

Moulton School and Science College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122055
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	340082
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Elaine Taylor HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1389
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	285
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Otley
Headteacher	Trevor Jones
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2007
School address	Pound Lane Moulton Northampton
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 35 lessons, scrutinised the pupils' work and held meetings with staff, pupils and the Chair of Governors. They observed the school's work, and looked at policies, records and other relevant documents. These included 273 parental questionnaires and a further 212 questionnaires from staff and pupils.

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

- the current progress of the pupils, especially those in Key Stage 4
- the rigour and effectiveness of the processes the school uses to evaluate its work
- the impact of the initiatives the school has put in place to improve the overall effectiveness of the sixth form.

Information about the school

Moulton School and Science College is a larger than average school on the northern boundary of Northampton, serving the village of Moulton and other surrounding villages, drawing some pupils from the town itself. Almost all the pupils are from White British backgrounds and the proportion eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The school has been a specialist science college since 2002. It was awarded the Healthy Schools Award in 2008. Since the last inspection there have been a number of new appointments to the leadership of the school including a new headteacher in September 2007.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

'This is clearly a school that is not prepared to stand still'. These words from one of the parental questionnaires accurately describe Moulton. Under the strong leadership of the headteacher many new initiatives have been carefully and thoughtfully introduced to tackle issues from the previous inspection and improve the progress that pupils make. Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 have been above average and rising for some time but, given the above average starting points of the pupils, this means their progress has remained satisfactory. There are very clear signs that progress is accelerating, especially in Key Stage 3. Changes to the support provided for the care and guidance of the pupils have ensured that all groups make similar progress and some of the most vulnerable pupils are supported exceptionally well, achieving above expectations. All aspects of personal development are now good and the curriculum has been developed so it too has improved from the satisfactory grade it was awarded at the last inspection.

The positive attitudes of the pupils combined with satisfactory teaching are leading to above average success in GCSE examinations. Teachers work hard to ensure they share the requirements for the different grades and levels, but there is still variability in the overall quality of teaching across the school. Too little use is made of information on the progress that individual pupils are making to plan activities in lessons that meet all their needs, or allow for adjustments as the lesson proceeds. Teaching in the specialist subjects is good and aspects of the good practice have been shared across other subject areas. New systems for monitoring the quality of teaching have yet to become fully embedded and, as a result, the proportion of lessons that are good or better is not yet high enough to ensure pupils consistently make good progress.

The school regularly collects data on how well pupils are progressing and on their behaviour and effort. This is shared with parents through reports and meetings. Recently introduced progress booklets enable pupils to track their own progress, but the quality of the feedback they receive from their teachers through the marking of their work is variable in quality. A new marking policy has been introduced, but has yet to demonstrate consistent impact.

Leaders in the school have a very clear view of the strengths and weaknesses because they are much more effective in gathering the information they need to evaluate the school's work. Planning for improvement is thorough and detailed. The actions are prioritised well so that development initiatives take place in a logical sequence and thus have more sustainable impact. The school is well placed to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Ensure that pupils receive effective feedback on their work so that they fully understand what they need to do to improve.
- Increase the proportion of lessons that are good or better by ensuring that teachers:
 - effectively plan to meet the needs of all learners
 - implement a range of assessment strategies within teaching to inform and drive good learning and progress.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Standards are high at the end of Key Stage 3 and above average in national tests at the end of Key Stage 4. From their above average starting points, this represents satisfactory progress. The school sets challenging targets and increasingly meets them, including those in the specialist subjects. There are no groups of pupils who underachieve and the school can point to individual success stories with some vulnerable pupils. In lessons observed during the inspection, pupils were making at least satisfactory progress. In a small minority of lessons pupils were making good progress where the teaching was satisfactory because of their positive and diligent attitudes and ability to apply themselves well to the required tasks.

Behaviour is good around the school and in lessons. A new behaviour policy and systems to support those who present challenging behaviour have had a positive impact. Exclusions have fallen substantially and those who have been subject to sanctions have been successfully reintegrated. The atmosphere around the school is calm and purposeful and pupils need little prompting to arrive punctually at their lessons. Their attendance is above average and they feel safe at school. The support facility that has been introduced is very well used and ensures pupils know where to go if they need help. Pupils have a good understanding of what it means to lead a healthy life and the vast majority make sensible choices in what they eat. Many take part in sporting activities. Through charity work, peer mentoring and other initiatives they make a good contribution to the school and to the local community. Pupils are good at working collaboratively in lessons and organising events. Their basic skills are well developed. On leaving very few are not in education, training or employment showing how well they are prepared for their future working lives. Pupils take part in musical and artistic events. They are polite and welcoming. In lessons observed they showed a good ability to reflect on key issues and to appreciate the views of others. The school's links with other countries have enabled them to develop a good understanding of cultural diversity.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school judges teaching to be satisfactory overall and the inspection confirms this judgement. There is a growing proportion of good or better teaching, but the quality remains variable across the school. Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects and of the requirements for examinations and assessments. Lessons are generally well managed. In good lessons teachers use a wide range of teaching strategies and pupils respond enthusiastically to the tasks, remaining involved and motivated throughout the lesson. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to present information and increase enjoyment. Teaching assistants are well deployed and play a significant part in supporting those with special educational needs or disabilities.

Teachers generally plan starter activities to revise previous learning, but do not always use the information this gives them to adjust the rest of the activities. Often the intended outcomes are the same for all pupils regardless of their prior learning or ability. Teachers do not routinely use a range of questioning skills or other strategies to assess how well pupils are progressing during the lesson or to inform the next steps.

Opportunities are missed to allow more able pupils to work independently and develop a deeper understanding. Whilst some teachers provide detailed and helpful advice either through their marking or by discussing their work with them, pupils would appreciate more of this support. The quality of the guidance they receive in this respect is very variable.

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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The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. There are effective strategies to support the transition from primary school and, in Key Stage 3, most can study a second modern language. Almost all continue with at least one language to GCSE. Increased options available in Key Stage 4 have improved the scope for pupils to follow a personalised pathway. A range of applied and vocational courses supplement the GCSE provision. Good alternative arrangements enable lower attaining pupils to pursue appropriate courses and achieve in line with other groups. Pupils are particularly appreciative of the study skills sessions to help them with revision and to become more independent learners. Astronomy is a popular course delivered after school and the specialist subjects enhance the curriculum well. There are many popular after school clubs. Trips, visits and special events enrich the curriculum. The curriculum for personal, social, citizenship and health education (PSCHE) is good and the delivery is improving but still variable.

Good systems ensure the pupils are well cared for and supported. The provision is well organised and record keeping is meticulous. Liaison with outside agencies is good. Good communication ensures support is effective. The PSCHE programme is used well to deliver satisfactory careers guidance. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is a strength of the school because it is well targeted, coordinated and consistently focused on the pupils' attainment.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Good leadership at all levels has effectively focussed the school's efforts on key priorities and created a positive climate where staff are united in seeking to raise achievement. Improvements are evident in key areas of the school's work. An effective system for gathering and analysing data on pupil progress has enabled leaders to set challenging targets for all learners and ensure that these are increasingly met. Outcomes have improved strongly in some areas. Monitoring and evaluation is increasingly rigorous and this has enabled the school to focus precisely on priorities for improving the provision. Some of these systems are relatively new and are only just starting to have a marked impact on the overall quality of teaching.

Governors are effective in ensuring staff and pupils are safe and safeguarding procedures are rigorous. The governing body is made up of members with a range of expertise and the necessary skills to support the school. They currently provide a satisfactory level of challenge.

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Improvements made to the systems for keeping parents informed about their children's progress are much better than at the time of the last inspection. Parents appreciate the opportunities to visit the school and the way the school is helping them to support their children in their learning. There is now a good range of systems in use to communicate with parents and the school has a strict policy regarding the speedy response to enquiries.

The school makes good use of a wide range of external partners in order to enhance the provision. Creative use is made of links with local and national organisations to make the most of the school's modest budget.

All groups of learners are equally well supported to achieve. The school is using data well to analyse the outcomes for different groups, even those where there are small numbers. A full audit of the contribution the school makes to community cohesion has been undertaken and work has begun on planning the next stages. All groups coexist happily within the school community and through the specialism the school supports cohesion across the local community.

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	3
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	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

A dip in performance in the sixth form in 2008 led the school to put in place a comprehensive strategy to tackle underachievement. Progress measures indicate that the decline has been successfully halted. As a result, achievement in 2009 was satisfactory. Improvements to the way students are supported and guided have improved several aspects of their personal development. Attitudes have improved and

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attendance is now satisfactory. Students have a good understanding of how to be safe and healthy. The contribution they make to the community is good. The work of older students to support younger pupils is a strength of the school. Teaching is satisfactory but variable. In some lessons students are not given sufficient opportunities to study independently. Teachers dominate the discussions and students feel less motivated. The curriculum offers a good range of courses at AS and A level, but there is a limited offer for those for whom these courses are not appropriate. The range of enrichment activities is limited. Leadership in the sixth form is satisfactory and the continuing implementation of the improvement strategy is secure.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents are very supportive of the school and they recognise the improvements that have been evident in the last two years. They also recognise that there is variability in the quality of teaching and a few are concerned that work is not regularly marked. Praise is given to the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Those who are concerned about the late timing of the parents' evening for new pupils will be pleased with the move to an earlier date. Action is said to be taken when there are concerns. A small minority are concerned about poor behaviour and some feel the new behaviour policy is not consistently applied. There are several comments from parents about the limited choice of food on offer and pupils make the same criticisms. The majority feel their children are happy at school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Moulton School and Science College 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 inspection team received 273 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1389 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	76	28	179	66	13	5	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	82	30	180	66	10	4	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	68	25	178	65	22	8	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	62	23	177	65	19	7	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	44	16	199	73	17	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	11	193	71	37	14	4	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	11	188	69	38	14	4	1
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)	47	17	174	64	27	10	3	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	18	187	68	26	10	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	55	20	152	56	51	19	4	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	11	175	64	29	11	8	3
The school is led and managed effectively	61	22	187	68	14	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	89	33	165	60	11	4	2	1

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.



6 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Moulton School and Science College, Moulton, NN3 7SD

On behalf of all the inspectors who visited your school this week I want to thank you for the way you helped us in this inspection. Your honest and mature comments were most useful in helping us to reach our conclusions about the school.

You told us how you enjoy school, particularly the clubs and sporting activities that are provided. We were impressed by your good behaviour especially when we saw you working cooperatively in lessons. This contributed significantly to the progress that everyone was making in those lessons. You told us you feel safe and appreciate the student services provision that has been put in place to support you. You should be proud of the way you contribute to the school and to the local community. It is good to see that the progress you are making is starting to improve, and we were impressed by the above average standards you reach in your tests and examinations. The study skills sessions I saw you enjoying are very useful to you in your revision.

You receive satisfactory teaching and the school's leaders are checking regularly to make sure the quality of your lessons is more consistent. We feel that sometimes the work you are given is not matched closely enough to each person's needs. You can study a good range of subjects including vocational options for those who prefer them. There are good links with other organisations to make sure the school is able to meet your needs in the best way it can.

There have been several improvements since we last visited the school and we think the leaders in the school, under the effective guidance of the headteacher, have good capacity to make things even better for you in the future.

We have asked the school to address some key issues in order to increase your achievement further. These include:

- making sure you all have work that is set at the correct level and ensures you continue to make good progress throughout the lesson
- increasing the proportion of your lessons that are good and making sure teachers give you helpful feedback on how to improve your work.

I send you my very best wishes for your success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Elaine Taylor

Her Majesty's Inspector

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