

Summarised inspection findings

Moore House Academy, Butterstone

10 March 2020

Key contextual information

Moore House Academy, Butterstone is a special school in Butterstone, Perth and Kinross for children and young people with a range of complex needs. Moore House Academy is a part of the group of services run by Moore House Group. The school was registered to deliver education in May 2019. The headteacher has been in post since June 2019. The school roll is 16.

1.4 Leadership and management of staff

satisfactory

This indicator highlights the importance of sound governance and fair and proper recruitment and selection of staff. It focuses on accountability, responsibility and shared values as important features of building and sustaining a highly-professional staff team. Effective empowerment of staff and partners with due regard to wellbeing and positive relationships is a key feature of a successful professional team.

- governance framework
- building and sustaining a professional staff team
- staff wellbeing and pastoral support

- On opening, the school adopted the Moore House Group's mission, vision and values. The headteacher has now recognised a need to develop these further to capture better the school's unique context. The headteacher should ensure parents, partners, staff and children and young people are fully involved in the development, and ongoing review, of the school's vision, values and aims. The school's vision, values and aims need to focus more on ensuring high-quality learning and teaching, where children and young people make the best possible progress.
- The headteacher at Moore House Academy, Butterstone is a member of the senior management team of Moore House Group. The organisation's governance framework details the roles and responsibilities of the board of governors and senior management team. Board meetings are held approximately every six weeks. These ensure the board have an overview of all aspects of the organisation's work, including at Moore House Academy, Butterstone. Monthly senior management team meetings focus on quality assuring each aspect of the organisation's work. These support the headteacher to share progress and identify further areas for improvement. Monthly child protection meetings, with the senior management team, support the headteacher to discuss issues related to matters of safeguarding and child protection. The organisation's advisory group of consultants are supporting the headteacher to take forward improvements in the school. The governing body needs to ensure it works in close partnership with the school to rigorously monitor the school's progress. Strategic leadership needs to ensure it leads to high-quality outcomes for all children and young people.
- The school uses digital technology to store files and share information via email. The school does not currently have sufficient access to the internet to support staff's aspirations for improved use of digital technology across the school. Staff use mobile phones to maintain contact with the school when children or young people visit venues outwith the school campus. The daily staff meeting allows staff to share general information about school activities planned for that day and about each child's and young person's wellbeing. This supports them to be kept up to date with developments at the school and informed of any issues affecting each child or young or person. Teachers are at the very early stages of identifying, and attending, relevant professional learning. They are beginning to recognise the need for them to attend conferences and events relevant to working in the special schools sector. The headteacher has set aside time for staff to undertake professional review and development. This has not yet

taken place. Staff now need to engage with professional review and development to support them to improve their practice.

- Moore House Group's staff attendance, absence and grievance policies are clear. These support the headteacher to manage the staff team effectively. The organisation's recruitment procedures ensure the safe recruitment of staff and processes take account of equalities legislation. Commendably, the headteacher involves children or young people in the recruitment of new staff. The headteacher should consider how parents could become more involved in future appointments made at the school. As the school continues to develop, the headteacher needs to ensure that policies and procedures support the development of a highly skilled team.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school and communicate regularly with the headteacher and staff. The headteacher should now develop a more structured way to communicate with parents to ensure they are kept fully involved in school improvement.
- The headteacher should continue to develop a clear process for handling and monitoring any complaints the school may receive. The headteacher is aware of the need to increase staff's and children's and young people's awareness and knowledge of matters related to diversity.
- Teachers are at the early stages of familiarising themselves with the GTCS professional standards. Student teachers are supported by a mentor and by members of the advisory consultancy board. All new staff undertake a four day induction programme before being appointed to a post with the Moore House Group. The headteacher is highly attuned to all staff's welfare and has supported them well to settle into their posts at Moore House Academy. The headteacher needs to continue to raise staff's expectations at the school, to ensure they grow to become a highly-skilled team. Staff need to continue to be supported to develop their confidence in undertaking leadership roles.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

weak

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

- The school's peaceful and calm learning environment reduces children's and young people's stress and anxiety. This supports them to concentrate and engage in their learning. All staff relate well to children and young people. They show compassion and empathy towards them. They are particularly tolerant in the few instances where children and young people become distressed. Teachers employ a variety of methods to engage children and young people. Teachers' knowledge of children's and young people's interests drives the content of learning experiences. Children and young people arrive at school motivated to learn and make progress. Teachers now need to develop their practice further so that children and young people have a better understanding of what skills they are learning and why. Children and young people should be supported better to understand the progress they are making and what their next steps in learning should be. Almost all children and young people are increasing in confidence and engagement, as evidenced by their increased attendance. The school needs to continue to build children's and young people's abilities to engage with learning.
- The school campus supports teachers well to take learning outdoors. Teachers now need to develop their use of outdoor learning to support children and young people to better understand the skills they are developing when learning outdoors. Staff use a range of natural resources to make learning enjoyable. Overall, lessons do not yet offer children and young people sufficient levels of challenge. This can mean that tasks are often too easy for children and young people. In these instances, children and young people take too long to settle and become disengaged in their learning. Almost all lessons are teacher led. Children and young people need to have increased opportunities to lead their own learning. Teachers use open questioning to encourage discussion within lessons. This supports children and young people to contribute their ideas to lessons. In a majority of lessons, this practice could be developed further so that children and young people have a clearer understanding of the aim of the lesson. Teachers use digital technology to enhance lessons where possible. The school should take forward plans to increase the use of digital technology within lessons, including enhancing access to the internet across the campus.
- A few teachers have adopted a practitioner enquiry model and the headteacher encourages staff to develop their capacity through career-long professional learning. There is a focus on inclusive education, with a few staff undertaking online learning modules. Staff need to ensure that their engagement in such professional learning leads to improvements in practice.
- Staff take into account children's and young people's physical, sensory and behavioural strengths and needs when planning and delivering lessons. Staff are beginning to develop their practice to ensure that, in the senior phase, all lessons reflect the need to plan for transitions and develop skills for the future. Teachers are beginning to reflect this relevance in their plans, though it is not yet possible to measure success. Teachers are beginning to incorporate the

development of skills for learning, life and work into their planning. Teachers plan whole school activities to increase children's and young people's independence. For example, a recent trip using public transport to a theatre in Edinburgh was designed to encourage young people to develop their independent travel skills. Teachers now need to raise their expectations of what children can achieve independently. Children and young people should be afforded more opportunities to develop their independent living skills.

- At the broad general education, teachers are beginning to plan using the Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes, although this is not yet embedded in practice. Assessment approaches are limited to gathering samples of work at regular intervals and making comment on children's and young people's personal progression. Teachers need to gain more understanding of National Benchmarks in order to make sound judgements as to how well children and young people are progressing against national standards. Whilst teachers observe children and young people closely, teachers' judgement of achievement of a level currently lacks rigour. Teachers need to be supported to develop their understanding of, and skills in, moderation. Partnership working with other schools is in its early stages and moderation activities have not yet had an impact on improving children's and young people's outcomes. Improved approaches to moderation need to make clear to staff, what children and young people need to be able to make the best possible progress. The headteacher should continue with the plan to support teachers to visit, and see practice in, other schools.
- A few teachers are beginning to be able to identify how well individual children and young people are progressing within specific curricular areas. However, children's and young people's progress, and attainment, across the curriculum is not yet being rigorously and robustly tracked and monitored.
- Overall, assessing what children and young people can do, planning for them to make good progress, and tracking and monitoring children's and young people's progress is a significant area for improvement in the school.

1.5 Management of resources to promote equity:

Theme 2: Management of resources and environment for learning

- Moore House Academy is based in a former school campus with a number of buildings. Teachers use these spaces well to deliver learning in a range of curricular areas. A few classroom spaces are well equipped with resources to deliver lessons. For example, the science and music classrooms and fitness gym are particularly well resourced. Staff have begun to adapt learning spaces to improve the quality of children's and young people's experiences. For example, through altering the lighting to better meet the needs of children and young people sensitive to light. Children and young people are consulted on these changes and are influencing improvements to the learning environment. The school should continue to develop learning spaces in the campus buildings to ensure improvements enrich children's and young people's learning experiences. Children and young people choose resources which meet their needs and interests. This supports them to maintain their levels of interest in their learning. The school has limited connectivity to broadband. This limits teacher's abilities to use digital technologies to enhance children's and young people's experiences. The school should develop further the range of digital technologies available in the school. For example, interactive whiteboards and tablets.
- The school is situated in a quiet, rural setting and has extensive grounds. These include a tennis court, playing field and woodland. Teachers use outdoor spaces well to support outdoor learning, particularly aspects of health and wellbeing. Children and young people enjoy the calming effect of the school's setting. This supports them to engage better with their learning.
- The school does not yet robustly evaluate the impact of resources to engage children and young people in their learning. The school should now gather a range of information to ensure future purchases provide best value.

2.1 Safeguarding

- 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.

2.2 Curriculum

satisfactory

This indicator highlights the importance of placing the needs of learners at the centre of curriculum design and development. The structure and delivery of the curriculum should take good account of local and national circumstances. The curriculum is the totality of learning experiences across the four contexts as delivered by the school and its partners. An effective curriculum results in strong outcomes for all learners.

- rationale and design
- development of the curriculum
- learning pathways
- skills for learning, life and work

- The school's curriculum is designed to deliver learning experiences that take as full account as possible, the additional support needs of individual children and young people. The school needs to continue to involve all staff, relevant stakeholders and partners in developing and embedding the school's curriculum. This should include a clear rationale for the school's aspirations for each child or young person. The curriculum structure needs to be developed further to take increased account of the Curriculum for Excellence design principles. Teachers need to develop further their understanding of the four capacities to ensure these are built into their curriculum planning.
- Children's and young people's learning pathways are individualised. All children and young people have an element of choice regarding how their school day is structured. Learning pathways offer some flexibility for children and young people who struggle to attend school full time. The school needs to develop the curriculum further to ensure children and young people with poor attendance can make improved progress in their learning. The majority of staff take responsibility for developing literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across the curriculum. Visiting staff enhance the curriculum which ensures children and young people access learning in areas such as art. Teachers are committed to providing an interesting curriculum across all areas of learning. Most teachers offer lessons in more than one curricular area. However, the curriculum is constrained by the availability of staff in certain subject areas, such as English and a few aspects of expressive arts. The staff team are creative in their approach to ensure children and young people do not miss out in these areas. The headteacher is taking action to address this staffing issue. Children and young people would benefit from increased opportunities to develop their skills within the life and work of the school, for example sitting on committees or improvement groups. Overall, staff use outdoor learning opportunities well. They should now look to develop how these opportunities can contribute to children's and young people's personal achievements. The school needs to develop further children's and young people opportunities to achieve qualifications and accreditation for their success in learning.
- The school is successfully developing partnerships with local colleges, universities and employers. These partnerships are beginning to support the school to increase children's and young people's opportunities for learning. For example, children and young people are beginning to access work placements and university courses. Partnership working is growing, and for those young people in the senior phase who attend regularly, there are good opportunities to develop skills for learning, life and work. Skills for work courses provide opportunities for children and young people to develop their skills in creative digital media, and sport and leisure. Within the broad general education, the school should broaden opportunities to experience and learn about the world of work. Teachers should embed links across the curriculum using interdisciplinary learning, assemblies and within taught subject areas. At present, there are a few opportunities for personal achievement through enterprise. The school

should build on these emerging strengths and provide opportunities for children and young people to build awareness of the world of work.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- All children and young people attending the school have experienced significant periods of time where they have not accessed education. Almost half find attending school challenging. Since opening, staff have focussed successfully on ensuring all children and young people attend the school as frequently as they can. Staff have built positive relationships with children and young people. Children and young people are supported effectively to attend the school. Transition planning is effective in supporting most children and young people to settle into their placement at the school. This is resulting in half the children and young people attending the school on a full-time basis. This is having a significantly positive impact on families, and children's and young people's wellbeing.
- Therapy pets support children and young people in the school to relax and feel calm.
- Transition planning for half of the children and young people who attend the school on a part-time basis is ongoing. This is having a significant improvement on their attendance. The attendance of children and young people attending on a part-time basis is, in the majority of cases, increasing. This is supporting those children and young people to build their confidence and engage more in their learning. The school should continue to work with all relevant partners to ensure these children and young people can increase their attendance and receive their full entitlement to education.
- Teachers use the wellbeing indicators to assess children's and young people's wellbeing. Their strengths and areas of concern are recorded in a wellbeing plan. Children and young people are supported to identify their next steps. As yet, it is too early to evaluate how well these plans are supporting improvements in children's and young people's wellbeing. Across the school, teachers should develop further children's and young people's understanding of the importance of the wellbeing indicators. Parents should continue to be supported to understand the language of the wellbeing indicators and their importance in their child's or young person's development.
- The school uses a range of plans to record information, including individualised education programmes, on each child's or young person's unique needs. These provide a rich range of information on what each child or young person likes, dislikes, their difficulties, strategies to support their learning, their next steps and personalised targets. These plans support staff to know how best to engage each child and young person in their learning. The school should review these plans to provide a more streamlined approach to recording this information. A few children are considered for coordinated support plans, when appropriate.
- Children's and young people's opinions inform the work of the school. They are consulted regularly on a range of planned activities. As a result, they know they will be listened to, and that their opinion matters. This is helping them to develop their confidence, and trust in adults.

Teachers arrange a variety of excursions to venues beyond the school. These are helping children and young people to develop their independent travel skills.

- The school celebrates festivals and events at daily tutor groups each morning. All children and young people access all aspects of the school's work. The school should now develop children's and young people's understanding of issues related to diversity in a more progressive way.

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.