

Moorside High School

Cellarhead Road, Werrington, Stoke-on-Trent, ST9 0HP

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Not enough students make good progress by the end of Year 11, from their starting points in a range of subjects.
- Students' standards and their rates of progress over time are variable between subjects because the quality of teaching is not consistently good.
- Not all students achieve their potential, particularly the most able, because the work they are given is not consistently challenging to ensure that they achieve well.
- Students are not always clear about what they are meant to achieve during lessons which slows their progress.
- Whilst some teachers use the school's marking policy well, day-to-day marking is, at times, cursory and does not address the grammatical, punctuation and spelling errors that the students make.
- Checking of students' work over time is not sufficiently comprehensive and in enough detail. This means that subject and year leaders do not pick-up inconsistencies in teaching and achievement as quickly as possible.

The school has the following strengths

- The senior leadership team are driving improvements well, including in teaching, within a very focused school improvement programme.
- The governing body has good insight into the school's needs and its performance and questions rigorously the rate of students' progress and the quality of teaching.
- The proportion of students achieving five A* to C grades, including in English and mathematics, is above average.
- Provision for the sixth form students is good, resulting in their good achievement.
- Progress in English through Key Stage 4 is good.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress and are supported effectively by teaching assistants.
- Students behave well, within an inclusive, safe and caring environment.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed students' learning in 31 lessons. Five of them were observed jointly with either the headteacher or with individual members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors talked with students during lessons and at break and lunch times. They met formally with three groups of students to find out their views about the quality of education they receive at the school.
- The inspectors also held meetings with senior and subject leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a variety of documentation including information about the achievement of all groups of students in the school. They checked the school's development plan and subject department plans, and their impact on driving improvement, including in the sixth form. They scrutinised students' work, checked records of their attendance and behaviour, and reviewed policies to help keep them safe.
- In carrying out the inspection, the inspectors took into account the 29 responses to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the 32 responses given in the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Lynne Blakelock, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Additional Inspector
Wendy Adeniji	Additional Inspector
Paul Topping	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than others of its type. It is over-subscribed.
- Most students are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students known to be disadvantaged and therefore supported through the pupil premium is below average at 21%. The pupil premium funding is additional government funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is just below average at 16.5%.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- The school works in partnership with Leek College to provide alternative courses in hair and beauty and engineering, to 16 students in Key Stage 4.
- Sixth form provision is at the Moorlands Vith Form College, which is six miles away. The centre is run jointly by the Painsley Catholic College, Cheadle Academy and the Moorside High School and offers a wide range of courses for students at the three schools.
- The school does not enter any students early for GCSE examinations.
- The senior leadership has been restructured by the headteacher, who took up his post in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is never less than consistently good and accelerates the rates of students' progress by ensuring that:
 - students of all abilities, particularly the most able, have work that challenges them effectively
 - students understand the purpose of learning in terms of what they should achieve
 - day-to-day marking informs students of grammatical, punctuation and spelling errors, and ensures that they address them.
- Make sure that middle leaders consistently and rigorously check students' progress so that any weaknesses in teaching or students' work is identified quickly.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The re-structuring of the senior leadership team by the headteacher and supported by the effective governing body, has facilitated important changes and improvements. There is much stronger focus on students making good, rather than just expected progress. This is accompanied by an equally strong emphasis on improving standards and progress in all subjects. Students benefit from effective guidance about the best choices for students in Key Stage 4. There are also very clearly defined roles and expectations of leaders at all levels which are strengthening the school's capacity to accelerate students' progress where it is not at least good.
- The school's information about achievement in 2015 and samples of students' work provide a strong indication that strategies for improvement are paying off. Progress is quickening in some subjects in some year groups.
- The school's emphasis on improving achievement in all areas is clearly seen in the four-weekly reviews of progress towards subject leaders' targets. Inconsistencies in standards between subjects and in the rate of progress have arisen for a variety of reasons, including the choice of examination courses and variable teaching. The school knows progress needs to be better in some subjects and at least good in all. In this respect the impact of the senior leaders work is starting to pay dividends and the headteacher is accurate when he states, 'The school is on a journey.' It is a journey that all staff are committed to. Most feel well supported by the training they have and in their opportunities for professional development.
- The quality of teaching is overseen carefully by the deputy headteacher who ensures that teaching is observed regularly and is improving. During joint observations with inspectors, there was full agreement about the strengths in teaching and the areas for improvement. The deputy headteacher continues to strengthen leaders' roles in observing teaching. Effective teachers support those who are building-up their skills, in order to improve the outcomes for students.
- Teachers' performance targets reflect the school's needs. The school knows the importance of these being measurable and expected outcomes are crystal clear.
- There is growing impact of the work of subject and year leaders through the quality of monitoring. For example, the leadership and management of disadvantaged students, and of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good. This is one area where the equally thorough focus on ensuring that students achieve as well as possible from Year 7 is driving improvements more quickly through the school.
- Middle leaders' checking of students' work over time is not consistently comprehensive and in enough detail to make sure that they pick-up inconsistencies in teaching and achievement as quickly as possible.
- Some strategies are developing, such as the leadership of the most-able students which governors and school leaders identify as a priority.
- Students and staff say that behaviour and attitudes to learning have improved a lot over time. This is because school leaders set clear boundaries and ensure that safeguarding procedures meet the statutory requirements. In turn, these arrangements help to ensure that the students stay safe. Attendance has also improved and is now above average.
- Students have a range of choices to learn in and out of the classroom, including through after-school activities, visits and visitors. They reflect the school's desire to develop the students' personal skills as well as their academic and vocational skills. Students, from Year 8 to Year 11, are well informed about their career options. They develop, for example, interview skills and are guided in writing a curriculum vitae. They have continual chances to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding in lessons, through assemblies and in the school's ethos of equality. The new curriculum is being implemented and subjects and courses are chosen carefully to provide a balanced range of learning opportunities.

- The variability in teaching and in the provision for students of differing abilities, particularly the most able, means that presently not all students have an equal chance of achieving their potential.
- Partnerships benefit the students. Although the school has little involvement in teaching their sixth form students, it is fully committed to the achievement and well-being of its sixth form students. Together with the Principals of the other two sixth form providers and the sixth form leaders, the headteacher has implemented effective checks to measure the impact of teaching and the curriculum on the students' achievement and well-being.
- The partnership with Leek College is effective in providing students with courses that meet their needs and career goals. Their safety, attendance and progress are checked very regularly.
- Parents like the school, which welcomes them and listens to them. They support the school's work, including the chances to discuss their children's progress.
- The local authority works supportively with the school through, for example, visits to discuss its information about students' progress. It agrees that the school has good capacity to improve further.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors' minutes of meetings show their involvement in, and good knowledge of, all aspects of the school's work. Chairs of the different committees meet regularly to ensure a thorough overview of the school. This is a powerful tool in ensuring that the governors have a really clear picture of the school's performance and can focus on ensuring its needs are met.
 - The headteacher's exceptionally comprehensive reports and the range of information that the governors find out for themselves, through, for example, meeting with leaders and learning walks, enable them to question the school's work in depth.
 - The governors understand national and school data about the school's performance. They understand the role of staff's performance targets in improving teaching, rewarding staff and in supporting those who do not achieve their goals.
 - The governing body takes the students' views very seriously, reads reports from the student voice meetings and checks on progress made towards the ideas and queries they have raised. They know, for example, that the range of initiatives to help them have started to narrow the gap in performance between students supported by pupil premium funding and those not.
 - The governors know that teaching is variable because its impact over time on progress is variable. They check that achievement in all subjects is good or improving. They want more students to achieve A* grades.
 - The school's finances are sound and carefully checked to ensure monies are spent effectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good.
- Students move sensibly round the school, getting to lessons punctually and settling down to learning promptly.
- During lessons, students usually get on with their learning well. When learning is not at the right level for students, they learn more slowly and a few lose concentration. Students say that most teachers use the behaviour code in the same way.
- The school promotes British values continuously. The responsibilities with which students are entrusted, such as the school council, being a prefect and being a leader of learning, help students to develop a range of personal and social skills. Students demonstrate well respect and consideration for others' needs.
- Students show support towards each other. They show respect for their school and environment by wearing their uniform smartly and keeping learning and recreational areas tidy and free from litter.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. This includes those students in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, who learn at other sites. Teachers ensure that students behave safely, including adhering to health and safety procedures in practical lessons.
- Students feel safe because the school provides a safe environment, including a secure site. Students are comfortable to seek assistance from staff if they have any worries about their physical or emotional safety because they trust them to help them.
- Students say that there is very little bullying because they all get on well. School records back this up.
- As the students move through the school, they build-up a comprehensive awareness of potential dangers and how to avoid them. Personal, social and health education teaching focuses effectively on safety and respect for each other. Students understand the importance of valuing people for how they live their life. They feel well-informed about issues, such as how to use the internet safely and homophobia.
- The school's carefully considered strategies help to ensure that attendance continues to be above average. There is little persistent absenteeism. Students understand the link between their attendance and the progress they make towards their targets.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is variable across subjects and year groups, and leads to variable achievement by the end of Year 11. This is because in some lessons, there is a lack of clarity about what students need to achieve in learning, which slows down progress.
- Some students make expected rather than good progress because work is not sufficiently carefully planned to ensure that it is not too hard or too easy for the students. In particular, the most-able students are often not sufficiently accurately challenged to enable them to broaden and deepen their skills and make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teacher's marking and feedback is not sufficiently rigorous in identifying errors such as poor punctuation and spelling in students' work. When such errors are spotted by teachers, they do not always make sure that students have corrected their work and have learnt from their mistakes.
- The school has worked hard to ensure that the marking policy after formal assessments is adhered to. Staff do a good job in providing helpful information about what students know well and what they need to do next. Marking is particularly effective in English and physics. Students are building up their critical skills in assessing accurately their own work and that of their classmates. However, between assessment points, most teaching is confined to ticks, and grammatical and spelling errors are not addressed.
- In a few lessons, including a Year 8 physics lesson, teaching incorporated good chances for students to strengthen their literacy skills. This is a developing feature overall. However, the half-hourly daily tutor-time lesson is planned very well to develop students' specific literacy and numeracy skills in interesting and sometimes fun ways. Within this time, students in Years 7 to 9 read regularly and their reading ages are checked termly.
- Some students present their work very neatly. However, some teachers do not ensure that this is so, and writing and presentation are often untidy.
- A common strength is the positive relationships between staff and students. This motivates the students to learn.
- Teaching is improving and having an increasingly positive impact on students' learning and progress over time. A Year 10 English lesson facilitated the students' good understanding of how to vary sentence writing to maximum effect. The good focus on understanding, challenging and appropriate questioning,

matched to individual needs, resulted in sophisticated responses to a relevant and interesting task about the school canteen.

- Students find learning very interesting when lessons have interesting starts, such as a scene at a railway station and the modelling of religious dress.
- Teaching assistants, although not involved in planning, have access to it and know their students well. As a result, students who need additional support achieve well.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Not enough students make good progress in a range of subjects, including the most-able students. This is because the quality of teaching and expectations of students' progress have been variable over time. While progress is good in English, it is no better than expected in mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and humanities.
- Standards are consistently above average by the end of Year 11 in the proportion of students achieving five A* to C grades, including in English and mathematics. Students' attainment is also well above average in subjects such as information technology, religious studies and sports studies at A* to A and A* to C grades. Over time, performance in the 'Best 8' subjects is well above average.
- However, in mathematics, standards are in line over time with those nationally. Standards have fallen to well below average in some subjects, including some sciences, history and modern foreign languages. Staff are working effectively to address this.
- The proportion of students making expected progress in English is above average and close to average in the proportion making better than expected progress. This reflects the quality of teaching. The school is aiming for more students who enter the school with average ability in English in Year 7 to reach higher than 'C' grades by the end of Year 11. In mathematics, the proportion of students making expected and better than expected progress is just below average.
- Disadvantaged students attain less well than other groups in the school at the end of Year 11. The gap had widened until 2014, when it narrowed to three-quarters of a grade behind other students in the school and those nationally in English, and one grade behind in mathematics. The gap is narrowing because staff are more accountable for the achievement of disadvantaged students and a senior leader oversees strategies and their impact well. Students benefit, for example, from the one-to-one support in English, extra help in numeracy, support through a homework club and an accelerated reading programme.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good throughout Key Stages 3 and 4, particularly in mathematics. This is because their needs are identified quickly and accurately and their rate of improvement monitored very regularly.
- The achievement of the most-able students is starting to be monitored regularly. However, they do not always achieve as well as they could because of inconsistency in the level of challenge, in chances to apply their learning and in staff's expectations.
- Those students who have not reached the expected standards in English and mathematics by the end of primary school receive specific literacy and numeracy support. In 2014, 60% of students in English and 47% in mathematics reached the expected levels at the end of Year 7. Those who did not are achieving specific support in Year 8 to do so.
- All students go on to join the sixth form, further education, or go into training.
- Students in Key Stage 4 who are taught at other places learn and develop well because courses suit their aspirations, interests and needs. They develop important skills for employment as they work through the

courses.

- The school's data show that pupils make expected progress in Key Stage 3 in English and better than expected progress in mathematics.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Students join Year 12 with above average GCSE results. The number on roll has risen after a recent decline, due to the school promoting the sixth form well to students. Most students have achieved English and mathematics at A* to C grades when they join Year 12 and others study the subjects until they do so. Most students stay on into Year 13.
- Very few students are taught by Moorside High School staff. However, provision for Moorside students is good in the wide range of courses, the quality of teaching and in the academic and pastoral support they receive through the association.
- The joint sixth form provision is managed well by the Senior Leader of the sixth form, who meets very regularly with the headteacher of Moorside and the principals of the other two schools, as well as with the students, to consider its effectiveness.
- Students make good progress through Years 12 and 13, achieving above average standards by the end of Year 13, which demonstrate their good progress. Students achieve at least the academic threshold by the end of Year 13.
- The students have lots of opportunities to take part in activities and events that broaden their development. This includes a link with a school abroad. Such activities ensure their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is built-on.
- The sixth form provides a structure and support for students, whilst encouraging them to organise their work. This they do well, showing mature behaviour and good attendance. Students increasingly learn for themselves. Their learning is supported very well by regular supervised support sessions, which also checks their progress against their targets.
- Students value the broad range of courses, including vocational subjects, which meet their needs and the Department for Education's study programme. They find the careers education and guidance helpful as part of their wider learning programme.
- At the end of Year 13, all students move on to either further or higher education, or training or employment.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124399
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	449114

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
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	760
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	480
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Goldstraw
Headteacher	Simon Clarke
Date of previous school inspection	March 16 2011
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