

Inspection of a good school: Moorbrook School

Ainslie Road, Fulwood, Preston, Lancashire PR2 3DB

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 October 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe and happy at this school. Pupils place trust in the staff, and they are comfortable to talk to them about any concerns that they may have. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils appreciate that staff help them to identify and overcome any barriers that may exist due to their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Many pupils have been disengaged from education prior to joining this school. The confidence that pupils have in their teachers is clearly evident. Added to this, teachers help pupils to engage well in their learning during lessons. Pupils also conduct themselves well, and they behave appropriately around the school. Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities, which develop their personal skills, including their resilience and teamwork.

Pupils at this school aspire to a diverse range of careers. They benefit from a wide choice of vocational learning opportunities. These options enable pupils to develop a range of interests that they may consider pursuing when they leave the school.

The school is ambitious for pupils to attain the qualifications that they need for their next steps. However, in some subjects, the curriculum is not as ambitious as it should be. This hinders how well pupils learn. Additionally, although leaders have created strategies to support pupils who find learning to read more difficult, these initiatives are at the early stages of being put into place.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has experienced considerable growth in pupil numbers since the last inspection. This has resulted in a period of turbulence, as leaders and governors

acclimatise to the increase in demand for pupil places. This has hindered the pace at which leaders and governors have been able to bring about improvements to the quality of education, including around curriculum development. As a result, some pupils are not achieving as highly as they should.

The school has developed a suitably broad overview of what it wants pupils to learn across different subjects. However, it has not identified the essential knowledge that pupils must learn and how this builds from pupils' individual starting points. This hinders how well teachers design activities to enable pupils to learn new topics and concepts.

The school has put into place appropriate new assessment procedures to enable staff to check pupils' starting points. However, it is unclear how staff use the information gathered from these initial assessments to address the gaps in pupils' knowledge. While teachers address pupils' misconceptions well during lessons, the assessments that teachers use to check what pupils know and remember about their learning over time are underdeveloped.

Staff have a strong knowledge of how to support each individual pupil's SEND. There are effective systems in place to make sure that any additional needs are identified quickly. Due to recent training, staff are increasingly adept in removing any social and emotional barriers to learning that pupils may have.

The school understands the importance of building a love of reading among its pupils. Staff read regularly to pupils and encourage them to develop an interest in a diverse range of texts. Older pupils develop skills to analyse texts well, for example by drawing out emotive language. However, the school has not embedded a phonics programme to support pupils in the early stages of learning to read. There is a lack of regular and systematic support to help those pupils at the earlier stages of learning to read. This prevents some of these pupils from reading fluently and confidently.

The school has a strong partnership with parents and carers. Parents benefit from regular contact with each pupil's key worker. This helps parents to be fully involved in deciding the most appropriate strategies to help pupils learn, grow and develop. This includes ensuring that behaviour strategies from school can also be applied at home.

Staff ensure that pupils' behaviour improves over time while they are in school. Adults ensure that pupils are able to concentrate well in lessons.

The school makes sure that pupils are well prepared for their next steps. Pupils access appropriate impartial careers information, education, advice and guidance. They learn about different careers and the pathways into them. This helps pupils to move successfully to appropriate post-16 education or training.

The school carefully weaves life skills into the experiences that pupils have each day. For example, pupils take part in community projects to build up their communication skills. They also learn about financial management in preparation for adulthood.

Leaders and governors place staff well-being at the heart of their work. For example, when decisions are made about the delivery of the curriculum, leaders and governors consider the impact of these changes on staff's workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the precise knowledge that pupils should learn is not clear. This hinders how well some teachers design activities to ensure that pupils learn new topics and concepts. The school should ensure that it finalises its curriculum thinking. This is so that teachers are clear about what they should be teaching, what activities to design and when new learning should take place.
- Some of the systems to check how well pupils are learning and retaining new knowledge are underdeveloped. This means that teachers do not have all the information that they require to identify gaps in pupils' learning. The school should ensure that there are clear assessment systems in place to support teachers to identify where pupils are insecure in their learning.
- The school is in the early stages of implementing a phonics programme. This means that some pupils do not acquire the phonics knowledge that they need to become fluent readers. The school should ensure that it introduces an effective phonics programme to enable all pupils to learn to read with fluency and accuracy.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2018.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	119866
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10290072
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	56
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dianne Hodgson
Headteacher	Claire Thompson
Website	www.moorbrook.lancsngfl.ac.uk
Dates of previous inspection	23 and 24 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school makes use of eight unregistered alternative providers.
- There has been a significant turnover in staff at the school since the last inspection.
- At the time of the inspection, there were no girls on roll at this school.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and

teachers. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority.

- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in a range of situations, including in corridors, at breaktimes, at lunchtimes and in lessons. Inspectors also spoke with pupils about their perceptions of behaviour and bullying.
- The inspectors spoke with pupils about their programme of wider personal development.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.
- There were no responses to Ofsted Parent View. However, inspectors spoke to some parents by telephone.

Inspection team

Elaine Mawson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jane Holmes

Ofsted Inspector

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