

Moorbridge

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108565
Local Authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	337102
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2009
Reporting inspector	John Farrow

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	15
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Anne Wilson
Headteacher	Mrs Felicity Andreasen
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Earsdon Road Shiremoor Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE27 0HJ
Telephone number	0191 200 8813
Fax number	0191 200 8810
Email address	felicity.andreasen@northtyneside.gov.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited 12 lessons, and held meetings with members of the management committee, staff, pupils, and spoke to parents by telephone. He observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work, policies and documentation, external reports and 11 parental questionnaires.

The inspection reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well individual pupils achieve
- the impact of the school's care guidance and support on pupils' behaviour, learning and attendance
- how well assessment is used to extend the learning for all pupils.

Information about the school

This small short-stay school provides education and support for up to 24 students and young people aged 11 to 16 years. Students who attend are either at risk of exclusion from a mainstream school or are exceptionally vulnerable and unable to cope in mainstream. All students have complex social, emotional and or behavioural difficulties and most have associated additional needs and or mental health difficulties. There are currently 15 students on roll, the majority of whom are undergoing assessment of their special educational needs and/or disabilities and a few have a statement of special educational needs. A few students are looked after by the local authority. The school has secured national anti-bullying accreditation, Sports Mark and the Healthy Schools Award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Moorbridge provides a good education for its students because effective practice pervades almost all aspects of its work. The school has improved since its last inspection; now providing students with outstanding care guidance and support. This, together with consistently good teaching, allows most students to grow in confidence, improve their behaviour and make good progress. The school works tenaciously with parents, carers and other partners to dismantle previously entrenched barriers to students' development and progress and seeks to ensure that all partners are fully involved in decisions that affect every child. Most parents express strong support for the work of the school and emphasise its positive impact on their child's well-being. One parent eloquently summed up the views of many when she wrote, 'our son's life and that of the rest of our family has been transformed...we will always be in their debt'. Students achieve well. Staff at all levels hold high and ambitious expectations on their behalf and place learning at the centre of their work. At the same time, each pupil is provided with a highly personalised balance of care, challenge and support, designed to ease them back into successful learning. Consequently, students who enter school in turmoil, usually with entrenched patterns of failure, extreme anxiety or depression quickly accept and respond to the positive working ethos that permeates the school. Good assessment procedures allow teachers to plan to meet the differing needs of individual students well, while good teaching successfully challenges and extends students' knowledge, understanding, language and thinking skills. Tracking information and portfolios of work confirm that despite students' past difficulties and fragmented education, most make good and occasionally outstanding progress in relation to their age and starting points. Older students, due to complete their education at this school, show a strongly improving trend of attainment that is recognised and celebrated through an appropriate and expanding range of external qualifications.

Most students enter school with a history of persistent absence or non-attendance. Following admission, attendance rapidly improves and the incidence of persistent absenteeism usually declines. A small minority of students improve their attendance at a slower rate. Despite the school's determined efforts to improve the attendance of all students, overall attendance remains low in comparison to mainstream schools, partly due to the cyclical and transient nature of students' placements alongside the fragile mental health of others.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher make particularly effective use of monitoring activities and have an accurate and well evidenced view of the school's strengths and the few areas in need of improvement. This, together with its successful drive to improve the attainment of students and their attendance indicate a good capacity to

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improve further. However, while the school is now a clearly cohesive community there is only limited evidence of its success in promoting community cohesion beyond the school. This is because it has yet to develop a sufficiently systematic approach to planning and evaluating the impact of its work in this area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attendance of the small minority of students who are persistently absent by:
 - working in partnership with other agencies, parents, carers and the students themselves to improve and secure the attendance of the few students who are persistently absent.
- Promote community cohesion by:
 - developing students' understanding of the similarities between different cultures represented within their locality and in the wider United Kingdom
 - increasing students' confidence, experience and skills in living and working alongside people from different ethnic, religious and social backgrounds.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Most students, including those with special and or additional educational needs, take full advantage of the opportunity for a fresh start to their education provided by the school. While standards attained at the end of Year 11 are generally below average, students apply themselves conscientiously in lessons and work at a brisk pace, taking care and pride in their work. They usually respond thoughtfully and with enthusiasm to the lively and engaging teaching that is consistently well matched to their abilities and interests. Consequently, the vast majority make good and sometimes outstanding progress in lessons and show a rapidly improving trend of attainment, often from well below average starting points. Older students completing their education at the school are successfully entered for wide range of external qualifications and awards for which completion and pass rates are high.

The vast majority of students say they feel safe and enjoy coming to a school where they know they are being helped to make good progress and to face their futures with greater confidence. Students believe that staff care about them and will always, 'do their best for us even when we are kicking off'. High quality relationships underpin students vastly improved attitudes to learning, which in turn actively contributes to their own and others good progress in lessons. When things go wrong, as they occasionally do, students usually respond quickly and well to any additional guidance or direction required. Students know what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and try to turn this knowledge into practical action. For example, they observe an impressive respect for, and adherence to, the school's strict non-smoking policy. They also make extensive use of the health promotion strategies offered by the school nurse. Students clearly value being active members of this vibrant community and willingly become involved in fund

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raising activities designed to help others either at home or abroad. Students' spiritual moral social and cultural development is good and they learn to respect each others' needs or feelings and make increasingly reasoned judgements on moral dilemmas facing young people their age.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers use their good subject knowledge effectively to motivate students and plan lessons well matched to their ability and interests. They are innovative and creative in the way they use information and communication technology (ICT) alongside more traditional resources and activities that appeal to their students' curiosity and promote active participation and enjoyment. A good example of this was seen in a science lesson where students were tasked to design and undertake a 'cooling' investigation, which they did well, produced good accurate results, and had fun. Teachers and teaching assistants work together well using instructional language and questions very effectively to extend their students' emergent knowledge and understanding. While this can often feel like a direct challenge to the students, it also supports the rapid growth of their

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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confidence and self-esteem as they begin to recognise their own success and potential as learners. For example, in an ICT lesson one student said 'I was often confused about databases at first but now I know what I'm doing and am above my target grade'.

The curriculum is well matched to the needs of all students, including those with special educational and or additional learning needs. It is effectively organised and responsive to the views and aspirations of staff and students, while maintaining a strong focus on cross-curricular opportunities that support the rapid development of literacy, numeracy and computer skills. It provides an engaging range of opportunities that prepares students well for their transfer to a new school or their transition to the next stage of training or education.

Careful and sensitive assessments of each pupil's academic, personal, social and emotional needs inform all aspects of the life and work of the school and its partnerships with outside agencies such as the child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS). As a result, students receive outstanding care, guidance and support and they say there is always someone they can turn to, should they need help. Consequently students have good access to high quality support in relation to, for example, sexual and mental health, drug and substance abuse. The school also works very well with the local education welfare service and CAMHS to agree and implement the most appropriate type of support or interventions, tailored to each child's and families circumstances. Unrelenting efforts are also made to ensure that the school provides a safe environment for students and staff.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school leadership team are effectively realising their shared ambition to place learning at the heart of this thriving school's work. They have successfully communicated these high expectations to students, their families and key agencies. They are raising the standards attained by students from their individual starting points and are preparing them well for the next stage of their education or training. They are systematically revitalising the day-to-day operation of the school and monitoring its impact on learning, with the aim of securing further improvement. The management committee contributes to this by maintaining a sound oversight of their statutory duties, holding the school to account for tackling known weaknesses and ensuring that students and staff are safe. They work closely with the headteacher to make certain all statutory

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safeguarding requirements are met and constantly updated, to maintain the school's well established high quality practice. While they have helped to develop the school as a cohesive community, leaders' recognise more needs to be done to develop and evaluate students' understanding of living and working alongside ethnically and religiously diverse groups in the wider community. Despite this, the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well. It pursues effective strategies that support students at risk of discrimination, and most students are able to discuss and even challenge stereotypical views held, for example, in relation to ethnicity or sexuality. The school is highly committed to and successful working in partnership with parents and carers and makes determined efforts to establish honest and purposeful relationships with them, even where they hold conflicting expectations of what education can or should offer. Consequently, most parents are very appreciative of the school's efforts to keep them fully involved in all decisions that affect their children. Good partnerships with a range of outside agencies also contribute greatly to students' well-being and future education or training pathways. The school secures good outcomes for students with extreme and complex needs and, therefore, provides good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

A high proportion of parents/carers returned questionnaires. Those who did were almost all positive about the quality of education and care provided. Most valued the quality of the school's relationship with them and their children, the quality of teaching and the

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effectiveness of the school's leadership and management. One typical comment said, 'My child has been to various schools. This is the first to understand my child's needs or help him to make progress'. A small minority of returns opposed this overall positive pattern, but the inspector judged that relationships with parents/carers were overwhelmingly constructive, and upheld the positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of students registered at Moorbridge to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 11 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 15 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	3	27	5	45	3	27	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	6	55	4	36	1	9	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	7	64	4	36	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	3	27	4	36	3	27	1	9
The teaching is good at this school	7	64	4	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	6	55	5	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	5	45	6	55	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	6	55	4	36	1	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	6	55	3	27	1	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	55	3	27	0	0	1	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	55	4	36	1	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	7	64	3	27	1	9	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	7	64	3	27	1	9	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 November 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Moorbridge, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE27 0HJ

Thank you for the welcome and help you gave me when I came to inspect your school. I would particularly like to thank those of you who spent time talking to me during the inspection.

I believe that Moorbridge provides you with a good education and outstanding care, guidance and support. I visited many lessons and found that you make good progress because of good teaching and because of your own hard work. You are being well prepared for either your next school or further education or training. I thought your behaviour in lessons and attitudes to work were particularly good and that you were conscientious and capable. When some of you do have the occasional outburst, your behaviour is managed calmly and learning usually carries on without too much disruption.

Many of you arrive with a history of poor attendance from your previous school and this usually improves very quickly. Nevertheless, a few of you are still absent too often and this is limiting what you can achieve at this school. I am asking the headteacher to work with you, your families the education welfare service and others to improve the attendance of those of you who are absent too often. I am also asking the school to develop further your understanding of the similarities and differences between the various cultures represented in North Tyneside and in the wider United Kingdom. This will help to increase your confidence and skills in living and working alongside people from different backgrounds.

You can help yourselves by continuing to work hard and by making sure you attend as regularly as possible.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Farrow

Additional inspector

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