

Hopedale School

Hopedale House, Cheddleton, ST13 7ED

Inspection dates	4–5 June 2013	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- It is well led and managed. Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher are totally focused on providing pupils with positive experiences to achieve their full potential academically and personally.
- Leaders have quickly developed an effective team of staff who share their ambition and drive for success.
- Teaching is usually good. Pupil progress is carefully checked. Any gaps in learning or slow progress are eliminated through individual booster programmes. As a result, most pupils make good progress in their basic literacy and mathematical skills.
- Pupils, who have experienced failure, flourish in a highly supportive environment. Their behaviour is outstanding because they experience significant success academically and in their personal development.
- Arrangements to ensure that pupils are kept safe and are well cared for are excellent. Staff are highly skilled in managing pupils' behaviour.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Not all teaching is consistently good and not enough is outstanding. Teachers do not always adapt activities in response to pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils do not make rapid enough progress in these lessons.
- Pupils are not consistently provided with sufficient opportunities to check their own progress.
- Not all teachers provide pupils with enough guidance on how to improve their work.
- Leaders do not check to see how the progress pupils make compares to the national norms.

Information about this inspection

- The headteacher was notified of this inspection on the day before the inspection started.
- The inspector observed five lessons taught by four different teachers, all of which were jointly observed with the headteacher. The inspector also made short visits to other activities and listened to some pupils read. Discussions were held with a range of school staff and pupils.
- The inspector checked a range of documentation, including schemes of work and the safeguarding procedures and policies. There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's Parent View to be reported on. The inspector took account of evidence from parents and carers and the school's own survey. Eight staff questionnaires were also taken into account.
- At the time of this inspection, there was an inspection of the children's home. A separate report has been written which is available on the Ofsted website.

Inspection team

Mary Hinds, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hopedale is a small residential special school for up to 25 pupils, aged seven to 16 years. The school was registered in May 2012 and opened in June 2012. This is the school's first inspection.
- The school is located in Cheddleton, a village in the Staffordshire Moorlands. Most pupils are referred from the local authorities within the area. Although there are a few girls, the majority of pupils are boys. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Over half of the pupils are in the care of their local authority.
- Almost all pupils have a statement of special educational needs or are currently being assessed for one. All have complex social, emotional and behavioural needs, and some have autistic spectrum disorders as well as complex learning needs.
- The school endeavours to provide 'innovative and enjoyable education, therapy and intervention for pupils enabling them to successfully return to mainstream schooling'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the teaching is consistently good and increasingly outstanding by:
 - making sure that pupils are able to identify and assess for themselves whether they have achieved their targets
 - assessing pupils' progress within lessons and adjusting activities so that progress is more rapid
 - improving the marking so that it makes clear to pupils what is good about their work and how they can make it even better
 - comparing the rates of progress of pupils in the school with those of pupils nationally to ensure challenging targets are set.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Pupils' achievement is good. Most pupils have low levels of attainment when they start school. Many have significant gaps in their learning as a result of considerable disruption to their education prior to admission. The vast majority are making up the lost ground. The school's accurate information on pupils' progress shows that all groups of learners are making good progress from their varying starting points, including those with complex learning needs in both literacy and mathematics.

The school carefully assesses pupils' levels of attainment when they enter school, and staff plan meticulously to meet individual needs and to bridge the gaps in their learning. Pupils have good opportunities to develop key literacy and mathematical skills through constant reinforcement, booster sessions and effective teaching. Of the small number of pupils in Year 6 this year, most are expected to achieve broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

The Key Stage 4 programmes of work start in either Years 9 or 10, depending on pupils' individual needs. There are clear routes and opportunities for pupils to achieve nationally recognised accreditations in GCSE, BTEC and functional skills. All pupils study English, mathematics, science, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship, physical education (PE), information and communication technology (ICT), cookery, employability and personal effectiveness. In addition, pupils choose a further two areas of study, for example land-based studies, sport or the performing arts. The small group of pupils in this key stage are on track to leave the school with broadly average attainment as the gap is closing quickly against national averages. The school is particularly successful in recognising and developing individual interests. For example, pupils enjoy and achieve success in music where they collaborate and play music together, guided by a talented music specialist. They look forward to performing in their first concert.

Across the school, pupils speak with confidence and read with visible pleasure. The youngest pupils enjoy reading about spacemen and the effects of gravity. They had confidence to attempt to read new words as they read aloud to the inspector. Many read with expression and good comprehension. Older pupils enjoy researching their own personal interests, such as motor cycles and racing cars and reading poetry. Pupils have opportunities to go on work experience.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Outstanding

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. From being disengaged in their education as a result of negative experiences, pupils rapidly become enthusiastic and active learners. This is evident in lessons and around the school, where all pupils behave exceptionally well. Pupils enjoy school as their improving attendance rates illustrate. Pupils' attendance is now average.

Staff have a consistent approach to managing potentially challenging behaviour. Pupils know and appreciate the clear boundaries and consequences of their behaviour because they have been part of the decision-making process. There is a rigorous scrutiny of pupils' behaviour through regular reviews throughout the day. This ensures that pupils develop self-awareness and an appreciation that they can achieve well. Every opportunity is taken to reinforce success, no matter how small, and pupils are encouraged to support each other and to celebrate each others' success.

Relationships are exceptionally strong because pupils trust and respect all adults, especially their key workers. Humour is used well to build up pupils' self-esteem, self-belief and confidence. As a result, pupils make impressive gains in managing their own behaviour, socially and emotionally, resulting in better rates of academic progress. The school was able to present some very compelling evidence through case studies of the powerful work done in this area.

Pupils explain clearly what the school has done to re-engage them and support them in developing social and other personal skills. They appreciate the weekly session of therapeutic intervention strategies and say that this helps them to calm down and to think about their own behaviour. Most are able to identify when they need to go to a safe place to 'cool down'. When given the opportunity, pupils are able to work independently. Although there are high levels of one-to-one support, adults are becoming more skilled in enabling pupils to take on greater responsibility for their own learning.

When they come to the school, pupils rapidly become integrated in to the community. This helps them to gain confidence and prepares them well for the next stage of their lives. The citizenship programme provides pupils with opportunities to explore different political view points, moral and social issues, and about being part of the local community. There is a good focus on a broader range of personal, social and health education issues, together with different citizenship aspects. These provide many opportunities for the pupils to learn more about themselves, their behaviour, and to develop their personal views on the law and the public services.

The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effective. The school organises monthly diversity themes to encourage pupils to explore and celebrate differences in religion, disabilities and cultures. Pupils develop very impressive attitudes towards those who are different to them, whether it is on the grounds of race, religion, sexuality or any other factor. This prepares pupils well for life in British multicultural society. In a lesson exploring different accents and dialects, in response to the teachers' questions about whether differences are important, one pupil stated: 'It doesn't matter how you sound because we have all got different personalities.'

Quality of teaching

Good

Teaching is good because teachers are expert in gaining the pupils' trust and developing strong relationships with them. This builds pupils' confidence as learners and their self esteem so that they learn effectively. All staff have high expectations which secure enthusiastic learners.

Teachers and support staff have good subject knowledge and plan lessons carefully, based on exciting and relevant topics such as 'keen to be green'. There is a good balance between practical activities and more formal written exercises. Usually, lessons have three distinct activities which provide pupils with time to practise basic skills, as well as maintaining their concentration and full participation. ICT is used well to provide individual programmes of work and to develop independent learning.

Pupils' progress is regularly assessed and this is used well to plan for all abilities. Teachers and support staff probe pupils' understanding effectively through focused questioning. They are highly sensitive to pupils' emotional response to their tasks and are able to skilfully re-engage pupils in their learning. However, they do not always reshape the tasks in response to pupils' understanding and, as a result, progress rates slow down. Furthermore, although pupils have clear targets, these are not always presented in an accessible way for pupils to judge for themselves or to assess each others' work to see how much progress they have made.

There are some good examples of effective marking where pupils are provided with clear guidance on how to improve their work. However, pupils' work is not always marked in ways that make it clear to them what is good about it, how this relates to their targets and what they now need to do in order to improve further.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The curriculum is good. Plans are based on the National Curriculum and ensure that learning is

acquired at the appropriate pace. Some subjects are taught discreetly, for example English, mathematics, science and citizenship, and others thematically, such as history, music and design and technology. The curriculum is well matched to the needs of pupils and it secures good achievement

All lessons have the same structure in the morning. Key literacy and numeracy skills are usually linked to pupils' individual educational targets and practised daily. Good links between subjects mean that pupils are also able to develop these skills in other subjects, including problem solving in real life contexts. This is making a strong contribution to the good achievement made by the vast majority of pupils and has a considerable effect on their personal development.

The afternoon curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of subjects and experiences, including practical and creative learning. Pupils enjoy their work in science, ICT, humanities, expressive arts, and food and design technology. Pupils enjoy the range of sports and games that they take part in each week. Individual strengths are recognised, and used to motivate and encourage pupils to excel.

The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including do-it-yourself and horticulture, as well as additional therapeutic activities in music, art and relaxation and massage therapy. All pupils have the opportunity to go on an outdoor education residential visit and further afield. Several pupils recently went to Fuerteventura and had the opportunity to talk to the pilot on the flight deck. Good use is made of visitors, such as the school nurse, to contribute to specialised themes which are often linked to the PSHE programme. All pupils have careers education and effective support from Year 7 onwards. There is good provision for their employment aspirations.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Outstanding

The school's arrangements to ensure the safety and welfare of students are outstanding and all regulatory requirements are met. Pupils say they feel safe in school and they particularly value the high quality of the personal relationships they develop with the staff. Staff have an in-depth knowledge and understanding about individual pupils. They are committed in ensuring that their personal needs are met. The school's own recent pupil and parent survey confirm high levels of satisfaction. Pupils say there is no bullying and, if there are disputes, that adults deal with these quickly.

Policies and procedures for the recruitment of staff and their training in safeguarding are rigorous. Details of all the required checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are recorded in a suitable single central register. All staff have been trained to the required levels in child protection and implement their responsibilities to a high standard.

All policy documents, including those for the management of behaviour and the prevention of bullying, take excellent account of up-to-date statutory guidance and are reviewed on a regular basis. The implementation of school policies and procedures is thorough and consistent. Risk assessments for the premises, for school activities including off-site visits, and for fire safety are rigorous and updated regularly.

There is a good emphasis on the development of healthy lifestyles, particularly through themes in the PSHE programme, and pupils understand how to eat and live healthily. Suitable records are maintained of any incidents, although these are rare, and of the sanctions imposed for any serious incidents.

There are strong links with other agencies, such as social services, therapists and medical staff. This helps pupils in their personal development and in understanding how they can overcome the personal issues that led to them coming to Hopedale.

Leadership and management**Good**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is totally focused in making sure that all pupils are able to reach their full potential. She is exceptionally well supported by the deputy headteacher. Over a very short period of time they have achieved a great deal. They have created a highly cohesive team of committed and dedicated staff who share their passion for excellence. Both the headteacher and the deputy headteacher lead by example. They have secured a nurturing and supportive environment where pupils achieve well, and are keen to be responsible learners with excellent attitudes and beliefs about themselves and all pupils and staff. In a very short period of time, school's leaders have ensured that the independent school standards are fully met.

Leaders monitor the work of the school regularly and have embedded key strategies for improvement, particularly the positive behaviour management strategies. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and these are well planned for. An appraisal process has recently been introduced which identifies individual targets for the performance of all staff. As a result, teaching is good and improving. The proprietors have recently established a group of 'critical friends' who are starting to become better informed about the school's effectiveness. Scrutiny of the minutes of meetings shows that they are increasingly asking probing questions about the school's effectiveness.

Staff feel well supported. There are daily team meetings where all discuss pupils' behaviour. This, together with regular review meetings for pupil's progress, provides a good overview of the effectiveness of the provision, and enables staff to put academic and behavioural interventions in place. Although academic performance and personal development are robustly tracked, pupil progress is not measured against national expectations and, therefore, leaders are not confident that they are setting aspirational targets.

The premises are bright and well-maintained. Classrooms and other learning areas support pupils' learning well through attractive displays which celebrate pupils' work. The school has already developed a close partnership with parents and carers, who feel very well informed of their children's progress and welfare. Parents, carers and others have access to the full range of information to which they are entitled through the school website and prospectus. The complaints policy meets requirements. The headteacher has ensured that all independent school standards are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	138243
Social care unique reference number	SC444869
Inspection number	420276
DfE registration number	860/6040

This inspection was carried out 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.

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school	Special
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	7–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	22
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietors	Amy Hopkin, Sarah Deaville, Jon Armitage, Vivienne Hopkin
Chair	None
Headteacher	Amy Hopkin
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
Annual fees (day pupils)	£28,000
Telephone number	01538 361886
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