

# Inspection of a good school: Morecambe Road School

Morecambe Road, Morecambe, Lancashire LA3 3AB

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Inspection dates: 13 to 14 June 2023

## Outcome

Morecambe Road School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils receive a warm welcome into the school every morning. They are happy in school and are eager to talk to their friends and staff. Relationships are important in this school. Pupils, staff, parents and carers described the school as one big happy family. Parents could not praise the school enough. They said how it had changed their children's lives.

Teachers have high expectations for every pupil. Pupils strive to reach their goals. They achieve highly. Pupils learn to be independent, make choices and have high aspirations for their future. Those pupils who are non-verbal learn to communicate their wishes and needs to adults.

Pupils love the wide range of activities that they get to enjoy. Pupils who had recently returned from a residential trip shared their favourite things. Some loved the canoeing and water sports while others enjoyed the sleep over with their friends. Some pupils help to run the school café and undertake work experience.

Pupils feel safe, secure, settled and ready to learn. They behave well in and around school. Sometimes, pupils do fall out but staff are quick to help them to understand the impact their words or actions have on others. This ensures that on the very rare occasion that bullying occurs, it is dealt with effectively.

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

The primary need of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who attend the school has changed considerably since the previous inspection. A higher number of pupils with more complex needs and severe learning difficulties now attend the school. Leaders have responded successfully to the different needs of pupils. They have designed an ambitious curriculum that allows pupils to build their knowledge over time and to apply that knowledge confidently.

Leaders have expanded the vocational offer this academic year for some Year 10 pupils. These pupils have undertaken a number of vocational courses at Lancaster and Morecambe College, including digital media, catering and sports leadership. Pupils have gained entry-level qualifications in these vocational subjects. This has been a success. However, leaders have not finalised, in partnership with the college, what they intend these pupils to learn and what qualifications they will be working towards when they move into Year 11.

Teaching and support staff are experts in their field. They choose teaching activities that will engage and interest all pupils and allow them to build on what they already know. Learning is personalised to each pupil's specific needs. This ensures that they succeed academically and in their personal development.

Assessment strategies are used well to allow teachers to identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge. Teachers use this information to reshape their teaching so that pupils can overcome gaps in their learning before they are introduced to new concepts.

Pupils develop a love of reading in school. In the Reception/Year 1 class, sensory stories allow children to use their senses to smell, touch and respond to objects from the story. Across all year groups, staff bring stories to life for pupils through puppets, drama, song and poetry. Staff's expertise ensures that pupils are able to learn the sounds that letters represent to decipher unfamiliar words. Pupils who are at the early stage of learning to read gain the skills and knowledge that they need to become confident readers.

Staff know the emotional and sensory needs of all pupils. They are proactive and intervene swiftly to support pupils to regulate their behaviour. This is undertaken quietly, sensitively and with respect. Over time, pupils learn to manage their own sensory needs. Pupils also learn to understand their emotions. They communicate through visual, sign or verbal communication to let staff know how they are feeling. Pupils' mental health is a priority in school. Staff and external specialists are available to support pupils with any mental health need. There is very little disruption to learning as a result.

The curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils celebrate cultural and religious festivals. Visits to places of worship and meeting religious leaders allow pupils to experience other cultures and celebrate difference. Pupils have many opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award develops their resilience and teamwork skills. Staff harness pupils' talents and interests. For example, pupils enjoy learning guitar, yoga and golf.

Leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for adulthood. The strong focus on personal development helps pupils thrive in school. The many opportunities to develop independence through curriculum activities, volunteering, work experience and community events give pupils the confidence and stamina that they need to be ready for their next stage in education, training or work.

Staff reported that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. They feel listened to and supported by leaders. Staff spoke warmly about the school and the supportive team ethos.

Governors are passionate about their school. They have a wide range of skills and work well together to ensure the pupils in school have the best possible education.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in school. Leaders ensure that staff are vigilant and respond swiftly to any sign that may indicate a cause for concern. Leaders work with external partners, including the local authority, to keep pupils safe. Leaders also work with a number of charities to support pupils and their families.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in school, online and in the community.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The curriculum for those Year 11 pupils who will be studying vocational courses this September is still in the design phase. This means that it is not clear what pupils will study and what qualifications they will be working towards. Leaders should ensure that they design a curriculum that allows pupils to build on what they already know and prepares them well for their next stage in education.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2013.

## 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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119876
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268953
<b>Type of school</b>	All-through special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	195
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Local authority
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Sarah Mainwarning
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anna Dootson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.morecambe.lancsngfl.ac.uk">www.morecambe.lancsngfl.ac.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- A new headteacher has taken up post since the previous inspection.
- Leaders use one unregistered provision for short-term tuition.
- Some pupils in Year 10 attend Lancaster and Morecambe College for the majority of their timetable. They are supported by school staff at all times.
- At the time of this inspection, there were no children under the age of five.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. The school caters for a wide range of needs, including moderate to severe learning difficulties, communication, and social communication needs.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and governors, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, communication and English, mathematics and physical development. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders and looked at samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.
- During the inspection, inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, behaviour and pupils' wider development. They also spoke with leaders, staff and pupils about safeguarding, behaviour and personal development.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents expressed through Ofsted Parent View. They also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Julie Bather, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Stephen Ruddy

Ofsted Inspector

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