

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Moorcroft School

Bramble Close, Hillingdon, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3BF

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 October 2024

Outcome

Moorcroft School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Ms Toni Edmonds-Smith. This school is part of the Eden Academy Trust (EAT), which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Susan Douglas and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Barry Nolan.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and students are greeted warmly every morning by staff who know and care for them. This is a joyous start to the day because pupils and adults are pleased to see each other, and pupils eagerly enter the school building. Pupils are happy and kept safe. They are expected to behave well, be as independent as possible and communicate their needs and choices, which they do.

Across all three sites, pupils consistently experience incredible care and support from very knowledgeable and expert staff. They have access to a range of resources and an environment that enables them to communicate in a way that suits them. Pupils are also given time to regulate their emotions and deal with their sensory needs, so they are able to learn.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop their interests, confidence and independence. For example, they enjoy listening to music in 'disco club', choosing books to listen to or read, feeding the chickens, doing helpful jobs and working in the tuckshop. The sixth-form hub is a place where students can enjoy unstructured time with more independence. Here, students make themselves and each other drinks, chat and socialise.

Pupils increase their vocabulary through a range of activities, including storytelling workshops, sensory stories, going into the community and learning about the world around them.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The quality of education at Moorcroft school across all sites is excellent. The curriculum is focused on developing pupils' communication skills through activities, such as sailing and food preparation, as well as in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. The curriculum has been designed to ensure that pupils can build their knowledge over time. The school uses the targets in pupils' educational and health care (EHC) plans to ensure that the curriculum helps pupils achieve their personal goals.

Leaders are extremely ambitious for all pupils. Learning is precisely planned with the specific needs of each pupil in mind. Pupils' targets are carefully identified, and activities are well designed to ensure that they can reach their milestones. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge of English and mathematics. For example, reading menus and measuring ingredients, or counting, sorting and ordering stock for the staff tuck shop. Early reading is delivered using an appropriate phonics approach, and those who can access reading are learning to read and write at a positive rate. Teachers regularly check what pupils have learned and understood. They make appropriate adaptations to correct any mistakes and misunderstandings.

Pupils' independence is a key feature of their education at Moorcroft, and pupils are helped to be as independent as possible. They are encouraged to do things for themselves, such as butter toast, select snacks and carry out self-care activities.

Students and pupils work very well with each other, their teachers and support staff. The school is a calm and purposeful place. There is a well-considered, individualised approach to helping pupils to regulate their emotions so they can be ready to learn. Staff are experts at helping this happen.

The school works effectively with outside agencies and in-house therapists to ensure that the best possible care and support is available to pupils. These include specialist behaviour teams, speech and language, occupational and physiotherapists, health and social workers.

The school has worked diligently to ensure that pupils attend school well. They work with families and other agencies to support students to come to school when things are difficult. There is a deep understanding of the challenges that families face so support is tailored to their needs.

Students are very well supported by all staff. Opportunities to develop their own interests are plentiful and they are prepared for life outside Moorcroft. Areas such as on-line safety, consent and relationships are thoughtfully designed to ensure that the learning matches the developmental stage of pupils.

The school council is an active group of students. For example, they are currently making a film about their school. All pupils vote to make decisions about the school, and students take part in peaceful protests, raise money for charity and run cultural days in school.

The school carefully manages work experience by preparing the workplace and students in advance so that it is successful. Students have had access to work experience at local supermarkets or in hospitality. They are always asked for their opinions about their experiences. Students are encouraged to express themselves through every activity at the school. This could be through pictures, gesture, verbally or using technology. Learning how to say no or to choose is central to developing pupils' sense of independence.

Leaders have maintained ambitious standards with growing numbers of pupils and across three sites. Leaders' decisions are always in the best interests of children not just for now but in consideration of their future. They are also considerate of staff development, well-being and workload and always seek to provide opportunities for staff to hone their expertise. All staff are highly valued.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in May 2019.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	138158
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	10345937
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	146
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	52
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Barry Nolan
CEO of the trust	Susan Douglas
Headteacher	Toni Edmonds-Smith
Website	www.moorcroftschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	1 to 3 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils has increased. The school population includes pupils with severe learning difficulties and profound, multiple learning difficulties.
- The school has expanded to three sites while two new school buildings are completed. These are due to open by January 2026.
- The school accommodates pupils across three locations: Moorcroft School, Bramble Close, Hillingdon UB8 3BF currently has 100 pupils on roll; The Satellite provision, Pinkwell Lane, Hayes UB3 1PG currently has 30 pupils on roll; and Sunshine House, 33 Dene Road, Northwood HA6 2DD has 16 pupils on roll.

- The current headteacher took up their post in September 2022 and has responsibility for the educational outcomes for pupils across the three sites.
- The previous headteacher took up post as regional director in September 2022 and has strategic oversight of the three sites.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school uses a range of communication methods to meet the pupils' varying needs, including those with autism, and those with visual and hearing impairments.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. This is appropriately pitched to the level and stage of pupils' understanding and ability to access information.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of the school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspectors met with a range of school leaders from different sites, including the headteacher, regional director, chief executive officer and trustees, including the chair and deputy chair of the trust. They also spoke with representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors visited sample lessons, met with some pupils and looked at samples of work. They also observed breaktimes and the start of the day and looked at curriculum, outcome and assessment documentation that relate to pupils' EHC plans and learning.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Una Buckley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sara Morgan

Ofsted Inspector

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