

Name of School:	Mowbray School
Headteacher:	Jonathan Tearle
Hub:	North East Special
School type:	Community special
MAT:	Not applicable

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	EFFECTIVE
Date of this Review:	25/02/2020
Overall Estimate at last QA Review:	This is the school's first review
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	GOOD
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	13/12/2017

Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising host school leaders and visiting reviewers agree that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

Leadership at all levels Effective

Quality of provision and outcomes Effective

AND

**Quality of provision and
outcomes for disadvantaged
pupils and pupils with additional
needs**

Area of Excellence Not offered at this review

**Previously accredited valid Areas
of Excellence** Not applicable

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate Effective

Please note that a Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review is not equivalent to an Ofsted inspection, and agreed peer evaluation estimates from the review are not equivalent to Ofsted judgements.

1. Context and character of the school

Mowbray is a special school catering for 239 pupils, aged between three and 16 years. The main school is based in Bedale, in North Yorkshire. A satellite provision for primary aged pupils opened in January 2020. Due to the increasing demand for places, pupil numbers have grown. The satellite provision in Ripon will allow Mowbray to accommodate over 280 pupils.

The school caters for a wide range of needs, including pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties (SLD). Some pupils have difficulties associated with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH), speech, language and communication, and physical disabilities. The proportion of pupils with complex autism spectrum conditions (ASC) continues to increase. A majority of pupils join Mowbray from mainstream schools. A small minority became disaffected whilst at their previous school.

All pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHCP). The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average. There are nine pupils who are looked after by the local authority.

Mowbray has attained local and national recognition in many areas. These include awards for best practice in attachment awareness and promoting pupils' well-being, including Investors in Pupils. The school has gained recognition for outdoor learning, and the best use of a farm award. The school farm is used by the local community and other schools. The school has National Autistic Society (NAS) accreditation and is due to be assessed for advanced accreditation.

The ethos of the school is "Achieving..... Success through understanding, respect and endeavour."

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- School leaders provide governors with informal and formal training to ensure that governors are well informed. The governing body has a strong grasp of issues facing the school and provides it with support and robust challenge.
- Leaders have a realistic view of the strengths and areas for school development. The school improvement plan is comprehensive leading to robust actions to improve the school.
- Senior leaders enable teachers to develop strong subject knowledge. They do this through well-planned continuous professional development (CPD), mentoring and informal support.
- Mowbray successfully engages parents in their child's education. Teaching staff develop trust through daily personalised contact. The parent liaison officer and senior leaders thoughtfully support parents. The training offer, open to all parents, includes autism workshops. It is complemented by well-targeted support for families who are harder to reach or who need more support, including the provision of emotional first aid training.

- Support for, and development of, teaching assistants (TAs) is well organised. TAs are keen to develop their skills. They make good use of regular meetings, targeted CPD and additional on-line training opportunities.
- Continued school expansion has resulted in the need for more middle and subject leaders. Some middle leaders have been supported to undertake relevant masters and doctorate level research, relevant to their areas of responsibility. They are developing networks to share good practice within and outside of the school. Middle leaders value the informal, inspirational support from senior leaders.
- Mowbray makes a strong contribution to the local community. The school shop promotes footfall on the high street. School staff and pupils have supported a local supermarket to be more disability friendly and Bedale to be a makaton friendly town. They are involved in community litter picking, they visit care homes to entertain residents and they take shoeboxes of gifts to local hospitals. Pupils regularly enter the Wensleydale festival of poetry and song.
- A school senior leader is a senior leader of education, supporting mainstream schools in a variety of ways. This includes behaviour, ASC and memory skills.
- Pupils from the school council spoke with pride about their school. They especially valued friendships as well as being understood and cared for by staff. They enjoyed outdoor activities, including working on the farm. The school council has an annual budget which members are accountable for.
- Pupils utilise a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. These include, various sports, films, art and French clubs which broaden pupils' knowledge and experience.
- Mowbray promotes pupils' well-being highly effectively. The recently improved curriculum supports pupils to develop relevant skills and resilience. Speech and language and occupational therapy advice is built in to pupils' everyday experiences, so that pupils' communication and sensory needs are well met. Leaders have implemented a range of supportive provision, including emotion coaching, zones of regulation and attachment awareness. All staff have completed positive mental health and emotional well-being training, including the North Yorkshire Compass Buzz programme. They are developing best practice in supporting pupils with ASCs.
- Leaders use their personal knowledge, understanding and strong relationships with staff to promote their emotional well-being. For example, leaders use their awareness of work-life balance to support staff well-being.
- Mowbray is working towards the careers quality mark and has achieved almost all the Gatsby benchmarks. All pupils have destinations at local colleges, apprenticeships, employment, or personalised learning programmes. Pupils with SLD go on to study at the Dales sixth form.

2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if...

- ...the school self-evaluation and strategic plans were clearer and simpler, to help plan for and demonstrate progress towards objectives.
- ...leaders ensured that the evidence of pupils' learning is consistently and accurately utilised and built upon, across the school.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Relationships in the school are warm and trusting. Teaching staff show a high level of commitment to the pupils. Pupils respond well to this. Their conduct around school is positive.
- Staff use their secure knowledge of their subjects, and of how their pupils learn best, to provide pupils with skilled support and boundaries. This results in pupils demonstrating exemplary conduct and attitudes to learning.
- Teaching staff understand pupils' needs well. Pupils' well-being and potential for challenging behaviour is well understood. In a primary English lesson, a pupil moved himself back into the blue zone on the class zones of regulation display. In the same lesson the teacher quietly gave a pupil a short time away from the classroom, then skilfully re-engaged them in their learning.
- All staff at Mowbray participated in producing the new Mowbray curriculum. This has a clearer focus on preparation for adulthood which ensures that pupils are better prepared for their life after school.
- Since September 2019, curriculum pathways have been developed. There are now formal, formal pastoral, and semi-formal pathways. The pathways are used flexibly, to promote a personalised approach to learning. Pupils can move between pathways or have some access to more than one pathway in order to meet their individual needs.
- There is a calm, purposeful atmosphere in lessons and around school. Pupils transition in classes and around school smoothly, so that learning time is maximised. There is cohesion between pupils and opportunities for collaboration. In an outdoor learning session, pupils were purposefully engaged in useful, practical tasks. They worked together, solved problems and resolved conflict.
- In a well-planned, well-paced English GCSE lesson, the teacher carefully introduced relevant technical language. This meant that pupils could understand what the examination questions really meant.
- In almost all cases, TAs have strong subject knowledge and trusting relationships with pupils. This means that learning is well supported. In an outdoor learning session, the TAs asked pupils pertinent questions and quietly intervened, only when necessary, promoting independence.
- Staff use questioning well. This engages pupils in learning and checks how well pupils have secured previously taught knowledge.
- In a primary PE lesson, a pupil who came off task. The pupil was skilfully brought

back in to the session by a member of support staff who calmly re-engaged him after giving him time to process the information and self-regulate.

- In a mathematics lesson, pupils with visual impairments were well supported. Staff, skilled in the use of Braille, used excellent resources so that pupils were fully included in the lesson.
- In 2019, the number and grades of GCSE and equivalent qualifications increased again compared to previous years. The number of AQA unit awards achieved in a variety of relevant vocational areas doubled, compared to the previous year. Four pupils achieved the Duke of Edinburgh award at bronze or silver level.
- Current data on pupils' behaviour shows a continued trend of improvement. The number of exclusions decreased for the third successive year, despite pupil numbers increasing.
- Attendance has increased for the last three years. The overall figure compares favourably with other schools with similar pupil profiles.

3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if...

...pupils' progress towards their EHCP targets was consistently evidenced across the school.

...sensory breaks in lessons were consistently used in a timely fashion, so that pupils remained more alert and focussed on task.

4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well

- There is no significant difference in the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils compared to their non-disadvantaged counterparts at Mowbray. Pupils who are looked after by the local authority generally make better progress than pupils who are not looked after.
- In recent years, a significant minority of pupils joined Mowbray from mainstream schools, where they had low attendance and were significantly disengaged with learning. Many of these pupils had needs consistent with SEMH and/or ASC. Some families were disengaged with previous schools, so trust needed to be built. Mowbray have successfully re-engaged these pupils in learning. School leaders and teachers have found creative ways to use pupils' interests and abilities. Pupils know that school is a safe and stimulating place to learn relevant skills and knowledge and to develop positive attitudes.
- The school's personalised approach is crucial in re-engaging pupils. School leaders, teachers and parent liaison officers are flexible and boundaried in their approach, in engaging and supporting families. For example, some pupils initially came to school later in the day, to ensure that they attended school.

- Mowbray uses a variety of assessments to guide its work. This includes a cognitive profiling tool, self-esteem questionnaires and sensory and communication baselines. Pupils who need support with developing memory skills are supported to do this.
- Mowbray can show that this group of pupils make strong progress in developing skills for adult life. The school has compelling cases studies, which demonstrate that pupils are now engaged with learning, building skills for life and are achieving useful accreditations. Pupils are now on course to achieve relevant qualifications and places at local colleges. This represents exceptional progress for these pupils.

4.2 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...

...relevant pupils in need at Mowbray were better supported by social care and external agencies, in order to better support their safety and holistic development.

5. What additional support would the school like from the Challenge Partners network, either locally or nationally?

School leaders would like opportunities to discuss progress towards the school's EBIs later in the year.

This review will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities.