

Summarised inspection findings

Moore House Academy, Bathgate

4 June 2024

Key contextual information

Moore House Academy, Bathgate, is an independent special school for children and young people with a range of additional support needs. The current school roll is 20. All children and young people of secondary age attend the school campus in Bathgate. Primary aged children attend a separate school campus in Dunfermline. The school is part of the wider Moore House organisation and is governed by a Board of Governors and a Chief Executive Officer.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Led by the headteacher and driven by their shared vision, values and aims, staff have established an ethos of care and mutual respect across the school. The school's welcoming and nurturing environment is underpinned by positive relationships. All staff are committed to a rights based, inclusive education for all children and young people. This is leading to improved attendance at school and higher levels of engagement for all learners than was evident in their previous educational placements.
- All teachers use a relational approach within lessons to engage children and young people in their learning. Children and young people feel valued and respected by the adults who support them. Through their observations and by building respectful relationships quickly, staff know children and young people well. As a result, they are knowledgeable about each child and young person's individual learning needs. In a minority of lessons, teachers judge when to use different teaching strategies well such as individual and paired work. They do this most effectively in outdoor learning activities. A few children and young people would benefit from more opportunities to work in groups with their peers.
- Support workers develop positive relationships with children and young people. In a few classes they work in partnership with teachers to provide appropriate one to one support for learning. In the majority of classes, support staff are deployed well to help children and young people manage their emotions and maintain their regulation. Teachers should now consider how to deploy support staff to support children and young people more directly in their learning. For example, to support the delivery of learning activities differentiated to each child or young person's needs.
- All staff work collectively to ensure that the learning environment across the school is consistently calm and conducive for learning. All staff model caring and supportive relationships well. They speak to children and young people respectfully and show high levels of understanding of the challenges each child or young person faces. Support staff assist children and young people's transitions between classes well. This helps children and young people to move around the school buildings calmly. In the few instances where children or young people become disengaged, anxious or distressed, staff are skilled at supporting them

to reengage and minimise any potential disruption to lessons.

- Staff value children and young people's work and achievements, which is displayed attractively in all areas in the school. For example, young people's ceramic artwork is displayed on shelves in the school's corridors. All children and young people value each other's achievements and show mutual respect for the work on display.
- Teachers have high aspirations for each child and young person. Almost all plan lessons which are appropriately challenging. However, a majority of lessons are overly teacher led. This can result in children and young people being passive learners and, in a few lessons, disengaging in their learning. Teachers use digital technology appropriately in a few classes to support children and young people's learning. Almost all children and young people would benefit from engaging in more active learning experiences. Teachers should use a wider range of concrete materials and visual aids, including digital technologies, to help children and young people engage in their learning.
- Most teachers use questioning well to challenge and extend children and young people's thinking. This supports children and young people to build their confidence and resilience to move their learning forward. Across the school, teachers should consider how they can use questioning even more effectively to develop children and young people's higher order thinking skills further. In all lessons, teachers use verbal praise effectively to recognise children and young people's efforts. Teachers should develop further how they use feedback to support children and young people to know how successful they have been. This will help children and young people identify their next steps in their learning better.
- The school use onsite supports, including a dedicated Psychological Services and Intervention (PSI) team to conduct holistic assessments of children and young people when they begin their placement in the school and on an ongoing basis. The PSI team supports the wider school team through ongoing professional learning to develop their understanding of the emotional factors affecting each child and young person. This is supporting staff well to interact positively with each child or young person and maintain a calm learning environment across the school.
- Teachers termly planning supports them to plan learning contexts, which engages and interests children and young people in their learning. Teachers now need to ensure that all children and young people are clear on the purpose of their lessons. A useful first step would be for teachers to develop a consistent approach to using learning intentions and success criteria across the school. This will help children and young people to understand better what it is they are learning, and why.
- There is a clear commitment by all staff to ensure that children and young people's wider learning experiences are individualised and centre around children and young people's interests. Children and young people have the opportunity to participate in a range of enrichment activities. Staff use a range of locations, outdoor spaces, and partnerships within the local community effectively to provide these activities. Children and young people highly value these real-life learning experiences. Children and young people can describe how they are developing their skills, including their confidence in trying new activities. Children and young people are able to exercise choice over which activities they participate in.
- Most teachers use a variety of formative and summative assessments effectively to capture children and young people's progress, particularly at the senior phase. Teachers discuss children and young people's progress in the broad general education (BGE) at regular planning meetings with the headteacher. Teachers ensure each learner's progress is captured using a BGE progress tracker document. Teachers track and monitor children and young people's progress in the BGE well through evaluating progress against the Curriculum for Excellence

experiences and outcomes and national Benchmarks. This supports them effectively to plan future learning, which builds progressively on what children and young people can already do.

- The headteacher has introduced a range of moderation activities jointly with Moore House Academy, Dunkeld. Teachers engage purposefully in moderation activities, building their skills and confidence in understanding standards. The headteacher should continue to develop and increase moderation activities, both internally and externally. As planned, she should strengthen links with schools in the local area further. This will support teachers to build their confidence further in making accurate professional judgements in both the BGE and senior phase.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the Board of Governors.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- The small number of children and young people attending the school and range of their additional support needs invalidates comparison of their progress. From observations of learning and reviewing children and young people's work overall, children and young people are making good progress in literacy and numeracy.

Attainment in literacy and English

- All children and young people's progress in literacy and English is highly personalised. Taking account of their age, stage of development and range of additional support needs overall, children and young people are making good progress in literacy and English.

Listening

- Most children and young people listen well for key information and record the descriptions of what they have heard. Listening activities have been tailored to align with children and young people's lived experience, with a focus on The Promise. In the majority of classes, children and young people contribute to class discussions. Most are confident in preparing a structured talk with support and are able to articulate key concepts. Children and young people should continue to develop their listening and talking skills in discussions and presentations.

Reading

- Children and young people read texts of increasing maturity as they move through the school. This includes reading instructions related to learning tasks. Older children and young people read descriptions of films to describe the target audience. Most children and young people are developing their reading skills well. They are developing how to read aloud with expression. Most use a range of strategies to decode unfamiliar words. Teachers should continue to improve children and young people's motivation for reading by encouraging reading for pleasure and creating a culture of reading across the school.
- Children and young people are encouraged to record their reading on a reading map. This includes details relating to their reading such as the country of the texts setting or the birthplace of the author. Children and young people use the reading map well to describe what they liked about a book and why.

Writing

- Most children and young people form sentences and use punctuation and grammar well. Almost all write paragraphs of text on subjects of interest to them. Most children and young people write text of increasing length as they move through the school. Most write for a range of purposes. For example, writing informative stories about their pet or people they like. As learners move through the school, they write increasingly mature pieces of text such as news

articles on the potential impact of vaping on children and young people. Children and young people should continue to be supported to write clearly and neatly.

Numeracy and mathematics

- All children and young people's progress in numeracy and mathematics is highly personalised. Taking account of their age, stage of development and range of additional support needs overall, children and young people are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Children and young people should continue to develop their numeracy skills across all curricular areas.

Number, money and measure

- Most children and young people perform simple calculations competently. A minority perform more advanced calculations involving, for example, percentages with the aid of a calculator. As they move through the school, children and young people perform more complicated calculations such as estimating costs of household items and planning household budgets. They work out monthly and weekly pay from an annual salary. A few children and young people calculate the cost of items using hire purchase. Children and young people need to continue to develop their skills in using fractions.

Shape, position and movement

- Children and young people are developing their skills using shapes in a range of curricular areas. As they move through the school, they are developing well their understanding of shape, position, and movement. Children and young people use the properties of angles to calculate angles round a point or in a triangle. They find the area of simple shapes by counting squares. Most children and young people name two dimensional (2D) and three dimensional (3D) shapes. A few children and young people convert between units of measurement. A few young people use Pythagoras' theorem to calculate the length of the hypotenuse on a right-angled triangle. Children and young people need to develop their skills in identifying the properties of 2D and 3D shapes.

Information Handling

- Children and young people are developing their information handling skills mostly when conducting surveys or collating and displaying information. Most children and young people conduct surveys using tally tables to collate the information gathered. Most display the results of surveys in simple bar graphs. A few children and young people calculate the mean, median and mode of set of data.

Attainment over time

- Overall, most children and young people in the BGE are making good progress in literacy and numeracy and satisfactory progress in other curricular areas. The school needs to develop the BGE further to ensure children and young people access a wider curriculum. This will help improve children and young people's attainment further across a range of curricular areas.
- Young people in the senior phase are making good progress from their prior levels of attainment. They are attaining increasingly well over time. Young people achieve a range of National Qualifications units and course awards, up to and including National 5 level. Young people are attaining more qualifications, at a higher level, year on year since 2022. Since 2022, young people have been attaining a broader range of National Qualifications including, for example, travel and tourism, and music. Teachers should continue to challenge all young people to attain as well as they can.

Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Almost all children and young people are supported by staff effectively to develop strategies to manage their emotions and regulate their behaviour. In recent years, this has resulted in the school becoming a calmer and more productive place for learning. This is a significant development, which helps children and young people previously disengaged from learning to re-engage in education. As result there has been a subsequent reduction in disruption in school and the need for staff to use safe holds. This contributes to children and young people feeling more relaxed and enjoying their time at school.
- Children and young people have extensive opportunities to achieve through a range of enrichment activities at the school. These include beauty therapy, horse riding, cycling, dance, film, and media. The school's breakfast club supports children and young people to develop their social skills. Children and young people talk enthusiastically about how these activities help motivate them in their learning. This helps children and young people develop their understanding of the skills they will need for further learning or employment.
- Staff celebrate children and young people's achievements through praise in class and at school assemblies. Teachers should now consider how children and young people's achievements could be accredited more through a wider range of awards.

Equity for all learners

- Staff have a well-developed understanding of each child or young person's familial background. This helps them to build strong relationships, founded on mutual respect and children's rights. The PSI team provide bespoke, equitable interventions to help learners identified as requiring some form of emotional or psychological support. Staff now need to use their understanding of each child and young person more effectively to ensure their approaches to learning continue to improve outcomes for all learner's.
- Most children and young people successfully move on to further education or training after leaving the school. A few move on to employment.

Other relevant evidence

- The school week is currently too short and potentially hinders children and young people's progress. Senior leaders need to review the length of the week to ensure learners' receive their full entitlement to education broadly in line with national expectations.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.