

Moorbrook School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119866
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	319244
Inspection date	29 February 2008
Reporting inspector	David Smith

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	37
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs E D Hodgson
Headteacher	Mr Graham Torbett
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2007
School address	Ainslie Road Preston Lancashire PR2 3DB
Telephone number	01772 774752
Fax number	01772 713256

Age group	11-16
Inspection date	29 February 2008
Inspection number	319244

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

When Moorbrook School was inspected in February 2007 it was given a notice to improve because some aspects of its work required significant improvement. This inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

- All of the pupils at Moorbrook School have statements of special educational need as they are experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are a very small number of girls in the school. Four pupils are looked after by the local authority and most pupils are from White British backgrounds. More than half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. Many of the pupils travel a considerable distance from home to school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

This is a satisfactory school. It has made satisfactory progress in the last 12 months guided by satisfactory leadership and management. This is due to the combination of a determined headteacher and good local authority support and guidance. The senior leadership team has been strengthened and senior leaders have an adequate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This, combined with the good contribution of the governing body, provides a satisfactory capacity to improve with well founded ambition to be better. The school now provides satisfactory value for money.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The nature of pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities means that they do not meet the standards expected of pupils in mainstream schools. However, helped by improvements in behaviour and attendance, the Year 11 pupils are achieving some higher grades in their GCSEs. Pupils make good progress in mathematics across the school. They make satisfactory progress in English and science although, particularly in Years 10 and 11, there are aspects of good progress. Pupils enjoy practical activities and this interest helps them to make good progress in physical education.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Staff training and the introduction of a range of strategies have helped to improve pupils' behaviour which is now satisfactory. The school has worked hard to improve pupils' attendance which is now satisfactory. Pupils have a fair understanding of healthy lifestyles and are showing an improved capacity to cooperate with each other. The opportunities provided for pupils to attend mainstream schools for some of their lessons has a positive impact on their achievement and personal development. Pupils represent the school well, for example, when playing in the football team and during their residential trips.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Typically, most of the pupils engage in their learning for most of the time. They are made aware of expectations for their learning and behaviour and their response is satisfactory. However, when teaching is enthusiastic and challenging with good knowledge of the subject, pupils make good progress and achieve well. Occasionally, there are limitations in the use of assessment data to plan pupils' work and this slows progress in their learning. The curriculum is now satisfactory, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. The range of courses to challenge and interest the Year 10 and Year 11 pupils has been extended. College links and work placements help to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education. However, there are times during the day when lesson time is lost and this contributes to pupils' satisfactory rather than good approach to their work. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Staff work hard to promote a safe and welcoming environment and promote positive relationships with the pupils. Despite this, pupils do, at times, push the limits and staff do not consistently manage to prevent exclusions. The school recognises that it must improve the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent exclusions as a matter of urgency.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of preventative strategies to reduce the use of fixed-term exclusions.
- Make more consistent use of assessment systems to further develop individualised approaches to planning lessons.

- Ensure that all of the available lesson time is used to promote pupils' progress in their learning.

A small proportion of schools, whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. It is inappropriate to judge pupils' attainment against national standards due to their learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. Due to high expectations and enthusiastic teaching they achieve well in mathematics. Their achievement in English, science and information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory. The Year 7 pupils are not yet settled into the school but with skilled support they make satisfactory progress, for example, in their lesson with visiting musicians. The achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. However, the level of challenge is high in most of the subjects and due to improved attitudes and better attendance they are beginning to make good progress. This is the case in mathematics and, in particular, physical education where all of the Year 11 pupils last year achieved a grade C in their GCSE. Achievement is satisfactory in English and art and design but improvements in the provision of ICT have yet to impact on results. Pupils who are eligible for free school meals or those in public care, make similar progress to their peers in the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy their learning and, as a result, the presentation of their work and engagement in learning are adequate. The school has worked hard to improve procedures to promote attendance and, as a result, this is now satisfactory. The parent of a Year 11 pupil stated that her child, 'Enjoys going to school and gets on well with his peers.' Pupils say that they do not feel intimidated and that, despite some name calling, physical bullying is not a major concern. A wide range of systems are now in place to manage pupils' behaviour which is now satisfactory yet, despite this, the use of fixed-term exclusions is still too high. However, there is a reduction in the number of recorded serious incidents. A safe environment is promoted but pupils do, at times, place themselves at risk. Pupils behave well whilst they are in the community which shows that they are able to manage their own behaviour. They talk enthusiastically about their residential visits and these provide good opportunities for their social development. Pupils have a fair understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles and they are keen to be involved in physical activities. Pupils enjoy representing the school in football matches and are proud that their achievement is celebrated in the whole-school assemblies. Relationships are strong and this gives pupils the confidence to talk with staff if they have any concerns. The school council makes a particularly positive contribution to school life. Pupils' preparation for the next stage of their education is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Typically, pupils are made aware of expectations, teachers' planning is adequate and most of the pupils engage in their learning. Where teaching is good it is informed by good subject knowledge, there is enthusiastic teamwork and behaviour management is consistent. There is a good balance of support and challenge and pupils are aware of how to improve their learning. For example, in a science lesson in Year 10 pupils were motivated towards achieving well in their GCSE course and made good progress. Also, in food technology older pupils took pride in the preparation of their food and manage increasing independence in their work. However, due to inconsistencies in the use of assessment some of the planning of pupils' activities does not accurately meet their learning needs. Consequently, the pace of their learning drops and they make too little progress. Also, expectations for pupils' homework are too low and this contributes to pupils' satisfactory, rather than good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and the introduction of music has been a positive initiative since the previous inspection. There is adequate provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT in other subjects. It is good to see, for example, in science that the specialist words used in the subject are taught effectively to the pupils. The school has further developed good facilities for the teaching of practical subjects, such as design technology, and this helps to motivate the pupils. The opportunities provided for pupils to learn alongside their mainstream peers is a strength of the school. Pupils' success in their GCSE physical education is an example of the good progress made by pupils when they attend a mainstream school. College link courses have been re-established and pupils respond well to work placements. There is an increased range of opportunities provided across the school to ensure activities are more closely matched to pupils' learning needs. However, some teaching time is lost, for example, at the end of assembly and this contributes to pupils' satisfactory rather than good progress. Pupils are keen to be involved in the extending range of enrichment activities which helps to motivate most of them and leads to improved behaviour. It is good that the pupils' enterprise activities help to make the school environment more attractive.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in place and their health and safety is carefully managed. The staff team is very caring and ensures pupils have the opportunity to discuss any concerns they have. It is good that staff welcome the pupils in the morning especially as many of them have had long journeys to school. There is a strong focus on promoting pupils' personal development and, for example, assemblies have a clear moral theme with a drive to ensure pupils are taking more responsibility for their own behaviour. Lunch is a positive social occasion with good opportunities for staff and pupils to talk together. Staff have received appropriate training to help manage pupils' behaviour. Also, individual behaviour plans help to promote progress and an increasing number of pupils meet their behaviour targets. Despite this, there is still too little skilled prevention of unacceptable

behaviour leading to an excessive use of exclusions. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Although staff do not always use assessment well when planning lessons, they do make pupils aware of their learning and personal targets and ensure time is made available to monitor their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has led the school through challenging times and has been central to the satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. The senior leadership team has ambition for the school, has a good range of skills and is determined to lead further progress. This, combined with an effective governing body that provides good support and challenge, gives the school a satisfactory capacity to improve. There is a positive team ethos but, as yet, some of the subject coordinators are not sufficiently involved in the self-review process and the planning for improvement. Consequently, there are limitations in the contribution of middle leaders to continual improvement and this slows the rate of progress. Assessment data are used well to set challenging targets for the school and pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11, are on course to meet them. The school is now in a position to use data more effectively to measure the impact of school improvements on pupils' achievement and personal development. Parents are appreciative of the work of the school but a minority express some concerns regarding pupils' behaviour, despite the improving picture in the school. The school has satisfactory relationships with other agencies, such as Connexions, which helps to promote pupils' achievement and personal development.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 March 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Moorbrook School, Lancashire, PR2 3DB

I enjoyed my visit to your school. Thank you for making me feel at home and taking the time to tell me about your school. In particular, thanks to the school council who expressed your views particularly well. I could tell that you are proud of your football team and I hope you get your new mini-bus.

This is what I thought about your school.

Moorbrook is a satisfactory school and is better than it was a year ago. Your attendance is now satisfactory although there is still room for improvement. The headteacher, governing body and staff are determined that Moorbrook will become a good school. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and you make satisfactory progress. Many of the older pupils make good progress in GCSE courses. The range of your courses has increased and this has helped to keep you interested in your activities. Staff are providing you with a satisfactory standard of care but you must ensure that you do not place yourself in danger.

There are things that still need improving. You must help staff to make sure that none of your lesson time is wasted. I have also asked teachers to make sure that your work is neither too easy nor too hard.

The staff are working hard to ensure that your behaviour improves and progress has been made, although it is important that you make a big effort to help them reduce your exclusions. I know that many of you are not keen to have more homework but it would help you to improve your progress.

You can help by trying hard to behave well and work hard to make the best of your good abilities.

All the very best for the future

David Smith

Lead inspector