

Hope View School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Hope View is an independent day special school which opened in November 2007. It is located in Chilham, a village close to Canterbury. The school admits up to 30 boys, aged between seven and 18 years, who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. There are currently 28 students on roll aged between 10 and 18 years. All are boys and about a quarter are looked after in foster care. All students have statements of special educational needs and are placed at the school by local authorities. Many have been permanently excluded from previous schools or for others, including post-16 students, a placement in mainstream school or college is not considered to be suitable. On entry to Hope View, most are underachieving and have low attainment due to their patchy school attendance. The school's aim is to enable all students 'to leave the school with strategies which equip them to manage themselves and their behaviour in society, and with qualifications which are in keeping with their own personal educational abilities and achievements'. The school's last full inspection was in October 2008 and a progress monitoring inspection took place in March 2009.

Evaluation of the school

Hope View School provides a good quality of education and meets its aims successfully. Students make good progress despite gaps in their previous school experiences, as a result of a good curriculum and good-quality teaching and assessment. Arrangements for safeguarding are good and meet regulatory requirements. Students are well supported in managing their challenging conduct, and behaviour throughout the school is good. The school has moved forward since the last inspection, particularly with improvements to the curriculum and assessment of students' progress; previous weaknesses in arrangements for students' welfare, health and safety have been addressed effectively. The school now meets all but two of the regulations for registration as an independent school.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good and continues to be developed to broaden the range of opportunities available for students. There is an appropriate focus on the development of students' basic skills in literacy and numeracy, ensuring that gaps in previous learning are identified and suitably addressed. Students are taught in mixed-age classes depending upon their attainment and previous learning at the point of entry to the school. These arrangements are mostly appropriate. All students have access to a suitably broad range of subjects, including science, information and communication technology (ICT), humanities and creative subjects, and physical education. This provision is enhanced by a strong emphasis on personal and social development through a variety of subjects and experiences. Behaviour management and social skills lessons, together with daily assemblies, provide good opportunities for students to reflect on their own attitudes and behaviours as well as providing strong role models from within and beyond the school.

A relatively new and developing area of the curriculum consists of effective provision for vocational education, which includes good transition experiences for post-16 students. Accredited courses in cookery, construction, and skills for independence and life provide engaging activities which help to prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of further education, employment and life in the wider community. Arrangements for work experience and for work-related workshops are strongly supported by the local Connexions service. These links also offer good opportunities for individual students to develop their awareness of, and readiness for, opportunities beyond school. Post-16 students also benefit from access to GCSE courses together with further opportunities for accreditation in literacy and numeracy. Despite the growing success of these various subjects and courses, curriculum planning is not sufficiently coherent. There is no curriculum overview available to provide a clear picture of how the objectives and content of individual courses develop progressively over the age range of the school.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Strengths in the quality of teaching include the good quality of relationships between staff and students. Students respect the staff and value their support. Good arrangements exist to support students with any difficulties in managing their emotions without disruption to teaching and learning. Students maintain their concentration well throughout lessons, particularly where varied activities are introduced and there are opportunities for practical approaches to learning, for example in art and cookery. Teachers are skilled at questioning and challenging students to take an active part in discussions and activities. Teachers and learning support assistants work effectively together, using their good knowledge of students' temperaments and learning needs to ensure that no individual student is overlooked or disengaged. The range of resources used in lessons has improved since the last inspection; however, there is insufficient use made of visual resources, including ICT, to provide stimulating and interesting images to meet the needs of learners who benefit from that support. Good attention is given to the range of individual students' needs in each class but the highest-attaining students are not always sufficiently challenged, particularly in written assignments.

Students, including those above compulsory school age, make good progress in their learning. Improved arrangements are now in place for recording students' attainment using National Curriculum levels in the core subjects. On entry to the school, all students are assessed thoroughly to determine their starting points, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The requirements of their statements of special educational needs are written into individual education plans and behaviour plans. Students working towards externally accredited awards receive suitable feedback about their performance in relation to course-grading criteria. Feedback to students about their current level of achievement and specific individual targets is particularly strong in mathematics. Results in GCSE and Entry Level accreditations, for the students who left the school in summer 2011, show progress which often exceeds expectations, given the students' starting points on entry to the school. Progress in mathematics and science was better than in English. These results include Key Stage 4 and post-16 students. The school has taken appropriate steps to ensure that students increasingly achieve appropriately across the full range of subjects studied. The wider range of accredited courses and improvements in teachers' use of rigorous assessment and recording are contributing effectively to students' good progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is a strong emphasis on open and frank dialogue with students, challenging and supporting them to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Daily assemblies before and after school, in which democratic participation is encouraged, provide a secure environment in which whole-school and individual issues may be confronted. These occasions are particularly effective in allowing the whole-school community to reflect on their recent experiences and to identify where individuals and groups of students are making progress with improvements in their behaviour and social skills. Students are often very reflective and honest about the challenges they are facing. A school counsellor is available to work with individuals on a regular basis providing an additional, confidential opportunity to develop appropriate strategies. Behaviour throughout the school is good and students respect the expectations of staff. Where individual students are still learning to manage their behaviour and interactions with others, good support from senior staff ensures that incidents are skilfully de-escalated and any potential disruption is minimised. One parent commented through the inspection questionnaire, 'My son has developed and improved more in the short time he's been at Hope View than anywhere else.' A similar response from a local authority stated, '... pupils we have placed at Hope View have said that it is the best school they have been to and that they feel listened to and respected.' Opportunities are provided through the curriculum and through assemblies for students to understand all aspects of diversity and to develop respect and tolerance for different cultures and beliefs. A biannual multicultural week makes a strong contribution in this respect. Trips out of school, for example to museums, local castles and a residential trip to Wales, not only enhance the curriculum but also provide good opportunities for students to develop their social skills in the wider community. Citizenship themes, including an understanding of local services, are

taught through the social development course and benefit from visits by, for example, the British Transport Police, the sexual health nursing team and the drugs awareness team.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of students is good. Students state in their questionnaire responses that the school helps them to lead healthy lives, and in conversation they commented positively on their enjoyment of their physical education and cookery lessons. The school's policy for managing all aspects of health and safety pays due regard to national guidance and students are appropriately supervised on and off site. Policies and procedures for managing any bullying, for safeguarding students, fire safety and first aid have all been improved since the last inspection and now meet requirements. Students state that they feel safe in school and that any concerns they may have are dealt with quickly and effectively. All staff are appropriately trained in child protection, including up-to-date higher-level training for the designated person. Procedures for the management of behaviour and the use of sanctions and rewards are appropriately documented and implemented consistently. The school's safe recruitment procedures meet requirements and are implemented effectively. Recent training has been provided for first aiders and for fire marshals, and procedures are implemented effectively. There are risk assessments in place for all aspects of the premises and fire safety, and all routine checks on fire safety equipment are conducted and formally recorded regularly. Written records of sanctions, incidents, restraints and accidents are appropriately maintained and are up-to-date. A three-year plan to increase accessibility has been produced and the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are met.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All of the required checks on the suitability of staff and proprietors have been completed and the outcomes are suitably recorded in a single central register as required.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school's premises provide an appropriate and safe environment for effective learning. The accommodation is maintained and decorated to a high standard and classrooms are of an appropriate size for the current teaching groups. New accommodation for the teaching of construction is nearing completion and is of an appropriate size and layout for this purpose. There is adequate external space for play and relaxation, and this area is gradually being enhanced by the provision of furniture and play facilities.

Provision of information

Information provided for parents and carers is clear and up-to-date. However, the school does not submit the required annual account of income and expenditure to local authorities in respect of students placed at the school. Parents and carers are made aware of the availability of the required school policies and are kept informed about events and activities through regular letters. A record of assessment is provided each term and a detailed report on the progress of each individual student is sent home at the end of the academic year. Those parents and carers who submitted questionnaires are unanimous in their positive support for school policies, teaching and communication. A similar response was presented by the two placing local authorities that responded.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaints procedure meets regulatory requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the quality of education provided (standards in part 1) and must:

- ensure that the curriculum policy is set out in writing and is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for all subjects taught and ensure it is implemented effectively (paragraph 2(1)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information (standards in part 6) and must:

- ensure that, where a student registered at the school is wholly or partly funded by the local authority, an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that student is submitted to the local authority and on request to the Secretary of State (paragraph 24(1)(h)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/uk/si/2010/1997/contents/made.

- ensure that all teachers provide activities and assignments which challenge the highest-attaining students to achieve the standards of which they are capable, particularly in their written work
- extend the range and quality of visual resources, including ICT, used to support teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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School details

School status	Independent
Type of school	Day special school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
Date school opened	November 2007
Age range of pupils	7–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	28
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	28
Number of pupils who are looked after	8
Annual fees (day pupils)	£23,430
Address of school	Station Approach Chilham Canterbury Kent CT4 8EG
Telephone number	01227 738 000
Email address	contact@hopeviewschool.co.uk
Headteacher	Carla Lorne
Proprietor	Carmichael Education Ltd

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.

30 November 2011

Dear Students



Inspection of Hope View School, Chilham CT4 8EG

Thank you for your welcome to your school when I visited recently. I enjoyed my visit very much and am particularly grateful to you for taking the time to complete the questionnaires and to talk to me in lessons and around the school. The inspection judged that Hope View provides you with a good quality of education and supports you very well with your personal development. I was particularly pleased to see:

- that your questionnaires show that you enjoy school, feel safe and appreciate the quality of teaching you receive
- the way that you face up to your problems and support each other through the excellent assemblies each day
- that you concentrate so well on your work and take a pride in the points you are awarded in every lesson
- the good quality of the teaching and the way that teachers and support staff give careful attention to each student in the class so that you make good progress
- the success that you are already beginning to achieve in your preparation for exams.

To make sure that the school continues to provide you with a high quality of education, I have asked the headteacher and staff to make sure that the most-able students are always challenged sufficiently to produce the highest standard of work of which they are capable, and that more use is made of ICT to make lessons interesting and lively for you. I also want the school to send some financial information to local authorities and for the school to produce a curriculum policy and schemes of work for all subjects taught. You can continue to make the school successful by making sure you all attend regularly, continue to respect your teachers and take part in lessons in a mature way.

Yours sincerely

David Young
Lead inspector