted on the Early Years Register. It is inspected separately.
- Since the last inspection in 2019, the school has admitted boys as well as girls. The school has also increased its age range to provide education for students up to the age of 19. These changes are not accurately reflected on the Department for Education (DfE)'s Get Information about Schools website. The school has asked the DfE to update

this information.

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- 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**

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders and staff. The lead inspector also met with some representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at examples of their work. They also considered a wide range of documentation and analysis provided by the school.
- The inspectors observed pupils during social times.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.
- There were no responses to the pupil survey. Inspectors spoke in person with almost all pupils who were present during the inspection.
- There were no responses to Ofsted Parent View. During the inspection, the lead inspector spoke with some parents and carers by telephone.
- Inspectors only inspected the education provision at this school.

## **Inspection team**

Ben Hill, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Maria McGarry

Ofsted Inspector

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