

McKee Centre

73 Breck Road, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire FY6 7AQ

Inspection dates	15–16 March 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Parents, pupils and staff all agree that the school has come a long way in a short time. McKee is now valued for its nurturing, family atmosphere and the shared vision for all pupils to do well.
- Determined leadership by the headteacher has ensured that all aspects of the school's work have improved. Morale is high and staff feel valued.
- Leaders have an accurate view of what the school does well and where development is needed. Members of the management committee are holding leaders increasingly to account.
- Pupils' personal development is strong. Constant praise, encouragement and support from all adults helps pupils to settle well into routines. There is often a steep growth in pupils' confidence along with a renewed willingness to learn and respect for others.
- Attendance has risen. An increasing number of pupils are exceeding their attendance targets.
- The meticulous, daily recording of information about pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance provides a comprehensive overview of how well each pupil is coping in school.
- Overall, pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are proud of what they achieve. Through their relaxed, open relationships with pupils, all staff encourage them to do the right thing and to have higher aspirations.
- Good specialist subject teaching ensures that all pupils achieve well over time. Academic achievement is good and rising. In 2015, one third of Year 11 pupils gained five or more GCSEs. This was a first for the school.
- Parents really appreciate the high level of care and concern for their child's welfare, safety and progress. As two parents commented, 'nothing goes unnoticed', and 'they are good at sharing the good things with us'.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers are not consistently following the school's assessment policy in how to help pupils to improve their work.
- Subject leaders are not identifying exactly what will improve the quality of teaching and learning in their areas.
- The effective practice of some teachers in using questioning and discussion to probe pupils' understanding is not shared by all.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - developing the skills of subject leaders in identifying the aspects for improvement within their areas of responsibility in order to accelerate pupils' progress
 - ensuring that teachers consistently follow the school's marking policy to show pupils how to improve and meet their targets
 - sharing good practice in using questioning to challenge pupils' thinking.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Since the inspections in 2014, the headteacher has driven improvement and initiated change to meet pupils' needs, not least in the setting up of a second base in Fleetwood and a nurture group for the youngest pupils. He has been highly successful in developing a vision shared by all staff to enable all pupils to have the same opportunities as pupils in mainstream schools. In addition, he has provided a curriculum that will help pupils succeed academically and to leave school at the end of Year 11 with qualifications and the confidence to follow their career preference. Staff, parents and management committee members were unanimous in highlighting the transformation of McKee and how the school now effectively nurtures pupils' personal and academic progress. Staff morale is high. Typical comments include, 'This is a great place to work', 'I feel valued', 'I really feel that I make a difference to the pupils'.
- The appointment of experienced managers and subject specialist teachers as well as well-qualified support staff, together with effective training, has improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, outcomes for pupils have also improved. Expectations are high of what pupils can achieve and staff are enthusiastic and keen to help pupils to do their best.
- The curriculum is constantly under review to ensure that pupils' needs are met. As well as daily sessions in English and mathematics, pupils have sessions in science, geography, history, art, religious studies, information technology and physical education. Leaders are rightly looking to widen the curriculum by introducing additional courses for Year 10 pupils and online homework. Much is provided to increase pupils' chances of success, including additional sessions for Year 11 after school and one-to-one tutoring in mathematics to plug gaps in knowledge. Some of these initiatives are supported by pupil premium funding. The recently revamped library gives pupils a wider choice of reading materials, including magazines. Skills in reading and writing are reinforced in all subjects through reminders about key vocabulary and tips on how to interpret questions and develop answers.
- Subject leaders have amended what is taught to reflect changes in the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3 and examination requirements at Key Stage 4. Staff are consulting mainstream colleagues to ensure that they are in step with procedures to assess pupils' attainment. Work-based learning in Year 11, such as vehicle maintenance, construction and military training, is effective in engaging those pupils who find academic work hard. These courses, carefully chosen to reflect pupils' interests and needs, have also helped pupils to see purpose in gaining qualifications in English and mathematics.
- The school promotes well pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development through activities and daily routines. It also gives high priority to heightening pupils' awareness of life in modern Britain and helping them to decide on their future through a range of provision including a careers fair, discussions and work experience. Each Year 10 pupil, as part of a new project run by a local government department, compiled a curriculum vitae and considered the aspects that employers would take into account when conducting an interview.
- Leaders, managers and the management committee know that there is still some way to go to ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress. They have accurately identified the school's areas of strength and where further development is needed. Procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are now well established and closely tied to performance management and improvement planning. For instance, the regular scrutiny of pupils' work has highlighted some continuing inconsistencies in how teachers are implementing the school's assessment policy. The proposed change in the management structure provides a useful opportunity to delegate more of the monitoring responsibility to subject leaders, especially in determining the weaker aspects of pupils' learning in the different strands of English, mathematics and science.
- The development of a bespoke online programme to record all aspects of each pupil's behaviour, attendance and welfare has resulted in a very effective management and safeguarding tool within a culture of openness, care and concern. Teachers and support staff, who are each responsible for a group of pupils, can enter information at any time. As a result, leaders and managers have a comprehensive, detailed up-to-date overview of the personal development of each pupil and can track, for example, the steps taken to deal with an incident or the content of discussions with parents. Such valuable information has informed reports to the management committee as well as organisational change. It has also enabled the compilation of specific reports, care plans and contributions to multi-agency meetings concerning pupils' welfare.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- has improved and is now good. The management committee has been supportive of the headteacher in bringing about change and in appointing experienced staff. It has also rightly sought convincing evidence for some proposals, including additional accommodation. New members have used their specialist educational knowledge and management expertise to challenge and question school leaders on the progress of different groups of pupils and the use of funds.
 - is actively working to develop further links with the community. The Vice-Chair has been leading the development of the Parents' Forum and the collection of parents' views about the school. Although still in its infancy, this is proving a valuable channel of communication.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The development of specialist subject teaching teams has had a positive impact on the overall quality of teaching and learning and pupils' progress. Pupils are benefiting from teachers' good subject knowledge and their expertise in assessing work at GCSE level. Some pupils said that working with teachers who were enthusiastic about their subject had renewed their interest in the subject and made learning easier.
- A strength of the teaching is the effective way that teachers and support staff work together to ensure that all pupils participate in the lesson and complete the tasks set. Adults manage pupils' behaviour sensitively and positively, using praise and encouraging comments to sustain pupils' interest. They are quick to sense and intervene when a pupil is anxious, disturbed or losing concentration. Support staff are particularly skilful in talking with pupils and deflecting concerns. When incidents do occur, adults are prompt to take action and to minimise disruption to the learning of others.
- Rooms are well organised with attractive displays of pupils' work and information relevant to current topics. This common organisation suits well those pupils who find it hard to cope with change. Teachers prepare their lessons well, often using a range of materials including video clips, and with extension activities for the most-able pupils or those who finish quickly. As teachers share beforehand with support staff the content and key learning points, all are confident in answering pupils' queries and in prompting pupils when they are unsure of what to do. Teachers follow the school's policy on assessment by marking pupils' work regularly, although there is some inconsistency in how teachers highlight good aspects, indicate what the pupil should do next and check that this has been done.
- In lessons seen, pupils tended to remain quiet or to give only brief responses when directly asked a question. Teachers missed opportunities to question pupils even more about their knowledge, to probe their understanding and to encourage them to explain and justify their thinking. When teachers rehearsed with pupils the steps in a calculation or the language to use in answering a question, they picked up on misunderstandings and were able to review and repeat information so that pupils were confident to continue. However, this is not consistent across the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good with some exemplary practice. It is not outstanding overall because of variations in pupils' confidence in learning and in their understanding of what it is to be a successful learner.
- Parents value highly the way the school takes care of their children and supports families. They comment on how well the staff, especially their children's key workers, know their children and their personal problems, how 'nothing goes unnoticed' and how they know that their children are helped to be kept safe while in school.
- Pupils said that they had developed in every way since coming to McKee, stating, 'It has been the best thing for me', 'I have made friends', 'it is easier to learn here'. They grow in confidence and self-awareness because of the constant encouragement, support and positive atmosphere. Parents commented how this spreads into home and life outside school. Alternative providers noted how some initially withdrawn pupils blossomed in getting to the venue on time and working in a team with direction from others. In lessons at both Poulton and Fleetwood, pupils were willing to learn. They listened and generally got on with the set task well. Year 11 pupils have opted to take additional sessions after school

to help to consolidate their knowledge and skills in preparation for GCSE examinations.

- The headteacher and all staff know each pupil extremely well. Daily briefings and discussions between staff ensure that all are kept well informed of individual pupils' progress and any issues to resolve. The very good relationships between adults and pupils ensure that pupils feel safe and secure in voicing concerns. School councillors commented that occasional incidences of bullying are swiftly dealt with and that they know to show respect for others at all times. They were adamant that racism was not an issue and that, knowing some pupils had 'come out', knew that any aspects of homophobia were inappropriate and would not be tolerated. All pupils are made aware of how to stay safe online especially when using social media. Assemblies, form time discussions and sessions of personal, social and health education alert pupils to issues regarding sexual, mental and physical health as well as democracy and justice.
- Pupils were proud to have been elected to the post of school councillor and stated 'it is our responsibility to take care of our form'. The council has been instrumental in persuading leaders to provide all pupils with planners and in amending the content once they had been trialled. Councillors were also hoping to put a case forward for activities at breaktimes.
- Families appreciate the regular updates from staff and particularly the sharing of things that have gone well. Parents praised the extra care taken by staff to help pupils over anxieties, such as getting to meetings with the mental health team.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good overall. It is not yet outstanding because of pupils' occasional unacceptable behaviour in lessons, the irregular attendance of some and the incidents which lead to sanctions and periods of exclusion for a few. That said, given the histories and needs of most pupils, pupils' good behaviour is a true strength of the school. It reflects the tangible culture of expecting the best from each pupil.
- Pupils in the main conduct themselves sensibly in and around the school and when on visits and attending off-site training. In school, the changeover of rooms between lessons is orderly and pupils usually respond well to instructions from adults, including those who are leading work-related programmes. Most pupils can be trusted to take care of their own needs and to follow the timetable. Just occasionally, a pupil loses self-control, refuses to conform or uses inappropriate language. The school's meticulous records show how the number of incidents rise and fall, mirroring the starting and settling of those pupils who have been excluded from mainstream schools because of their behaviour. Year 7 pupils commented that they were learning how to manage their anger. During the inspection, the small number of minor incidents, such as refusal to be in lessons, were due to perceived slights and personal concerns. As a result of the quiet, calm and determined intervention and support of staff, situations were quickly defused and pupils went into lessons.
- Pupils show respect for the school's buildings and items on display. There are no signs of damage or graffiti and pupils were sensible in leaving rooms tidy.
- Pupils know the rules and boundaries. They see how the staged sanctions give them the opportunity to 'do the right thing' before their actions lead to more serious consequences. Some pupils opt to go out of lessons as a means of coping. Records show how the number of incidents of unacceptable behaviour reduces markedly once pupils realise the benefits of behaving well. Pupils use the points gained for kind acts, good work and for meeting their behaviour targets, to buy food items from the tuckshop.
- Attendance has increased significantly since the inspection in 2014 with over a third of pupils currently achieving over 90% attendance. For many, this is the first time they have been regular full-time attenders. One parent commented that her child had even wanted to come to school during the holidays. Pupils know their individual attendance targets and value the rewards for meeting them. The inclusion of work-related courses has resulted in a marked rise in the attendance of Year 10 pupils.
- Actions, including links with other agencies, support for families, taxi arrangements, first day calls, home visits and prizes for good attendance, have had a significant impact in reducing absence. Much of the absence is now attributable to pupils' medical conditions.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes are good and improving. This is because teaching has improved and pupils' self-confidence has grown as they realise they can learn well and gain worthwhile qualifications.
- Overall, progress is good. It is outstanding for some given that attainment on entry is usually below that

expected for pupils' ages due to irregular attendance and, in some cases, long periods of no schooling. Once settled in the school, pupils usually start to knuckle down and to make good progress.

- Those pupils who join in Year 10 often show accelerated progress in Year 11. In the last school year, a quarter of Key Stage 4 pupils made more progress than expected and exceeded their academic targets. For some, however, the anxiety of sitting an examination meant that their achievement was not echoed in examination grades. The school's current information shows that three quarters of pupils are making the progress expected for their age. Disadvantaged pupils do at least as well and often better than others because of the highly effective support they receive.
- Pupils are responding well to the school's expectation that they will complete GCSE courses. The proportion of Year 10 and Year 11 pupils being entered for examinations is increasing each year. Currently, almost two thirds are entered for GCSEs and others are taking equivalent work-related qualifications.
- In 2015, over a third of Year 11 pupils gained five GCSE passes with one in 10 gaining high-quality grades. The school's own information shows that current Year 11 pupils are on track to meet their target grades and to increase the proportions gaining a pass and also the higher grades, particularly in English and mathematics. Gaining a pass in Year 10 boosted the confidence of some pupils, who are now working to gain higher grades in Year 11.
- In 2015, nearly all Year 11 pupils moved into education, employment or training. The majority took up courses at local colleges while others gained apprenticeships and jobs linked to work-related programmes. As in past years, several Year 11 pupils are now looking to join the army. A few are also intending to apply to university.
- The school-wide expectation that pupils will do well in basic subjects is reflected in pupils' good progress over time especially in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' written work is generally neatly presented although some pupils have poorly formed handwriting. Work seen, such as accounts written in the first person of soldiers' experiences in battle, show pupils' effective use of language to express feelings and events. On a one-to-one basis, pupils are often similarly articulate, reflective and mature in their comments. This was less evident in lessons.

School details

Unique reference number	134367
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10008165

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Maintained pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	93
Appropriate authority	Management committee
Chair	Alf Yates
Headteacher	Andrew Murray
Telephone number	01253 893102
Website	www.mckee.lancs.sch.uk
Email address	head@mckee.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 January 2014

Information about this school

- The school is the short stay school/pupil referral unit for the Fylde and Wyre area of Lancashire. It provides education for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils who have either been permanently excluded, or who are unable to attend mainstream school because of medical conditions or who are new to the area and as yet unplaced in a mainstream school. It also provides alternative provision for mainstream secondary schools in the case of pupils who are at risk of being permanently excluded.
- The number on roll varies considerably throughout the year due to pupils joining and leaving the provision. In the last year, 147 pupils attended for differing periods of time. Since September 2015, 68 pupils have joined the school. At the time of the inspection, there were 97 pupils, two thirds of whom were boys. Just under a half of pupils had been permanently excluded. A third had medical and/or psychological conditions. Most pupils attend full-time; 15 pupils were attending part-time.
- At the Fleetwood site, a small number of Year 7 pupils were working together in a nurture group and Year 11 pupils attended off-site work-related courses at 4Tech, Training 2000 (Army) as well as sessions at the school. On the second day of the inspection, Year 10 pupils at Poulton attended the final session of a short course given by staff from the Department for Work and Pensions.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage with very few speaking English as an additional language. Nine pupils are in the care of the local authority. Two pupils have a statement of special educational needs and nine are being assessed for an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those that are looked after by the local authority.
- When the centre was inspected in January 2014 it was judged to require improvement. A monitoring inspection was carried out in March 2014 and judged the school to be taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement.
- About half of the teaching and support staff have joined the school since the inspection in January 2014. The deputy headteacher took up her position in September 2014.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning sessions at the Poulton and Fleetwood sites. Three observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils at breaktimes and in lessons. They met with members of the school council, covering a range of issues but particularly councillors' views of their own progress, the school and their safety and welfare. The lead inspector also met informally with one Year 11 pupil to discuss the same aspects.
- The lead inspector met with three parents and took into account the views expressed in the 13 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and to the school's own questionnaires.
- An inspector met with two support staff to hear their views and inspectors also took into account the responses from 19 staff to the online questionnaire.
- The lead inspector met with the Chair, the Vice-Chair and two other members of the Management Committee, and held a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, heads of department for mathematics and science, and the pupil and family support worker.
- The inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, the improvement plan, and minutes from meetings of the management committee. They also analysed monitoring reports, records of pupils' progress and attainment, curriculum planning, safeguarding and welfare information and samples of pupils' work across the curriculum. The inspectors also took into account a written submission from the head of English, who was not in school due to illness.

Inspection team

Sonja Oyen, Lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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