

Moorside High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105977
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	309001
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Cox

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	856
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Shaw
Headteacher	Mr Nigel Ogden
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2006
School address	East Lancashire Road Swinton Manchester M27 0BH
Telephone number	0161 7941045
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Moorside High School is a slightly smaller than average school whose students come from broadly average socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below average as are the numbers of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need. The numbers of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those speaking English as an additional language are low. The school achieved specialist status in mathematics and computing in September 2008. It gained Artsmark Silver award and extended schools status in 2008 also. The school is currently led by an acting headteacher and is subject to reorganisation proposals in 2012, when it will join together with a neighbouring secondary school.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Moorside High is a good school. Much has been done recently to bring about positive changes. The acting headteacher and his staff have worked very hard to bring about the improvements. The school knows what to do to get the best out of students and is seeing the benefits of improvements in the classroom in the marked increase in achievement and standards in subjects, particularly at Key Stage 4. Questionnaire responses indicate parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Many commented on the 'significant improvements' and that their children had 'progressed enormously over the past two years'.

As a result of the improved teaching, which is now good overall, standards have risen in Key Stage 4 and are now above average. However, the school acknowledges that more needs to be done to raise standards and achievement at Key Stage 3 given students' broadly average attainment on entry. Typically, teaching is exciting and engaging and makes good use of technology, which is appreciated by the students. The recently acquired specialism, founded on two of the school's consistently strong subjects, is helping drive improvement. Students tell of teachers delivering exciting and dynamic lessons within a good curriculum that offers wide-ranging opportunities including appropriate vocational studies.

Students' personal development and well-being are good. They attend school regularly because of the good learning experiences and opportunities available to them. Older students tell of the improvements they have seen. The school provides a pleasant, safe and happy environment in which students thrive, enjoy their experience and to achieve their best under the good guidance of teachers and support staff.

Under the direction of the acting headteacher, senior leaders and managers, including governors, have set a clear course for improvement. All priorities are deeply rooted in raising standards and reflect the school's determination to secure sustained improvement. The school acknowledges the imbalance in achievement between key stages and have set about making changes, but the impact of these is yet to move the satisfactory achievement at Key Stage 3 to match that in Key Stage 4 which is good. Middle managers are in the main new to their positions. They make a very positive impact at an operational level but are currently less effective in helping senior leaders steer a course for further improvement. This is because systems for monitoring departmental performance lack consistency and effectiveness. Nevertheless, leaders have demonstrated good capacity to improve and the school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement in Key Stage 3 to at least match that seen in Key Stage 4.
- Develop middle leaders so they monitor consistently the performance of every department and use this work to better inform whole-school strategic planning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students arrive at the school with broadly average abilities and make good progress overall by the time they leave. In 2007 at Key Stage 3, the progress students made was satisfactory, although there was some underachievement. Standards reached in 2007 at the end of Key Stage 3 were broadly average with English and mathematics performing better than science.

In Key Stage 4 students made good progress in English and mathematics although it was satisfactory overall when taking into account other subjects. Standards were broadly average.

In 2008 provisional results indicate a small improvement overall for the progress of students at Key Stage 3 from 2007 but with significant improvement in science. Standards were similar to 2007. Provisional GCSE results for 2008 show students making impressive gains when compared to 2007, overcoming previous underachievement and resulting in good progress being made and higher standards being reached. Provisional results for students securing five or more A* to C grades at GCSE look to be much improved on 2007, as do the five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics, reflecting the continued strength of these subjects. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are above average. Provisional results for information and communication technology (ICT) are likely to be high. All students look to have achieved good grades at GCSE in this subject and the majority of those entered secured the higher grades of A and A*.

The school sets ambitious targets which challenge all students to exceed their capabilities. Success at meeting these targets has improved. A strong feature in 2008 has been the narrowing of the gap between boys' and girls' achievement. Higher attaining girls are more effectively challenged and the confidence and attitudes of average attaining boys radically improved. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the good support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students are well prepared for life in a multicultural society through engaging activity days and the use of positive role models in assemblies. Behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Students demonstrate good relationships and are tolerant of other's views. There has been a significant reduction in the number of exclusions in the last year because of the good support of the school and a determined approach to include those at risk of being excluded. The peer mentors, house systems and the mature attitude of prefects have helped reduce incidents of poor behaviour and bullying because there is mutual respect and a strong sense of belonging to the school. An approach to dealing with tensions between students by having them discuss issues together has been particularly successful.

Attendance has improved considerably and is now above average. This is due to a high profile in school on encouraging good attendance, the broad curriculum and imaginative and engaging teaching. Students talk excitedly about their development since joining the school. One said, 'There isn't a down side to being here, most of the teachers are like friends.' Students enjoy school with many of them taking part in extra-curricular activities, especially in sports as well as overseas and residential visits. They understand the importance of healthy lifestyles because of the school's emphasis on the benefits of physical fitness and an appropriate diet. Students make good contributions to the community by taking part in drama productions and in raising funds for local and national charities. Several thousands of pounds were raised recently during one week's activity in conjunction with a local radio station.

Students' are well prepared for life and work after school because of their well developed skills in numeracy, literacy and ICT, as well as involvement in the well planned work experience programmes and effective careers education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching is having a very positive impact on the progress of students particularly in Years 10 and 11. High expectations are established based on accurate use of assessment data and good use of examination criteria. In lessons students are encouraged to achieve the very highest outcomes and are very well prepared for their examinations. Marking in Key Stage 4 is very informative and makes clear what students have to do to improve in order to reach their target grades. The good use of assessment data to raise standards is not as effective in Key Stage 3. Here marking is not always helpful and expectations are not made as clear for younger students.

The pace of learning in most lessons is brisk. Students remain focused and studious responding well to good teaching. Positive relations between students and teachers often lead to a productive learning environment. Students appreciate what their teachers are doing and talk enthusiastically of dynamic lessons where technology, including interactive whiteboards, is used well to engage, stimulate and push students on in their learning.

In the small number of less successful lessons seen, the pace is slower. Sometimes the review at the end of the lesson is too rushed to help secure learning. In a minority of lessons teachers talk too much and the students lose interest and motivation. Teachers generally use questions well to probe understanding and knowledge. However, open-ended questions that require the students to think in a more evaluative way are not used frequently enough to promote independent learning. Students' high rates of progress in most subjects are being used to challenge performance in others and this is stimulating teachers and students to strive for even greater success.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Students of all abilities find courses to their liking through the separate 'pathway' curriculum in Key Stage 4. Since the previous inspection the school has consolidated its accredited vocational courses while introducing new opportunities such as the creative and media diploma and courses in construction at local colleges. The recent rise in results at the end of Year 11 confirms the appropriateness of courses at Key Stage 4. In Year 7 lessons provide a thoughtfully planned blend of independent learning and personal, social and health education. Dedicated citizenship days also enhance personal development in all years. The school has a wide and popular range of extra-curricular activities including targeted events for gifted and talented students. The school's principle focus has been on improving Key Stage 4. This has

resulted in the slower development of Key Stage 3. Senior leaders recognise the need to introduce new curriculum opportunities to Key Stage 3 students and are planning to provide better opportunities for accelerated learning by, for example, using two lessons together for practical subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All staff provide good levels of care and support. Their coordinated work ensures a proactive approach which benefits from a detailed knowledge of students' individual needs. The school

has effective links with relevant external agencies. There is good support in the inclusion suite for students who are vulnerable and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Links with subject departments are effective and there is good coordination between teachers and the support staff both in and out of the classroom. The school is aware of the need to develop more purposeful links with parents to support the work of the school and has plans in place to tackle this.

New entrants to the school settle quickly because transition and induction arrangements are undertaken well. Year 7 students benefit from the support given by older students throughout their first year. Students say they feel safe and well cared for throughout their time at school and speak highly of the approach taken by staff.

The system for monitoring students' academic progress is good, students know their targets and how to reach them, because of the regular progress reviews, although there is some variance in the quality of marking and its helpfulness in some subjects at Key Stage 3. There is effective identification by form teachers and directors of learning of those students requiring additional help in each subject.

Students are provided with opportunities to develop their understanding of citizenship through activity days, taking on responsibilities in the school and raising money for charities. Guidance for students when making subject choices in Year 10 is well considered and based on performance data and in response to aspirations. Direction towards further education and work opportunities is equally strong. Child protection systems are in place and safety checks on new staff satisfy current government requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Under the very clear direction set by the acting headteacher, leaders and managers have worked tirelessly to secure the improvements seen in many areas of the school. The recently acquired specialism, founded on two of the school's strongest subjects is testimony to the strength of the school's leaders and managers. Much has been done in a very short time by the acting headteacher to increase the accountability

of all staff. The recently re-shaped senior leadership team manage the middle leaders well. There have been a number of internal promotions to middle leadership level. This has helped create a common sense of purpose among the staff, many of whom have played a significant part in recent improvements. However, whilst middle leaders have had an undeniable impact at an operational level they have not yet had sufficient involvement in helping set the strategic direction of the school.

High expectations of staff and students has contributed to the much improved levels of achievement and standards particularly at Key Stage 4. Plans for further school improvement are clear and unambiguous. They are frequently monitored to ensure they bring about the further improvements needed. Community cohesion is satisfactory rather than good because the planning of activities and evaluation of impact is not yet sufficient. The school has appropriate priorities which are firmly rooted in raising achievement. Self-evaluation is a strength. The school knows itself very well and is clear on what it needs to do to improve further, particularly in raising achievement and standards at Key Stage 3 to at least match that seen in Key Stage 4. Governors hold the acting headteacher to account well. They take their

responsibilities seriously and provide good support and challenge. They have helped the school make the necessary improvements since the last inspection.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Moorside High School, Manchester, M27 0BH

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school recently. We were very impressed by your good behaviour and attitude and most grateful to the prefects who welcomed us on the first day and who were there, with others, late into the evening showing prospective parents around the school.

We judge your school to be good. It has come a long way recently and you should be very pleased with the changes that the acting headteacher and his staff have made. You have helped improve the school too. Your attendance is better than at the last inspection. You respond very well when the teaching is challenging and exciting. You must continue to do this and tell your teachers if you find the work too easy.

To make your school even better we have asked the acting headteacher and governors to do two things.

- To raise standards and improve achievement in Key Stage 3. Much has already been done for Years 10 and 11. The recent results, although provisional, have been impressive. They have reflected the hard work of everyone involved in this part of the school. We have asked that this same level of focus and activity is applied to Years 7, 8 and 9 so that all students are helped to achieve their best in all years.
- Many of the teachers who lead subject areas are relatively new to their positions. We have asked that they are more consistent in how they monitor the work of their departments and that they are given further opportunities, when the time is right, to have more impact on helping set the future direction of your school.

Finally, the inspectors and I were very impressed by the way you spoke to us and the way you all get along with each other. You should be proud to belong to Moorside High and I wish you well for the future. Good luck!