

Hope School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133421
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	381508
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2012
Lead inspector	Linda Clare

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	7–13
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mike Carden
Headteacher	Rohit Naik
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Linda Clare
Hilary Ward

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Two tours of the school were made, one accompanied by pupils. Twelve lessons taught by five teachers and one higher-level teaching assistant were seen. Separate 'learning walks' enabled inspectors to observe pupils of all ages in their 'Big Write' and 'Curriculum around the pupil' (CAP) sessions. Inspectors listened to pupils read, attended the whole-school forum, assembly and two 'Check out' sessions at the end of the school day. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plan, safeguarding and case-study documents, assessment, tracking and attendance data. Inspectors reviewed the information provided by parents and carers in 25 completed questionnaires. The views of pupils and staff in returned questionnaires were also taken into account.

Information about the school

Hope School provides for boys with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. At the time of the inspection there were 52 pupils on roll. Almost half has additional needs, the most predominant being attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs and are from Liverpool and the surrounding area. The majority of boys are of White British origin. Almost one in five is a looked-after pupil. The proportion of boys known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. The school has achieved the Quality Mark for Basic Skills Primary and Secondary Awards, Advanced Inclusion Award, Leading Parent Partnership Award, Healthy Schools Award and Silver Eco-School status.

As part of the Building Schools for the Future programme the school was re-located to its present site in September 2011. The new school building is co-located with a secondary mainstream school and the same campus is shared with a primary school.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- Hope is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because teaching, whilst good overall, provides only limited opportunities for pupils to achieve higher levels of independent working and there are limited opportunities for pupils to extend their understanding of the arts, different cultures and communities. Outstanding relationships with parents and carers, excellent vision and ambition for school improvement and the consistent and effective management of pupil behaviour are strengths of the school.
- Achievement and progress are good. Pupils enter school with attainments below those nationally expected for their age groups. They make good rates of progress and achieve well from their starting points. Good gains are made in behaviour, self-esteem and communication skills. Pupils with additional needs or circumstances which make them vulnerable make as good or better progress than that of their peers.
- Teaching is mainly good. Staff are enthusiastic, have good relationships with pupils and use praise effectively. There is limited opportunity for pupils to develop independent learning skills and much teaching seen was too teacher-directed and -led. Support staff contribute well to the management of pupil behaviour, but are sometimes underused to support learning.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally good and personal and social skills develop well. As pupils gain maturity they become more able to appreciate and evaluate the consequences of their actions. The school provides a secure environment in which pupils say they feel safe.
- The creative curriculum is good and supports the school's core purpose effectively. However, links outside the school environment to extend pupils' arts, community and cultural understanding are limited.
- Overall leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides inspirational and dedicated leadership. The development of distributed leadership has been strong, roles are embedding well and together senior managers provide outstanding direction. Governance is good. The management of teaching and the school's performance are both good and improving.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to further the development of pupils as independent learners by:
 - extending the role of support staff to facilitate the management of more independent pupil research and information-gathering
 - giving more time for pupils to complete individual programmes and less for teacher input to lessons
 - allowing pupils to organise their own resources and take more responsibility for their learning.

- Extend the good and creative curriculum that the school has established by:
 - offering more educational visits and visitors to enable all pupils to sample broader cultural and arts learning
 - developing closer links with community groups and neighbourhood programmes
 - developing the growing collaborative initiatives with other schools and learning centres.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Achievement is good. Pupils say they learn a lot in lessons, enjoy school and feel well-supported in their learning. Parents and carers agree and are fulsome in their praise for the progress their child makes, particularly in reading. As one noted, 'My son's reading has gone up in the time that he has been here. He's come on a lot and is so much happier.'

The majority of pupils learn to stay on task and participate well in lessons. They volunteer answers, cooperate in pairs and in small group sessions, thus improving their collaborative skills well. In a 'Big Write' session good speaking and listening skills were enthusiastically demonstrated as pupils debated the dangers of pirates, sharks and whirlpools in their route-writing directions. Trusting relationships with staff promote improved confidence and self-esteem.

For many pupils entering the school, progress has been hampered by poor attendance and gaps in learning as a result of behavioural difficulties or frequent changes of placement. This results in attainments which are below those of pupils of a similar age nationally. Pupils may join the school in different year groups and their lengths of stay vary. Very few complete a full key stage. In response, the school closely monitors annual and key stage progress and also how much progress pupils make over time from their starting points. Progress is greater and more marked for pupils the longer they attend the school.

Some pupils take longer to settle, testing the school's strictly-enforced 'no exclusions' policy. Once pupils recognise that exclusion is not an option, they settle well, attendance improves and progress accelerates. Progress is monitored efficiently to identify and support those in need of additional help or who are at risk of underachievement and the school has robust and effective procedures for intervention. The school did not have any pupils reaching the end of Year 2 last year. Pupils entering with below average starting points in Key Stage 2 achieve broadly age-appropriate levels by the end of Year 6. Attainment in reading at Year 6

is average. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 8 the majority continues to close the gap to achieve broadly age-expected levels.

Pupils make equally good and occasionally better progress in Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 2 in both English and mathematics due to the greater consistency of learning achieved over the longer period of time in school. Progress in mathematics is better than in English as a result of the activity-based learning and quality resources provided. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, those with additional needs and looked-after pupils make as good or better progress than that of their peers due to the school's effective tracking of individual progress, close attention to target-setting and its effective intervention programmes.

Quality of teaching

Overall, teaching is good. A few lessons observed had outstanding features and no teaching was less than satisfactory. Better lessons are characterised by brisk pace, changes of task and a range of teaching strategies to engage and motivate at individual pupil level. Teacher expectation is generally high and subject knowledge is good. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to foster curiosity and promote participation. Planning is good and well-informed by on-going assessment. In some lessons, pupils use individual red, amber and green stacking beakers very effectively to signal their understanding or to request assistance. As one pupil said, 'You don't get to feel ashamed about asking. The teachers can see that you're not sure by the top colour, so they come to help'. The system is less effective where pupil understanding is not checked until the end of the lesson.

Lessons are purposeful and staff clearly promote the strong focus on moral and social responsibility and reflection which permeate teaching and learning. This was demonstrated effectively as pupils empathetically discussed human rights, revealing good prior knowledge of, and reasons for, the discrimination of ethnic groups in wartime concentration camps. In line with the creative curriculum, practical learning is widely used to promote interest and pupil participation. However, in too many lessons activities are teacher-led and -dominated leaving relatively little time for pupils to gather their own resources, research answers or work independently at their own pace. Reading is taught systematically and regularly using phonics (linking letters with the sounds they make), a combination of look-and-say methods and word-building strategies with good outcomes. Extended writing is planned well, but not always completed due to lengthy teacher input.

Questioning is used effectively and recent professional development has improved marking across the school. Support staff monitor behaviour well but opportunities are missed to use them more effectively to improve the quality of learning. Resources for learning are good. Pupils are keenly aware of what they need to do to improve. Personal targets are self-evaluated at the end of each lesson. Level 5 is the ultimate goal and pupils strive to achieve this knowing these levels are integral to all school activities and rewards. Academic targets, displayed and referenced clearly throughout lessons, are equally well-known and pupils are quick to offer their understanding of how they may 'uplevel' - particularly in their reading, writing and mathematical skills.

Inspection findings accord well with the school's monitoring of teaching. Parents and carers are highly-supportive of the school's teaching and of how well it develops pupil communication skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is generally good. Most pupils feel that school is a positive experience and feel staff 'don't give up on us'. Over three quarters of parents and carers returning the questionnaire felt behaviour to be good. Pupil response to staff direction is good, behaviour in lessons contributes well to pupil learning and time out to reflect on unwanted behaviour is managed effectively, enabling a prompt return to lessons. Behaviour about school is generally good. Scrutiny of behavioural records shows that this is the case over time too. As a result the school has a welcoming, friendly ethos in which the school motto 'If I try I can' has meaning and relevance.

The breakfast-club provides a sociable start to the day for many of the pupils and massage sessions contribute to the calming ethos that the school promotes. Pupils demonstrate increasingly appropriate social and moral awareness and take a very active part in school affairs. The weekly whole-school forum is chaired responsibly by pupils. They freely and openly express their thoughts and ideas, showing good respect and consideration for the opinions of others. Pupils say incidents of bullying in any form are dealt with swiftly by staff. Restorative justice to help pupils understand how to repair harm and find a positive way forward is being introduced. The reward and sanction systems are very effective and are supported seamlessly by personal education and emotional literacy lessons.

'Let's Talk' and daily 'Check In-Check Out' sessions provide good opportunities for pupils to assess their day, their successes and areas that they could improve. Those gaining greater self-confidence are given opportunity to demonstrate their learning to visiting parents and carers by taking the teacher role in front of parent 'classes' on family learning days. Attendance is improving. It supports pupil progress well and compares favourably against schools meeting similar pupil needs. This, combined with the improvement in both attainment and progress and the school's continuing record of no exclusions would also indicate behaviour observed on the inspection is representative of that over time.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good and increasingly effective. The strengths of the headteacher and senior leadership team complement each other very effectively. Performance management holds staff accountable and is appropriately linked to good quality improvement planning. Comprehensive professional development has significantly strengthened assessment for learning procedures. Morale is high. The staff survey indicates their unanimous pride in the school and in its work. The school is a cohesive community demonstrating many levels of effective teamwork. The governors' regular involvement in school enables their informed challenge and good support.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Data analysis is secure, rigorous and supported by good quality tracking and effective interventions. The school evaluates its effectiveness against local schools and pupil progress is monitored meticulously against the national progression guidance for pupils with similar starting points. Adhering to the 'no exclusions' policy has clearly forfeited short-term gains in pupil progress, but has resulted in more secure improvement over time with better pupil engagement, attitudes and outcomes. The school has now achieved its distributed leadership and given the improvements securely in place, has good capacity to sustain further improvement.

The school's creative curriculum is good. Themes are chosen carefully to reflect the all-male school population. Plans to develop the role of subject coordinators will help to maintain breadth and balance as curricular themes develop. Effective links with external agencies, specialist services and a range of partnerships extend the school's offer. There is scope to develop further collaborative links with other schools and learning centres. The outreach service is successful in supporting pupils in local mainstream schools and a small number of placements with the co-located high school have been successfully implemented. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Cultural and arts activities such as poet and rapper visits to school are popular. However, pupils have few opportunities to engage in these and to develop community links beyond the school environment.

Equality and discrimination are tackled robustly, illustrated by the good and better progress made by pupils with additional needs. Appropriate procedures for the recruitment of staff are in place and safeguarding meets all current guidelines. Risk assessments and care plans for individual pupils are established and staff are regularly trained in managing difficult and physical behaviour challenges. These arrangements contribute well to pupil safety and to the consistency of the staff approach.

'Hope Holidays' and the 'Family Matters' support programmes place home links squarely at the heart of pupil learning. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and how it helps them to support their child's learning. As one parent commented typically, 'I'm very pleased with the ethos and management of this school. It far exceeds my expectations'.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add up exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



14 May 2012

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Hope School, Liverpool, L25 2RY

I am writing to thank you for your warm welcome when I visited your school with my colleague recently. Your thoughts and contributions were really useful in helping us to come to decisions about your school. This is what we found.

- You told us that Hope is a good school, you like attending and enjoy your lessons. Your parents and carers also think that it is a good school. We agree. It provides a good quality of education.
- The staff teach you well and you make good, and sometimes better, progress.
- Your behaviour is generally good and it gets better as you learn to manage how you respond to people by thinking through the consequences. It was good to see how many of you managed to become Level 4 or 5 each day.
- Everyone takes good care of you and almost all of you say that you feel safe in school. I was so impressed with your whole-school forum and thought that the chair did a fantastic job of keeping order so that everyone could have their say. How polite you all were – well done!!
- Your school is so good because the headteacher and all of the senior leaders know exactly what they need to provide for you to make sure that you make the best progress that you can.

We have asked your headteacher to look at two areas that would make your school even better:

- Your curriculum is good but it could be improved if you were able to go out to see and experience different cultures, arts and local community activities, so we have asked your headteacher to look at this for you.
- While you work hard in lessons, some of you could have been getting on with more work of your own. We have asked your teachers to allow you to research your own information and resources, and to enable you to work more independently.

You can help your teachers to do these tasks by telling them when work is too easy or too hard and behaving well when you go out from school.

I wish you all the very best for the future,

Yours sincerely

Linda Clare
Lead Inspector

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