

Inspection of a good school: Hope High School

Carfield, Clay Brow, Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 9DP

Inspection dates:

17–18 December 2019

Outcome

Hope High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Hope High School has a welcoming and nurturing atmosphere. Leaders, governors and staff are ambitious for every pupil. Pupils achieve well from different starting points.

When pupils arrive at the school, many display challenging behaviours. Staff foster strong relationships with pupils. This enables pupils to improve their behaviour and build their self-esteem. Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning. They re-engage well with their education.

The pupils that we spoke to said that they feel safe at the school. They feel valued and listened to. Bullying is rare. Pupils trust staff to sort out any issues quickly, should they arise.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of activities which help them to develop their health and well-being, such as sports, trips and outdoor education. They are also involved in charity work and participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Pupils are well supported to develop their independence. Activities such as travel and shopping are carefully planned to help pupils to become more confident and ready for adult life.

Parents and carers who spoke with inspectors are very pleased with the improvements that they can see in their children's behaviour. A typical comment was, 'My child has flourished and has become a rounded person.'

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

Leaders have planned a curriculum that is personalised to meet the individual needs of pupils. The curriculum provides many opportunities to enhance pupils' emotional and social skills. Education, health and care (EHC) plans are used well to plan for pupils' learning. Teachers know their pupils well and have high expectations of them. Pupils enjoy their learning and achieve well in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics.

Planning in most subjects, such as English and food technology, is well developed. Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn. Topics are taught in a logical order to build effectively on pupils' learning as they move through the school. For example, in food technology, pupils enjoy using what they know to make cakes and an English breakfast. Pupils develop a good appreciation of the importance of kitchen safety and acquire essential practical skills for adult life.

The plans for some subjects, such as art, history and geography, have been introduced more recently and are not fully implemented. Leaders have started to check that the new curriculum plans help pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding in these subjects. However, it is too soon to see the impact of these recent changes on pupils' learning.

The school is a calm and orderly place. Leaders have created clear routines and boundaries which help pupils to improve their own behaviour. Pupils are well behaved during social times. Leaders place a strong focus on developing pupils' mental health. Dog therapy is also used as a calming influence for pupils with anxiety issues.

Pupils have lots of opportunities to develop as responsible individuals. For example, they are able to experience leadership positions in the school council and as prefects. Pupils learn about risks such as alcohol abuse and illegal drugs. They explore different cultures and foods on World Food Day at the school. Pupils develop respect and tolerance for differences in people. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

A small number of pupils attend vocational courses, such as fish farming and horticulture. These part-time work placements develop pupils' confidence. Pupils also benefit from impartial careers advice and guidance. This ensures that they are aware of training and apprenticeship opportunities when they leave school. Almost all pupils move on to education, employment or further training.

Staff are proud to work at the school and are committed to improving the life chances of pupils. Staff report that leaders take account of their work-life balance. Some subjects are led by teachers who are new to the role. Senior leaders are aware that they need to provide greater support to these staff, including subject-specific training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. All appropriate checks are made on staff to establish their suitability to work with pupils. All staff and governors are appropriately trained in safeguarding. Staff know what to do if they have any concerns. Leaders are tenacious in following up concerns and working with external agencies to keep pupils free from harm. The pastoral care in the school is a strength. Staff ensure that pupils are well looked after and supported. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Plans in some subjects, such as art, history and geography, have only just been introduced and have not had sufficient time to become embedded in practice across the school. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum plans are successfully implemented and are having the intended impact so that pupils know more and remember more in these subjects.
- Some subject leaders are new and need time to develop their skills and subject knowledge. Leaders have begun to train and support these teachers so that they can help pupils to learn more. Leaders should continue this work so that staff develop subject-specific expertise and carry out their new roles effectively.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 27–28 January 2015.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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

Unique reference number	119898
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10082102
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	71
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ann Clark
Headteacher	Helen Dunbavin
Website	www.hopehighschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 January 2015

Information about this school

- Hope High School provides education for pupils aged 11 to 16 with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- Some pupils have autism spectrum disorder.
- All pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
- The school currently uses three off-site providers: Preston Vocational Centre for construction, CAST for a wide range of environmental work and Creative Hub, Skelmersdale for music.
- Since May 2019, the headteacher has been made associate headteacher at the Rose School, Burnley. She shares her time between both schools.

Information about this inspection

- We held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other senior leaders and groups of subject leaders, teachers and support staff. We met with three members of the governing body, including the chair. We spoke with a representative from the local authority and with a representative of an alternative provider on the telephone. We

also held informal and formal discussions with many pupils and observed interactions during social times.

- We reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans and attendance and behaviour records.
- To inspect safeguarding, we looked at safeguarding policies and reviewed the school's record of checks on the suitability of staff and governors. We met with the designated safeguarding leaders. We also spoke to pupils about safeguarding and considered parents' views.
- We spoke with some parents during the inspection. We analysed 24 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 14 text responses from parents, 31 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 11 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- We started the inspection by focusing on art, English, food technology and mathematics. We visited a sample of lessons in these subjects, met with subject leaders, reviewed pupils' work and photographic evidence and had discussions with teachers and a small group of pupils.

Inspection team

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Martin Hanbury

Ofsted Inspector

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