

Northmoor Academy

Alderson Street, Oldham, Greater Manchester OL9 6AQ

Inspection dates

8–9 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Strong and committed senior leadership has ensured that this school has got off to a good start. Other leaders have good subject knowledge and demonstrate a real enthusiasm for their areas of responsibility. However, their accountability for the impact of their actions is still developing and is not as strong as that of senior leaders.
- The curriculum is carefully designed and frequently evaluated and refined to ensure that it meets the needs of the school's rapidly expanding pupil population.
- There is strong support for the high numbers of pupils who join the school with little experience of the English language and education system. Teachers and other adults in the 'Welcome Hub' and support teams ensure that these pupils swiftly gain the skills required to access learning.
- Opportunities for pupils' personal and pastoral development abound in the school and promote inclusion effectively. The school and the Harmony Trust go the extra mile to ensure that families who are new to this country get the support that they need to thrive.
- The quality of teaching in school is good. Knowledgeable and committed teachers and teaching assistants promote learning effectively.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points in a wide range of subjects. However, on occasions, particularly in subjects other than reading and writing, most-able pupils have more limited opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding in greater depth.
- The quality of teaching of phonics in early years and key stage 1 is excellent. However, the support for pupils in key stage 2 to develop their understanding of phonics is not as strong.
- The early years is a well-resourced, vibrant and caring place in which children enjoy their learning and make good progress from their starting points. Girls make better progress than boys. However, teachers sometimes do not make best use of the high-quality outdoor environment to promote children's independent learning.
- Pupils are immensely proud of their school. This view is shared by their parents and carers. Pupils attend well. They feel safe and know how to keep safe because of the high-quality guidance they receive.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance the quality of leadership and management of the school, by strengthening subject leaders' accountability for the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.
- Heighten the quality of teaching and learning in school, by ensuring that teachers:
 - provide the challenge that most-able pupils need to develop their knowledge and understanding at greater depth in subjects other than reading and writing
 - in early years routinely make the best use of the outdoors to promote children's progress, particularly that of boys, and develop children's confidence to learn independently.
- Further accelerate pupils' progress in reading, by:
 - ensuring that pupils experience an increasingly wide range of books and reading materials to help them to develop the range of their vocabulary
 - building on the excellent practice of the teaching of phonics in early years and key stage 1, to ensure that pupils in key stage 2 develop a secure knowledge of phonics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- This was the first inspection of the academy since it was established. It has grown rapidly in size. It is a harmonious place of learning of which the community can be rightly proud.
- Senior leaders are tenacious in their detailed evaluation of pupils' progress and attainment. Leaders are also rigorous in checking the quality of teaching. This ensures that they have an accurate and honest understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Leaders have developed an aspirational vision for the school that reflects their high expectations. They work closely as a team with staff, trustees and trust officers to carefully plan the development of the school. As a result, the school development plans contain clearly identified and appropriate priorities for improvement.
- The leadership of subjects is good, particularly in English, mathematics and phonics. The leadership for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is also good. Subject leaders keep up to date and informed about developments in their subjects through regular attendance at external and trust-based training events. Subject leaders have begun to take appropriate actions to further refine the curriculum, and sharpen the sequencing of when knowledge is taught, in order to promote pupils' learning. However, it is too early to see the impact of these refinements.
- Subject leaders have a good understanding of how well the contents of their subject curriculums are taught because they regularly check pupils' books and observe teaching. Subject leaders receive good administrative support to collate pupils' attainment and progress information. However, their accountability for the evaluation of this information and the impact of their actions on pupils' learning is not fully developed. Senior leaders are taking appropriate actions to address this.
- Leaders place pupils' welfare, including their social, moral, cultural and economic education, at the heart of all that they do. This is reflected in the school's motto of 'believe, achieve, succeed', which permeates all aspects of school life. It is also strongly promoted in the school's development programme, 'The Harmony Pledge'.
- An exceptionally high proportion of pupils join the school shortly after entering the country. They are helped to settle quickly into the school and local community due to the support and guidance they receive to develop their cultural capacity. Many displays around the school celebrate the diversity of pupils' cultural heritage by proudly displaying the flags of their home countries and the range of different languages spoken. Pupils swiftly develop a strong understanding of the values needed to positively contribute to British society as well as wider global society. This is because of the good quality of the curriculum that they are taught.
- Leaders demonstrate a deep understanding of the barriers to learning faced by pupils. Leaders' appropriate use of the pupil premium funding ensures that disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points. Leaders' actions include a strong focus on building pupils' skills in reading and numeracy to allow them to confidently

access learning in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils also have access to a range of other support. This includes a well-supervised and family-focused breakfast club, specialist support from a resident multi-agency team in school, and participation in educational visits to the theatre, museums and outdoor education events. Technology resources are paid for by pupil premium funding and provide further enrichment to disadvantaged pupils' education.

- Leaders' good use of the additional primary school physical education (PE) and sport funding has given the pupils opportunities to participate in a range of sporting activities and supported them to adopt healthier lifestyles. The school runs the 'daily mile' with ever-increasing participation by pupils. Leaders use the additional funding effectively to provide a rich diet of sporting opportunities. These include sports clubs for multi-skills and a football club run by specialist trainers, as well as a yoga club. Clubs are well attended. Funding is used well to develop staff knowledge of effective strategies to teach sport. Funding has also increased competitive sporting opportunities for pupils to participate in local sports tournaments.
- There are highly effective systems to track and respond quickly to any absence. The school's pastoral support team plays a key role in this. The meticulous analysis of attendance allows leaders to identify those at risk and to implement effective actions to head off many absences. These actions include the appointment of an interpreter to promote parents' and carers' understanding of the expectation of pupils' good attendance.
- The school's curriculum is well designed to be broad and balanced and meet the needs of pupils. It meets the agreed requirements set out in the school's funding agreement. There is careful consideration of how the curriculum is implemented. This strongly supports pupils who arrive in the school with little experience of the English education system. They receive the appropriate guidance and teaching that they need to gain the necessary skills to access learning.
- The curriculum promotes British values well. It equips pupils with the skills that they need to continue to learn in their next stages of education. Leaders continue to refine the school's curriculum in order to systematically develop pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Leaders make good use of the additional funding that they receive for pupils with SEND. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is very knowledgeable and experienced. She ensures that support for pupils is carefully planned, well organised and effective in promoting pupils' good progress. Parents are given good information about their children's progress.
- Parents are well informed about life in school and their children's progress through a wide range of communications. Parents flock to the school at the start and end of the day. The well-attended, family-oriented breakfast club exemplifies the inclusive nature of the school. Pupils are well set for a day of learning. The breakfast club also provides parents with a point of contact that cements the bridge of trust between home and school. Parents overwhelmingly support the school. This is exemplified in comments such as: 'Northmoor Academy is an amazing school. What they have done for my children is outstanding. All the staff at Northmoor are so kind, caring and always there for you and your child no matter what.'

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school is effective.
- Many trustees possess professional skills and use them well to check and hold leaders stringently to account for the impact of their actions. Trustees share the leaders' vision, commitment and high expectations. The trustees know their school well because of the quality of the information they receive from senior leaders and officers. Additionally, trustees make effective use of their frequent and purposeful visits to the school to see staff and pupils at work and to check the accuracy of the information they receive.
- Trustees have overseen considerable investment in the school. This includes the provision of additional temporary leadership and administrative capacity during the first years of operation. This deliberate strategy has allowed senior leaders to focus their efforts successfully on ensuring good-quality teaching and learning.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and trustees have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and are followed meticulously. Statutory checks are carried out on the suitability of staff to work with children. The statutory checks on all leaders and trustees are completed to ensure that they are suitable to hold leadership and management positions in an academy.
- Leaders have taken appropriate actions to ensure that the school is a safe and secure place in which pupils can learn. Carefully controlled access ensures that pupils remain safe and secure during their time in school and that parents and the community have appropriate access to engage in school life.
- Well-trained staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding. They are vigilant about the potential risks that pupils may face, including those arising from extremism or the online world. Records are fit for purpose and meticulously kept. Leaders share information with parents and appropriate authorities effectively to ensure pupils' safety.
- Trustees have ensured that appropriate monitoring and filtering arrangements are in place for the school's internet connection.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders engage in well-considered and careful recruitment of teachers. Many teachers have a proven track record of effective teaching across the trust. This ensures that there is a well-skilled, committed and effective teaching staff in the school. As a result, the quality of teaching is consistently good.
- Teachers and committed, well-trained teaching assistants have good subject knowledge in a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics and art. Pupils are often inspired to learn through interesting and challenging activities. As a result, pupils develop good subject knowledge. For example, pupils in Year 5 studying the

work of LS Lowry were able to articulate how he used 'subdued' colours. They could also talk about his development of the people in his paintings from stickmen.

- Teachers make good use of questioning to probe and check the understanding of pupils by frequently requiring pupils to explain how they arrived at their answers. Teachers typically use their assessments well to identify pupils' misconceptions and swiftly address them. However, occasionally, teachers do not follow the school's feedback policy.
- Writing is taught with increasing complexity across the school to systematically develop pupils' knowledge of the spelling, punctuation and grammar needed in English to convey meaning effectively. This results in pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, developing their skills in reading and writing well. Teaching makes use of the opportunities to write in different styles in other subjects. However, sometimes the over-use of 'cloze procedures' or templates to scaffold pupils' writing limits most-able pupils' confidence to apply their knowledge and skills independently.
- Reading is taught effectively in school. Children in early years receive high-quality teaching in phonics from the outset. This continues in key stage 1. Reading books are closely matched to pupils' phonic abilities. A well-established scheme of reading books is used to develop pupils' understanding further as they progress. However, the provision of the teaching of phonics to pupils in key stage 2 who have little or no understanding of the English language is more limited.
- Pupils have limited access to a broad range of texts to support their love of literature. Leaders have correctly prioritised reading as an aspect for development. They are taking appropriate actions to enhance the quality of its teaching and to give pupils access to a wider range of texts. However, the impact of these actions is not fully embedded.
- Mathematics is taught well in school. Teachers sequence learning activities that systematically develop pupils' good understanding of mathematical concepts. For example, pupils in lower key stage 2 were able to confidently explain how they used inverse operations to balance equations and find missing numbers. However, sometimes, teachers underestimate the capabilities of the most able pupils and do not make tasks challenging enough to allow them to learn from their mistakes.
- Teachers demonstrate the same high expectations in other subjects across the curriculum as they do in mathematics and English. Pupils' work in books is typically of a very high standard of presentation across all subjects. Teachers develop pupils' knowledge systematically. For example, in music in key stage 1, pupils deepen their knowledge of time and rhythm through practical sessions. They learn to play different instruments with increasing confidence. However, the opportunities for the most able pupils to excel in subjects other than reading and writing and to develop their knowledge and understanding at greater depth is more limited.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are key strengths of this school and the foundation from which pupils thrive and make progress. Pupils know how to stay safe and healthy, including while online, because of the quality of education they receive. Pupils recently demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of the risks of identity theft and online fraud in presentations they gave to the local mayor in the council chamber.
- Leaders and staff frequently go the extra mile to promote an inclusive ethos. Families who are new to this country are strongly supported to learn English through additional language lessons. Leaders provide opportunities for families to share experiences and talk about any worries or concerns they may have. Families get guidance to help them to feel part of the local community. For example, as a result of parental requests, in collaboration with parents, staff planned a family trip that made use of the local transport systems. As a result, more families now make confident use of the local trams to provide their children with access to wider educational experiences.
- Pupils have many opportunities to develop their confidence and personal self-esteem by undertaking roles of responsibility. These roles include opportunities to contribute their opinions about school development priorities to the school's and the trust's senior leaders by serving on the 'Children's Leadership Team'. Other pupils accept the mantle of responsibility through their roles as 'play buddies', 'eco champions' and 'junior translators'. Additionally, older pupils develop their economic understanding by running effective enterprise activities to support the school's fair and end-of-year celebrations.
- Pupils demonstrate a deep understanding of equality and diversity because of the teaching they receive in this multicultural and harmonious learning community. They have an excellent understanding of the different types of bullying. Those that spoke with inspectors said that there is hardly any bullying. They were confident that teachers would act swiftly to deal with any concerns they might have.
- The school has excellent relationships with outside agencies. Leaders are proactive in seeking additional advice and guidance from the trust and the local authority, when appropriate, to protect pupils from harm.
- Many pupils have limited experiences of English culture, history and language. Leaders' dedicated promotion and development of extra-curricular activities, including a residential visit, mean that opportunities abound for pupils to expand their experiences. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly promoted alongside that of their academic achievement.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.

- Pupils demonstrate exemplary conduct around the school.
- As a result of the excellent professional relationships between adults and pupils, the school is a calm, harmonious community where trust and respect are mutual.
- Pupils are proud of their school and what it does for them. Attendance rates are in line with national averages. Persistent absences without good reasons for being absent are diminishing swiftly.
- Exclusions from school are extremely rare and consistently well below the national average for primary schools. This demonstrates how effective leaders' strategies are in supporting those pupils who want a fresh start in the school following periods of turbulence in their education.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Many pupils join the school soon after arriving in this country. The care and guidance provided by school staff ensure that pupils swiftly settle to become positive contributors to the learning community. Additionally, high numbers of pupils join the school through the fair access programme, often for a fresh start following interruptions to their education brought about by exclusion or prolonged trips to their family's country of origin. Despite these factors, all pupils, including children in early years, get a good start to their education. However, a high proportion of pupils have not yet spent sufficient time in school to ensure that they reach the expected standards for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, attainment outcomes in end-of-key-stage national assessments are below average in all key stages.
- In key stage 2, the few pupils who have suitable historical assessment information to identify their starting points make strong progress. In 2018, published progress for these pupils was well above average in writing and above average in mathematics. Progress was weaker in reading, and in line with the national average. Work in pupils' books and externally moderated teachers' assessments confirm that pupils make good progress. Attainment is rising swiftly. This particularly applies to those pupils who have benefited from being in the school for a longer period and who have received good-quality teaching.
- Most-able pupils sometimes do not receive the challenge to work and attain at the higher standards in some subjects. This is particularly the case in mathematics and in subjects other than English. Consequently, the proportion of pupils attaining higher standards is low and below national averages.
- Pupils in key stage 1 make good progress in their acquisition of phonics knowledge because of the high-quality teaching they receive. As a result, they quickly develop basic phonic skills to be able to decode the pronunciation of words. However, their understanding of meaning and their range of vocabulary frequently lag behind that which would be expected for their age. This is because of their limited experiences of the English language prior to joining the school from abroad. All pupils who did not attain the expected score in the Year 1 phonics check, typically due to their recent arrival in the country, did successfully reach the expected standard in the Year 2 re-check. This was because of the quality of teaching they received.

- In key stage 2, pupils develop their understanding of basic reading skills. However, they often find more complex comprehension tasks more difficult because of their limited range of vocabulary. For the international new arrivals, this is due to their lack of knowledge of English phonics. These pupils often have limited experience of a broad and rich range of English literature. Leaders have implemented appropriate actions to address these weaknesses. Leaders provide pupils with access to additional reading material to improve their outcomes in reading. However, it is too soon to see the impact of these actions.
- Pupils' work in subjects other than English and mathematics is of a good standard. In art, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of a wide range of artistic techniques, including pointillism. Pupils study a number of different artists. Pupils' learning in other subjects includes appropriate educational visits and/or practical experiences. This ensures that pupils develop the cultural capacity they need to succeed in their next stages of education. However, opportunities for the most able pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding at greater depth are sometimes limited.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points because of the support and teaching they receive.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership and management of early years are good. Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths, weaknesses and the priorities for further improvement. They share the high expectations and clear vision of senior leaders in the school and communicate these well to other staff in early years. However, leaders' accountability for the evaluation of assessment information and the checks on the quality of teaching are not fully developed.
- Leaders have ensured that all statutory welfare requirements are met. Safeguarding is effective and of a similar high standard to that seen across the rest of the school.
- Most children enter Nursery and Reception with levels of development that are below those typical for their age. Additionally, a high proportion of children join during the Reception Year. This has a considerable impact on published data. This shows that the proportion of children attaining a good level of development is well below the national average.
- Children benefit from good teaching in early years. Well-trained teachers and teaching assistants use questioning effectively to deepen children's understanding and address any misconceptions they might have. Teachers and teaching assistants identify children's interests and use them well to develop their next steps in learning through structured play and learning activities. This was evident in Nursery, where children were developing their communication and collaboration skills through role play in the 'Ice-cream Parlour'.
- Children also have good opportunities to develop their understanding of caring for others. An example of this is how they look after Ryan the gosling and Gizmo the goose. However, sometimes teachers and teaching assistants do not promote independent learning, particularly when children are outdoors.

- Phonics is taught exceptionally well and achievement in phonics is rising. Children quickly develop their phonic skills, which are used as the bedrock to the teaching of early reading. They also have many opportunities to apply their phonics in their independent early writing.
- Teachers use assessment effectively to identify and plan a wide range of exciting, focused activities that engage children. Consequently, children across Nursery and Reception make good progress from their starting points. However, the progress that boys make is not as strong as that of girls. It is too soon to see the impact of leaders' actions to promote the progress made by boys. Children benefit from a vibrant and well-resourced learning environment, both indoors and outdoors. A range of varied learning activities that engage children's imagination are routinely made available. This is stronger in the indoor learning environment, where children have more opportunities to develop their independence.

School details

Unique reference number	142412
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10087788

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	530
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Paul Makin
Principal	Jessica Hainsworth
Telephone number	0161 260 0482
Website	www.northmoor.theharmonytrust.org
Email address	info@northmoor.theharmonytrust.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This was the first inspection of Northmoor Academy since it opened in September 2016. Northmoor is part of the Harmony Trust and as such does not have a governing body. Governance is undertaken by the board of trustees who are supported by a number of officers, including the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Northmoor Academy is a larger-than-average school that has unexpectedly and rapidly grown in size since its opening in every year group. This is in response to the shortage of school places in the Metropolitan Borough of Oldham.
- The mobility of pupils is extremely high. In 2017/18, the mobility of pupils was approximately 60%. In the current year, it is nearly 40%. During 2017/18, 450 pupils were on roll at some point during the year. However, only 150 of them had completed a full year of education at Northmoor.
- The majority of pupils are of 'any other white background', and 40% of pupils are new to the United Kingdom since 2017. Over 30 languages are spoken in the school.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The school provides a breakfast club that is available to all pupils and their families.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of learning and recreation activities, including parts of lessons, and looked at pupils' work. They listened to pupils reading and talked with pupils about their lessons and school life.
- Meetings were held with the executive principal head of academy and a range of subject leaders, including the SENCo, who is the senior leader responsible for special educational needs. Inspectors spoke with representatives of the multi-academy trust's board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the trust. A telephone conversation was held with the chair of the trustees.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' progress and to school management, including the arrangements to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and staff and took account of the 13 responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View. The inspectors also took account of the 12 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 12 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

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