

Moorlands View School

Independent Special School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number	888/6046
Unique Reference Number	132079
Inspection number	301570
Inspection dates	11-12 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Honoree Gordon HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Moorlands View school is located in a rural setting not far from Burnley in Lancashire. It provides education for up to twelve pupils with severe emotional, social or behavioural difficulties who have had severely disrupted education in the past and, in most cases, have experienced several previous care placements. There are currently seven pupils on roll. The pupils live in the adjacent children's home. An inspection of welfare took place on the second day of this inspection. The school was last inspected in 2001.

Evaluation of the school

Moorlands View provides a stable, peaceful placement for children who have experienced very difficult personal circumstances. The quality of education is satisfactory. Pupils are well cared for and make good progress in learning to manage their behaviour. Their attendance and attitude to school improve and, as a result, they are able to make satisfactory progress in their learning. The school does not meet a number of the current regulations which have come into force since its last inspection.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory. It meets most requirements, but there is no written curriculum policy and schemes of work are not available for all subjects. Teachers plan month by month but there is no long-term plan. As a result, it is not clear how the different parts of the curriculum fit together nor how it is intended it will develop further.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, with a good emphasis on improving pupils' basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). As pupils have many gaps in their knowledge and skills due to absence from school in the past, this meets their needs well. Pupils receive one-to-one tuition every day to help to develop their skills in English and mathematics. This is effective because they respond well to this close support and so make progress. Pupils work together for other subjects, which benefits their social skills. However, the school does not link up subjects sufficiently in order to reinforce pupils' basic skills and to make learning meaningful, topical and relevant.

There is good provision for the creative aspects of education, particularly in music, where pupils learn to play a musical instrument and to make music together. So, for example, the current pupils are learning electric guitar, keyboard, drums and harmonica. In the latter they are joined by staff as beginners. Physical education is provided off-site, using local facilities with specialist instructors. Sports include swimming, football, basketball and badminton. These ensure that pupils keep fit.

There are weekly lessons in ICT and opportunities in the afternoons, through free choice activities, for pupils to follow interests or aptitudes further in ICT or in other curriculum areas, such as food technology, supported by the teachers. Pupils follow a course of lessons in beginners' Spanish. There is a comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE), which includes advice on careers.

Pupils' work is accredited through the Association of Qualifications Alliance (AQA) units of work, or at entry-level GCSE. For more able pupils, full GCSE courses in English and Mathematics are offered. The school has plans to extend the range and scope of the curricular provision further by including vocational courses. Currently, older pupils undertake work experience and attend a local further education college for one day per week. In this way pupils are beginning to be prepared for the world of work. All three pupils who have left in recent years at age 16 have proceeded on to further education or training.

Teaching is satisfactory. Relationships between staff and pupils are a strength, enabling pupils to develop positive attitudes to learning. The provision of one-to-one tuition in English and mathematics gives pupils confidence and enables them to make satisfactory progress in their learning. Teachers manage behaviour very effectively, creating a calm atmosphere where pupils feel valued and which encourages good effort. For most pupils this represents considerable improvement on their past experience of education. All the current pupils have gained externally validated qualifications in English, mathematics and ICT at entry level.

Teachers' subject knowledge is sound and explanations are usually clear. However, the range of resources is too narrow and does not adequately cater for pupils' different learning styles. So, for example, in trying to learn about maps and cross-sectional work in geography, there was no ICT simulation or other 3-dimensional model to help pupils' to understand the teacher's introduction to the topic. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills though using ICT. Whilst pupils have some opportunities to use ICT in other subjects, this tends to be limited to researching a topic or to word-processing. The school has not fully taken advantage of the potential for using ICT as a tool to motivate pupils and to promote learning.

The range of activities and strategies used by the teachers are too limited. Lessons draw heavily on commercially published materials. These provide useful structure but their use dominates lessons. There is an over-dependence on worksheets. In the

best lessons, teachers draw on pupils' prior knowledge and experiences and seek to make learning relevant. For example, a science lesson on the environment was both topical and informative, eliciting good responses from the pupils who could relate the lesson to recent news reports of flooding. Teachers encourage pupils to take responsibility for their learning, but sometimes miss opportunities to get pupils to think for themselves. Teachers do not often show the flexibility to draw links between different subjects, to reinforce learning.

The systems for assessing pupils' progress are not wholly satisfactory. Some aspects are underdeveloped. AQA, entry-level GCSE and, more recently, national curriculum attainment tests provide useful benchmarks against which pupils' progress can ultimately be measured. The school completes a formal initial assessment on entry to the school and follows this up on an annual basis. However, as yet, there is no system for tracking progress in between. Consequently, when teachers are planning lessons they do not have an up-to-date picture on how each pupil is doing, so that lessons can aim to fill in gaps, consolidate or extend what each individual can do and what he or she knows. Whilst work is sometimes adjusted for a particularly weak or for a more able pupil, by that pupil working one-to-one with a teacher, pupils of different ages generally do the same tasks in lessons. Progress in lessons is satisfactory, but this lack of information acts as a barrier to faster progress for some individuals. Marking is inconsistent. Pupils' work is not always marked regularly and marking does not often provide pupils with guidance on how they might improve their work.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

This is satisfactory overall, with considerable strengths in the provision for pupils' social and moral development. Pupils talked openly and confidently to the inspector.

The attendance rate is high. This represents significant progress in pupils' attitudes to learning because, in previous schooling, pupils' attendance has usually been poor. Pupils say that they enjoy school and this is why they are keen to attend. Behaviour is good. Pupils trust the staff and so they respond well to the close support provided by the teachers and begin to make progress. Pupils work together for several subjects, which benefits their social skills.

There are good programmes of visits out of school and of recreational activities. These help to develop confidence and self-esteem and provide good opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively. Much is tailored to individual interests.

The PSHE programme contributes extensively to pupils' moral and social education. It provides pupils with knowledge about how to avoid risk-taking behaviour and helps them to explore feelings and attitudes. In this way, pupils are helped to begin to manage their behaviour and responses with less aggression. This is reinforced out of school hours by the attentive pastoral support of the care home workers and the good links with external professionals and outside agencies. Above all, the care

shown by all the staff and the consistency of routines they establish create an atmosphere in which pupils can feel relaxed. They are then able to develop emotionally and behaviourally.

Through making music, pupils express their emotions, develop perseverance and work co-operatively. There are lessons in religious education, but the school does not do enough to develop awareness about other cultures and religions. The programme for education about citizenship is inadequate; it does not cover the content required.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for health, safety and welfare is good. Pupils are well cared for and closely supervised. Pupils themselves say that the reason they are happy is directly related to how much the staff care for them. There are good links with outside agencies and professionals to help support pupils. There are good opportunities for pupils to take exercise and healthy eating is actively encouraged.

The policies which underpin health and safety are in place and meet requirements. However, the school has no formal system to check their implementation. The most recent inspection conducted in February 2007 by the Commission for Social Care Inspectorate judged that the school meets the National Minimum Standard for welfare.

Care staff meetings in the home look closely at pupils' welfare issues, while in the school a review is held at the end of each day. The care manager and the headteacher meet to hand over responsibility, but otherwise the links between school and care home are insufficiently formalised. As a consequence, it is not easy to see how each contributes to the overall picture for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and where there may be overlap or duplication.

The school has not prepared a three-year plan detailing how the premises and curriculum will meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has completed a Criminal Records Bureau check prior to the appointment of all staff and has taken up references, but there is no evidence that identity, qualifications or medical fitness have been checked. In the care home, these procedures have been closely followed and meet the requirements set by the (former) Commission for Social Care Inspectorate.

The school's premises and accommodation

The accommodation and premises are satisfactory, light and airy, with sufficient classrooms, a hall and a number of specialist rooms for science, music practice, ICT,

and technology. The setting is attractive, with a small, but adequate outside play area and open moorland nearby. The school is housed in a former church building and this is rather shabby in places, but an extensive programme of refurbishment is addressing this. The work is due to be completed over the summer holiday period and will provide a new science laboratory, a new ICT room and a better classroom layout.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school does not meet most of the requirements. It does not routinely provide the information that parents, prospective parents, placing authorities and other agencies should be given. This includes administrative details, particulars of the curriculum and the arrangements for admission, discipline and exclusions. The school does not indicate what additional information parents and placing authorities could ask to see.

An annual report is written for parents/carers, giving information on pupils' progress. However, this focuses mainly on effort and attitude. The reports have little detail on what pupils have achieved in each of their subjects and the meaning of the grading system is not clear.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school's procedures do not meet the requirements. Various details are missing, such as stressing the confidential nature of complaints. The existing written procedures refer solely to pupils and make no mention of what parents, carers or local authorities should do in the event of a complaint. There have been no formal complaints in the last year.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- establish a curriculum policy set out in writing and supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, and implement this effectively (paragraph 1(2))
- ensure that lessons are well planned, that effective teaching methods and suitable activities are used and that class time is managed wisely (paragraph 1(3)(c))

- ensure that teachers show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils and ensure these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d))
- provide classroom resources of an adequate quality, quantity and range and use these effectively (paragraph 1(3)(f))
- establish a framework to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use the information from such assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress (paragraph 1(3)(g)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (standard 2) and must:

- provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England (paragraph (2)(d))
- assist pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures, in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions (paragraph (2)(e)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff carry out appropriate checks to confirm their identity, medical fitness, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references and take such information into account in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed (paragraph 4(c)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide particulars of:
 - the school's address and telephone number and the name of the headteacher (paragraph 6(2)(a))
 - the full name, address for correspondence during both term time and holidays and a telephone number or numbers on which the proprietor may be contacted at all times (paragraph 6(2)(b))
 - a statement of the school's ethos and aims (paragraph 6(2)(d))

- the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e))
- the educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements of special educational need and for pupils for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 6(2)(f)).
- ensure that parents are aware they can request:
 - particulars of the curriculum offered by the school (paragraph 6(2)(g))
 - particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 6(2)(h))
 - particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(2)(i))
 - details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j))
 - the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of procedures for handling complaints (standard 7) and must:

- set out clear timescales for the management of the complaint (paragraph 7(c))
- if the parents are not satisfied with the response to a written complaint provide for the establishment of a hearing before a panel appointed by the proprietor of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint (paragraph (7)(f))
- allow for parents to attend the panel hearing, and, if they wish, to be accompanied (paragraph 7(h))
- provide for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulate that the complainant, proprietors and headteacher and, where relevant, the person complained about, should be given a copy of any findings and recommendations (paragraph 7(i))

- provide for written records to be kept of all complaints indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing (paragraph 7(j))
- provide that correspondence, statements and records of complaints are to be kept confidential (paragraph 7(k)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

School details

Name of school	Moorlands View School		
DfES number	888/6046		
Unique reference number	132079		
Type of school	Special school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	April 1999		
Age range of pupils	11-16 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 5	Girls: 2	Total: 7
Number of boarders	Boys: 5	Girls: 2	Total: 7
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 3	Girls: 2	Total: 5
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 5	Girls: 2	Total: 7
Fees (boarders)	£41,600 per annum		
Address of school	Manchester Road Dunnockshaw Burnley Lancashire BB11 5PQ		
Telephone number	01282 431144		
Fax number	01282 455411		
Email address	waynecarradice@fastmail.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Wayne Carradice		
Proprietor	Ms Ann Mc Glynn		
Reporting inspector	Honoree Gordon HMI		
Dates of inspection	11-12 July 2007		