

Moorside High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124399
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	314918
Inspection date	21 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Kevin Sheldrick HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	696
6th form	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Goldstraw
Headteacher	Mazda Jenkin
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2004
School address	Cellarhead Road Werrington Stoke-on-Trent ST9 0HP
Telephone number	08444 778985
Fax number	08444 778986

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the achievement of students, the quality of teaching and learning, and the effectiveness of leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from published assessment data, the school's own records, parents' questionnaires, lesson observations and interviews with staff and students. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its selfevaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This below average size school serves the Staffordshire Moorlands area east of Stoke-on-Trent. Below average numbers of students are eligible for free school meals. The vast majority of students are from White British backgrounds, with about 3% from a range of minority ethnic groups. On entry to the school students' attainment is broadly average. The school has a slightly below average proportion of students with a statement of special educational need. However, the proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is close to the national average. The sixth form is a joint provision with two other schools and operates relatively independently of the main school. Just over a third of students leaving the main school at the end of Year 11 enter the sixth form. The school will become a science specialist school from September 2008.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. An important strength of this school is the emphasis given to care and support. The school has also adapted its curriculum well so that exclusions are rare and all students gain qualifications. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. This is a very inclusive school. However, the school's overall achievement has slipped in recent years, and is now satisfactory. The school's current work and recent results at both key stages point to average standards. Results at GCSE in 2007 were mixed with an increase in those attaining five A* to C grades but a fall when English and mathematics are included. The school has now taken effective action to halt the decline in achievement, primarily by improving English in response to the disappointing results in this subject in 2007. Students are very positive about all the support that is available to ensure no one falls behind. The school is quick to spot any dips in performance and takes swift and effective action to deal with any problems. In Year 11 the school cleverly links careers guidance to the interventions planned in response to evidence that students are below target. The school's tracking of student progress is not yet effective in ensuring all students make good progress. Very thorough arrangements ensure students are safe. An alternative, less academic curriculum involving a range of external providers, is important in enabling success for a small minority of students. Effective work-related learning, to a large degree, compensates for the limited access the majority of students have to vocational courses. Students are happy with the options choices and they are understandably enthused about the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities and trips. The good care, support and guidance and the lively curriculum explain why students enjoy school. This contributes to the students' good behaviour and above average attendance. Students indicate that the school is effective in encouraging them to live healthily. Students have been actively involved in improving the school meal arrangements to encourage healthy eating. There is understandable frustration at the lack of modern physical education (PE) facilities, although staff have creatively managed this to ensure students participate in sufficient physical activity. Students contribute to the community well through charity work and voluntary activity. The school is effective in promoting social and cultural development through the links it has with others, internationally and in other parts of the Midlands. Regular student meetings with the headteacher are valued because they bring about improvements. The school has correctly recognised that the school council needs revitalising so that more students can contribute to improving the school community. Students feel safe because bullying and racist incidents are rare and handled well by the school when they occur. Students are well prepared for the future because they have the skills required to succeed and there is effective careers education and work-related learning. The school provides excellent guidance to students at the end of Year 11, so almost all enrol for appropriate courses. Teaching and learning are satisfactory because high achievement is not consistently emphasised in lessons. There is good and outstanding practice that ensures students are challenged. Students understandably value the teaching that enables them to self-assess and take responsibility for achieving at higher levels. An outstanding mathematics lesson had these elements but further enhanced learning by linking the subject to the real world of sewage and tree planting. However, some teaching lacks challenge. There is evidence of too much time being devoted to work that has already been covered and not enough to reviewing learning and linking this to students' targets. Students receive insufficient guidance about how they can achieve well partly because marking is inconsistent. However, teaching assistants are used well to ensure students receive the additional support that prevents them falling behind. The leadership team is well qualified

and experienced. The views of parents and students are taken seriously and the good care of students extends to staff. A positive feature of the management of staff is the encouragement given to professional development. For instance, teaching assistants are encouraged to develop to such an extent that many become teachers. Better use is now made of the expertise in the school at all levels. The school does very well in ensuring equality of opportunity and avoiding discrimination. There is excitement about the next academic year due to the recent designation as a specialist science college and the implementation of a new curriculum. However, measurable targets related to improved achievement in the specialist subjects are not sufficiently prominent in the school development plan. Self-evaluation identifies most strengths and weaknesses and monitoring has reduced the amount of inadequate teaching. The monitoring of progress in terms of students' personal development and well-being is very strong. For instance, the school carefully monitors positive and negative aspects of behaviour and responds effectively to this. However, the school tries to monitor too many different aspects of teaching and takes insufficient account of student progress, resulting in some over generous judgements. The school has now adopted challenging targets but is not using these consistently well to promote higher achievement. Targets are used more effectively with older students. Tutorial time although quite extensive, does not sufficiently contribute to the academic monitoring of student progress. Governors are appropriately involved through a committee structure and their expertise is used by the school. They are now in a position to hold staff to account but this has had limited impact on raising standards. Effective financial management has enhanced information communication and technology (ICT)_provision, and there have been important improvements to accommodation. The school has a satisfactory track record of improvement. No groups of students make less than expected progress, although the school has not raised overall achievement enough. Selfevaluation is reasonably accurate and the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

Standards in the sixth form are above average and achievement is outstanding. Results in 2007 improved compared to the previous year. The college's latest assessment data indicate the upward trend is set to continue. Students appreciate receiving detailed information on the progress they are making and the steps they need to take to meet their challenging learning targets. Surveys show that students are well motivated and enjoy their studies. Sixth form students' personal development is second to none. Students take responsibility for their own learning and develop good independent learning skills. An exceptional feature is the outstanding contribution they make to the community. Many help younger students with reading; others engage in a wide variety of charity fund raising events and Amnesty activities. The sixth form centre offers an outstanding range of AS and A-level courses. The recent addition of a number of vocational courses and collaboration with other providers on 14 to 19 pathways is further broadening the appeal of the provision. Very good attendance and high retention levels in the sixth form are evidence of the highly effective care, support and guidance. Nearly all Year 13 students progress to university, with a few continuing in further education. Outstanding leadership and management have continued to improve student achievement. Very good links with other institutions significantly enrich students' experiences, preparing them well for the future. Effective planning results in the efficient use of resources. There is an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring all lessons are focused on achieving challenging targets.
- Take steps to ensure students are more aware of how they can make good progress.
- Ensure monitoring and evaluation eliminate the weaknesses in learning and teaching that prevent students making good progress. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	IE ²
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	IE ²
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	IE ²
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

22 May 2008 Dear Students Inspection of Moorside High School, Stoke-on-Trent ST9 OHP I would like to thank you for the part you played in making our visit to your school a pleasant experience. Special thanks must go to the students we interviewed for their honest and perceptive comments that helped us arrive at our final judgement. We think your school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education and has important strengths. We agree with your comments that the school is good at supporting any students having trouble no matter what it might be. Largely for this reason, the school does well in ensuring every student gains qualifications when they leave school. We recognise that you enjoy school because you feel safe and the curriculum ensures you have interesting experiences, including an amazing number of trips. The school is making the most of some old accommodation, for instance the dining facilities we know you have helped improve. We agree with you and your staff that it is about time your PE provision was upgraded. We are suggesting some improvements. We think you can expect change soon because your school's leadership team is keen to improve. We think more teaching should be as good as the best. We have suggested that all lessons should aim to be challenging. To achieve this we have suggested that monitoring should focus more on how well lessons overcome the weaknesses that have prevented good progress in recent years. You can help by asking for clarification about how you can achieve your challenging targets, if this is not clear to you. In addition, as the school is planning to improve the school council, this will provide you with enhanced opportunities for you to tell your teachers how the school can improve. We wish you well for the future. Yours sincerely Kevin Sheldrick Her Majesty's Inspector

22 May 2008

Dear Students



Inspection of Moorside High School, Stoke-on-Trent ST9 OHP

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We think your school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education and has important strengths. We agree with your comments that the school is good at supporting any students having trouble no matter what it might be. Largely for this reason, the school does well in ensuring every student gains qualifications when they leave school. We recognise that you enjoy school because you feel safe and the curriculum ensures you have interesting experiences, including an amazing number of trips. The school is making the most of some old accommodation, for instance the dining facilities we know you have helped improve. We agree with you and your staff that it is about time your PE provision was upgraded.

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You can help by asking for clarification about how you can achieve your challenging targets, if this is not clear to you. In addition, as the school is planning to improve the school council, this will provide you with enhanced opportunities for you to tell your teachers how the school can improve.

We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Sheldrick
Her Majesty's Inspector