

# Moatbridge School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100204
<b>Local Authority</b>	Greenwich
<b>Inspection number</b>	323245
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Anne Duffy HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	44
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Valerie Hines
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Michael Byron
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 May 2006
<b>School address</b>	Eltham Palace Road Eltham London SE9 5LX
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8850 8081
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8850 0987

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Moatbridge caters for boys between the ages of 11 and 16 who have statements of special educational needs relating to emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. Over half have additional learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Many have had previous negative experiences of school, including sustained periods of non-attendance. The school serves students from generally below-average socio-economic households. A small minority are looked-after children. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is above the national average and there is higher than average mobility. The largest group is White British and the proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is higher than average. There are few students for whom English is not a first language.

The school holds the Healthy Schools Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Moatbridge is a satisfactory school which provides a good level of care for its students. Although many students find learning a challenge, they respond positively to the inclusive ethos, which is demonstrated at all levels by a committed and enthusiastic staff. As one parent wrote, 'My son has matured since being at Moatbridge.'

Almost all students enter the school with a level of attainment that is significantly lower than their chronological age, and some have learning difficulties and/or disabilities in addition to their social, emotional and behavioural needs. As a result, they reach standards that are well below those found nationally. Overall, students' achievement is satisfactory. Coming from a background of negative educational experiences, some make good progress in overcoming their reluctance to learn and gain GCSE and Entry Level examinations. Staff know students very well but sometimes too much reliance is placed upon the individual views of teachers rather than on agreed targets to ensure improvement. As a result, progress is variable across subjects. Academic guidance, where students know and evaluate their own targets, is not always as strong as pastoral guidance.

The school's ethos has a very positive impact upon students' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students are motivated to develop the skills they need to enter the world of work and are assisted in this by the very strong pastoral support. Students understand how to lead healthy lifestyles; they make a good contribution to the community and increasingly adopt behaviour which improves their own and others' safety. They are very appreciative of how much the school has helped them and recognise that they owe a great deal to their headteacher's drive and his belief that they all deserve a second chance.

The satisfactory curriculum is enhanced for older students by participation in college and work placements and the school has good plans to create more vocational and skills-based opportunities. Opportunities to gain accreditation other than at Entry Level or GCSE are in place but are limited. At the time of the inspection, the students were positively engaged in contributing to the design of the school's development of workshops. Curriculum leaders are aware that more could be done to enhance enjoyment of learning by working together more closely to develop other projects which link subjects in an exciting way. Teaching is satisfactory overall; teachers are enthusiastic and well supported by skilled teaching assistants but planning and marking are inconsistent.

Leaders and managers are united in their determination to provide equality of opportunity for their students. At times, however, close working relationships result in monitoring that is too informal and not rigorous enough to drive forward school improvement. Students' academic progress is tracked at a subject level but is not monitored sufficiently closely at a whole-school level. The headteacher and chair of governors have good plans to improve the school's curriculum and facilities further. They rightly acknowledge the need for similarly improved systems to ensure that all students make as much progress as they can, and that everyone agrees what this is.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Make full use of the school's systems for tracking progress to support detailed monitoring and set challenging targets for improvement.

- Ensure that lesson planning is of a consistently high quality and that marking is regularly used to help students understand how they could improve their work.
- Make full use of the opportunities offered by a more flexible approach to the curriculum to create links between subjects and to extend opportunities for accreditation.

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

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Students enter the school at various stages in their school career and attainment on entry is exceptionally low, due in part to missed or unsuccessful schooling in the past. Students work from the lower National Curriculum levels to GCSE and progress varies between individuals. There is no notable difference in the progress made by different groups of learners, but there are differences in progress between subjects. Overall, students make satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9. By the end of Year 9, standards remain significantly lower than average but there are some notable individual successes, especially for those who sit mathematics GCSE in Year 9. In Years 10 and 11, achievement is satisfactory and a few students gain better than predicted grades in GCSE examinations, particularly in mathematics and art. For example, in 2008 one boy gained a grade B in art GCSE, while another has improved by two grades in GCSE mathematics modules this year. College placements help older students gain a broader range of skills and in some cases contribute significantly to the good progress being made.

A relatively recent focus on developing literacy skills has ensured that at least satisfactory progress is now made in an area that students have previously found very difficult.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Relationships are very good between students and staff and students enjoy school. This is evidenced in the improved rate of attendance which, while it is still below that expected for every student, has increased and is improving for the large majority of students. Less time is spent by students outside classes and their attitude to learning is generally positive. When they do need to leave a class, they know that this is for a limited period of time and they usually return with renewed attention.

Students' cultural, moral and spiritual development is supported by opportunities to develop skills in art and music and to explore different ways of life through cultural studies. Their social skills are enhanced by opportunities to reflect upon the effect that their behaviour may have upon others. Students make good use of the sporting opportunities available both within and outside school and many represent the school in football. Although they have mixed views about the 'Jamie's dinners' introduced within the local authority, they understand what it means to eat healthily and the Healthy School Award has had a positive impact. Students demonstrate that they understand the risks associated with alcohol, smoking and drug misuse, and how to keep themselves safe. Many pay tribute to how the school has helped them to develop personally; for example, one student said, 'If I wasn't at this school I'd be at home, or on the streets, or in trouble with the police. That's what it was like before I came here.' Through many work-related opportunities, and the school's recent investment in technology, students develop social and information and communication technology (ICT) skills that will support them when

they leave school. The school council members appreciate the way in which their suggestions are listened to and the contribution they have been able to make to different areas of the school. Students respond well to behaviour expectations so that, given the opportunity, they are good ambassadors for the school within the local and wider community.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teachers are enthusiastic about their subjects and this enthusiasm is conveyed to the students. Some teachers use group work and a variety of teaching strategies effectively. In these lessons, there is a high degree of active participation, disruption is reduced or non-existent, and students work well independently. In the best lessons, students are willing to make predictions, to re-evaluate them if they are proved wrong and to accept the views of others. Students increasingly remain in class and are well supported by teaching assistants, who play a significant role in both subject delivery and individual support. Students understand the importance of their individual behavioural targets, such as listening to others, and are motivated to gain the reward points that accompany their successful achievement. However, good individual teaching styles are not consistently supported by learning objectives that students understand, and variable use is made of self-assessment to evaluate learning. The quality of planning varies across subjects and some marking provides limited guidance to students on how to improve their work.

ICT is used increasingly effectively to enhance learning. This has been a priority for development and there is early evidence that it is having a positive effect upon students' involvement in and attitude to their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Since the last inspection, the curriculum has been broadened to include a modern foreign language and music. Good links are made with local providers for college courses or work experience. Older students in particular appreciate that they have the opportunity to gain recognisable qualifications that will help them to access a suitable college course or get a job. However, the range of external accreditation is still relatively limited. The school's leaders are aware of the need to extend opportunities for alternative accreditation and have taken some steps to address this across a growing range of subjects. Although there are signs that students are responding well to this, it is too early to judge the impact of these initiatives.

Provision for ICT has improved well and, coupled with the increasingly strong English provision, is beginning to have a particular impact upon students' literacy levels so that they now match numeracy levels more closely. Opportunities to make learning more exciting by offering themed, cross-curricular events are currently underdeveloped. Provision for personal and social education is good and includes good emphasis on safety, healthy living and citizenship. Despite limited accommodation, there are adequate opportunities for sporting activity but enrichment opportunities beyond the school day are restricted by students' need to travel some distance to get home.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Students' care and welfare are given a high priority. All arrangements for safeguarding are securely in place. The breakfast club provides a good start to the day and students who have difficulties getting to school welcome this. Some very good support is provided for those who may be experiencing personal difficulties, and counselling is used to good effect. Good links with outside agencies, including health, social care and the police, mean that there is a wide range of support available for students and their families. Pastoral care is good for vulnerable students and those at risk of exclusion. There are effective systems in place to provide support for students whose engagement with school shows signs of slipping. As a result, the previously high levels of non-attendance and exclusion have been considerably reduced.

The strong support offered by the school helps the students to overcome sometimes huge personal difficulties and previously very negative attitudes to school. The very strong focus on personal development is not always matched by an equivalent emphasis on how well students are doing in their academic work. However, students are guided well to achieve realistic long-term goals and, as a consequence, look to the future with renewed confidence. They appreciate the helpful guidance which they receive about the options available to them. For example, one boy spoke with pride about his plans to achieve three GCSE grade Cs in order to go to college and become an electrician; another is enthusiastic about a planned apprenticeship with a car company. This represents a huge change from earlier low, or non-existent, aspirations.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

There is a strong sense of teamwork among staff and within the senior leadership team. Many of the right areas are being identified for improvement and there is a growing understanding of how areas of weakness can be addressed, so that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Attendance issues are tackled with a good range of strategies. Teaching is monitored regularly. Although opportunities for teachers to learn from each other in a systematic way have not been fully utilised, staff speak highly of the support they have received to extend their own learning. Resources are generally deployed appropriately and the school has worked hard to fund the planned workshops in order to extend work-related opportunities.

There is an adequate system in place for tracking students' progress in individual subject areas but this is not clearly based upon a whole-school understanding of what constitutes good, satisfactory or outstanding progress. Information is not used extensively or consistently enough to make whole-school targets increasingly challenging.

Although very few parents responded to the inspection questionnaire, the school's own monitoring shows that parents are very supportive and appreciative of the education their sons receive. The school's recent focus on raising its profile within the community has been effective, with suitable means of evaluating its impact. Involvement in community initiatives, such as 'Let's Get Cooking', ensures that the school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. The governing body is very supportive of the school. Led thoughtfully by its recently appointed chair, it has not yet demonstrated a level of challenge that links directly to raising standards. However, it has worked well with the leadership team and with other partners to promote

equality of opportunity and ensure that the school's intention 'to get the boys into society as active and fruitful members' is achieved.



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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?	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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	3

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

02 March 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Moatbridge School, London, SE9 5LX

Thank you very much for welcoming me to your school. I really enjoyed my visit, and it was good to meet so many of you. I am writing this letter to tell you what I found.

I think your school is satisfactory, with a number of things that are good. Lots of you told me that you enjoy school for the first time and I could see that you have very good relationships with the staff. I could also see that many of you have improved your behaviour and this has helped you to learn more. Some of you could do better and this would help you to gain more qualifications. You are rightly proud of how much you have developed at school and it was good to hear a number of you talk about your plans for the future.

Your headteacher and the staff support you well and work hard to make the school a safe place for you to come to. There are some things that I think they could do to do to make it an even better place in which to learn. These are the things I have asked them to do.

- Make sure that they know in detail how well you are doing and what you could be aiming for, and use this information to help you to make as much progress as you can.
- Ensure that there is a consistent approach to lesson planning and use marking to help you understand how you could improve your work.
- Create links between subjects in more exciting ways and extend opportunities for you to gain accreditation in all areas of your learning.

I hope that you will all work hard to do as well as you can. I know that you are looking forward to the new workshops being built and I wish you every success for the future.

Yours faithfully

Anne Duffy

Her Majesty's Inspector