

Hope School

251 Hartsbourne Avenue, Liverpool, Merseyside, L25 2RY

Inspection dates 11–12 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- All aspects of the school have improved since its last inspection because of the high ambitions and relentless drive of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the governing body. All staff are fully on board and pulling in the same direction. High expectations for learning and behaviour run through the fabric of the school.
- Learning is paramount at this school and behaviour does not get in its way. In their academic and personal and social development pupils make outstanding progress. As a result, they are extremely well prepared for the next steps in their education.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding because senior leaders have ensured good practice is shared and teachers act on the advice they are given. Planning is splendid and spells out clearly what different groups of pupils are to learn. Staff and leaders check that pupils learn as well as they can and if not they do something about it straight away.
- The school's systems for keeping pupils safe and following up concerns meet statutory requirements and are scrupulously applied.
- Pupils learn to regulate their behaviour because of the consistency with which staff apply the systems for managing behaviour. Staff model calmness, courtesy and respect. As a result, pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are attentive in lessons and show a keenness to learn.
- The curriculum is a key reason why pupils are so well engaged. It is well thought out to cover all that it should and at the same time be very motivating to pupils. The 'Curriculum Around the Pupil' gives them the chance to take part in a variety of activities and events and contributes greatly to their excellent social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- The school's work with parents is impressive and the vast majority of parents report they are very pleased that their children are at this school.
- Governors have a thorough understanding of the school and ably check the information they are given. They undertake lesson observations with senior leaders that help them test out what they read and hear about.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons and saw all teachers and a higher level teaching assistant teaching. Four of these were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, a group of six pupils, four parents, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors and the School's Improvement Partner. He had a telephone conversation with an officer from the local authority's special educational needs department.
- The inspector observed the work of the school at break, lunchtime, assembly, at pupils' 'check-in' in the morning and watched some one-to-one teaching outside the classrooms. He checked a number of documents including reports on pupils' progress and behaviour, safeguarding files, the school's monitoring records and its planning. Additionally, he reviewed a range of pupils' books.
- There were insufficient parent responses to the on-line questionnaire to make the results available. However, the inspector looked at the results of the school's own survey of parents' views from summer 2014. He also took account of the 23 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Eric Craven, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hope school is co-located with a mainstream secondary school. Staff and pupils have been in the purpose-built building for three years.
- The school provides for boys with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. Almost all have statements of special educational needs with a few being formally assessed. Many have additional needs including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and around a quarter have learning difficulties. The great majority of pupils are of White British origin. All are transported to and from school.
- Almost all of the pupils are eligible for pupil premium; well above the national average. Pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after.
- The school uses no other alternative provision other than when pupils are reintegrating into mainstream schools.
- Many of the pupils arrive at the school at start times other than the beginning of Key Stages 2 and 3, frequently mid-year.
- The headteacher has been commissioned by the local authority on a number of occasions to provide support to other schools. He is currently providing support as executive headteacher to the Primary Support Centre, a pupil referral unit in the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Update the school website and ensure that it contains all the information it should.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school is expertly led by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, ably supported by other senior and middle leaders. They are highly visible around the school and provide super role models for staff and pupils alike. Staff seek and value the support of leaders. The sense of teamwork in the school is tangible. As a result, pupils' achievements, their behaviour and the quality of teaching are all outstanding.
- There is a consistency of approach and an ethos of high expectations. This is seen in the way behaviour is managed and how lessons are planned and taught. All staff who returned the questionnaire agree that the school is well led and managed and are proud to be members of staff.
- Staff's professional development is seen as very important and this has made a marked contribution to improvements in the quality of teaching and in pupils' behaviour. Newly qualified teachers and those in training are guided and monitored expertly. The school's arrangements for making sure pupils are safe meet statutory requirements and staff training ensures the systems are fully implemented.
- Performance management is used extremely well to help teachers improve and to appropriately reward them with salary increases when they have met their targets. Leaders are very watchful for underperformance from staff and swiftly put in support when this is necessary.
- Senior and middle leaders know the school's strengths and needs because they check relentlessly on its effectiveness. They draw on a wide range of information including data on the progress pupils are making and on the points earned for good and outstanding behaviour. Pupil progress meetings each half term allow senior staff and class teachers to check if any pupils are falling behind and if they are changes are made swiftly to help them catch up. This work is instrumental in ensuring that the school is effective in promoting equal opportunities for pupils from different backgrounds and with different needs.
- The headteacher also draws on external views on the school to help validate the school's own evaluations. The school has recently had an award for its parent partnership work successfully re-assessed. The school's work to engage with parents is excellent. The very positive views of four parents who were taking part in a training course during the inspection are testimony to this.
- The school's website is informative but is not entirely up to date and is missing a few pieces of necessary information.
- The school's plans are well formed. Funding additional to the school's normal budget is checked to make sure it is being used well. Good examples are the effective use of pupil premium funding as well as the primary sport funding, which has been used to increase pupils' energetic play at lunchtime and to increase pupils' skills. It has also helped provide a climbing wall. Pupils have benefited from these resources and two pupils are soon to attend a special climbing event because of the splendid skills they have developed.
- The curriculum is carefully constructed around pupils' needs. As a result, the vast majority of pupils want to be in school and are keen to learn. It is enhanced by a range of visits and visitors to the school including actors, authors and a reader in residence. Pupils are regularly off-site learning in the community.
- There is an excellent system to check that the school is developing pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and it is doing so outstandingly well. They learn about faiths, cultures and other people's needs, not least through their charitable work. They were spellbound in an assembly about Remembrance Sunday, where they were very reflective and adhered to the minute's silence impeccably. The pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders are influential in the work of other schools. They are highly regarded by the local authority that is keen to commission support from them. The local authority rightly has a wholly positive view about the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring relevant education and business expertise and experience to their roles and they apply them extremely well. Finances are carefully monitored and decisions on spending well thought out. Governors check the information on the proportions of pupils making expected and above expected progress and are aware of the performance of pupils eligible for pupil premium. They know about the quality of teaching and check what they are told by observing teaching themselves. They can cite how senior leaders have tackled underperformance in teaching and they are aware of the targets teachers are set and how they are rewarded when they achieve them. Minutes of their meetings show they do not shy away from posing questions to senior leaders when something is unclear or debateable. They are very vigilant regarding the safety of pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. For the vast majority of the time a visitor would not know that the pupils are placed at the school because of their behaviour. Because of staff's excellent skills learning is at the forefront of the school's work and behaviour takes a back seat. The school's motto is 'If I try I can' and pupils certainly do try and they do succeed. They get back on track with their learning because they learn to regulate their own behaviour.
- It is a credit to the school that it has a no exclusions policy and readily takes pupils with previously very challenging behaviour, including some excluded from other special schools. Almost invariably these pupils settle and learn to behave very well.
- Staff are consistent in applying rewards and sanctions and pupils appreciate their fairness in dealing with them. Staff's calmness and courtesy, even when faced with a rare example of challenging behaviour, is extremely impressive and models these attributes for the pupils very well.
- The points system is embedded well in the school's work and pupils value the rewards their points can bring them. The lunchtime detention system is very effective when it needs to be used. Pupils understand the symbolic tearing up of a referral slip once the detention is over and how this signals a fresh start.
- Anti-bullying ambassadors help those in need and it is no surprise that the school has recently won an award for its anti-bullying work. The school's data show that incidents of bullying have reduced considerably and are now infrequent. These – and the relatively rare racial incidents – tend to be to do with name calling. The school has robust systems for recording and reporting on these and checking how well it deals with them. Pupils say bullying is dealt with effectively and one typical comment was, 'Staff don't let it go; there are consequences.'
- Data on behaviour incidents show marked improvement over time and more and more pupils are earning merits for good and outstanding 'behaviour for learning' and 'social behaviour'.
- Pupils respect the building, resources and displays. The classrooms are neat, tidy and attractive and the school is litter free. All pupils wear the school uniform and look very smart. They are polite to visitors.
- The overall attendance of pupils is skewed by a handful of pupils whose attendance is very poor. The school has strong evidence to show the array of strategies it has used to tackle this including enticements and sanctions, through to prosecution. The evidence shows the school and its partners from other agencies are relentless in tackling absence. Encouragingly, there has been some movement forward on the attendance of some of these pupils. The data, when these pupils' data are discounted, are well above the average for special schools.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel safe and parents endorse this view.
- The school treats safety with the highest regard. This is apparent in its systems for entry and exit, vetting staff, risk assessments and staff's vigilance toward vulnerable pupils. The school's safeguarding policies are up to date and amendments are immediately drawn to staff's attention.
- Staff training is prominent and ensures a consistency of approach in safeguarding matters including child protection and the management of behaviour.
- The 'check-in' and 'check-outs' each morning and afternoon are used extremely well to encourage pupils to air any worries and to prepare for the day and reflect upon it.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They can explain the dangers in using the internet and they know how to protect themselves from cyber-bullying. They cite lots of examples of visitors to the school helping them how to understand about dangers they may face in the world, most recently about fire safety and fireworks.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The outstanding achievements of the pupils, the schools own records, the views of parents and pupils and the very many strengths in the teaching observed during the inspection show that the quality of teaching over time is typically outstanding.
- Teachers' expectations about what pupils can achieve are very high. They encourage pupils to think hard.
- There is beneficial consistency in the ways teachers plan to meet the needs of different pupils, in marking pupils' work and in providing different work and approaches for pupils who are found to be

underachieving. This consistency shows how well teachers are working as a team and how they have taken on board their training and guidance from senior staff.

- Teachers invariably get the conditions for learning just right. Resources are readily available and are interesting to the pupils including well-selected texts that engage them. In an English lesson the pupils were engrossed as they extracted information from the pages of Tolkien's *The Hobbit*. Seating arrangements are carefully planned. The work of teaching assistants who are permanent members of staff is impressive. They work intuitively with teachers providing just the right amount of support so as not to discourage pupils doing things for themselves.
- Assessment is a strength. Staff regularly check on pupils' learning, not least at the end of lessons when they invariably revisit the learning outcomes set for different groups of pupils. Increasingly, pupils are learning to check on how well they have done themselves and to offer views on the achievements of their classmates. This helps them develop excellent social and communication skills.
- The teaching of literacy is increasingly evident in other subjects as well as English, and reading is prevalent throughout the school. All teachers are taking opportunities to remind pupils about their grammar, spelling and punctuation. Very occasionally an opportunity is missed to remind a pupil to use their best handwriting in their books. Reading has been a strong feature of the school's work and a visiting author and reader in residence have successfully helped raise the profile of reading in the school. The pupils are encouraged to apply their numeracy skills where they can, including in science and cookery.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- When they arrive at the school almost all of the pupils are considerably adrift from the standards they should be reaching because of previous interruptions to their education caused by poor attendance and their behaviour. For some this is compounded by their learning difficulties.
- Nevertheless, they make outstanding progress in both their academic skills and their personal and social development because of the high-quality teaching and the very engaging curriculum they enjoy.
- Gaps in prior learning are being closed at a pace and staff are anticipating much improved results in the end of Key Stage 2 national tests at the end of this academic year. Each year pupils are successfully reintegrated into mainstream schools and at the time of the inspection two pupils were spending four days a week in a mainstream school prior to moving off the roll of Hope School.
- High proportions of pupils are making above expected rates of progress in English and mathematics. The proportions making above rates of progress in English and particularly mathematics from their starting points have increased year-on-year for the past three years. In their books there are examples of pupils producing excellent pieces of extended writing and showing good learning in mathematics, for example in being able to subtract five digit numbers and being able to express a sequence as a formula. Annotated photographs in some pupils' books illustrate their splendid learning about inputs and outputs.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding making better than expected progress has also increased year-on-year and is better than those not eligible for this funding in mathematics. In English the proportions are about the same. In both subjects the gaps have closed.
- There are impressive gains in reading as a result of the school's determined and well co-ordinated efforts to raise standards in reading. A large number of pupils have developed a love of reading. The school's records show that a 10-week focused reading programme has been very successful. For example, 29 pupils took part in the programme in the summer term 2014 and 41% of them made nine months or more progress in their reading ages in 10 weeks with one pupil making an impressive 25 months gain.
- The school's records of the progress of less able pupils, including those with learning difficulties, and of most able pupils, show both groups are making splendid academic progress as well. One hundred per cent of the most able pupils have made better than expected progress in mathematics over the past three years and in English over the past two years. Due to the successful interventions they receive and careful planning by teachers, less able pupils make better progress than other pupils in English and mathematics.
- Parents who returned the school's own questionnaire unanimously said their children learn well at the school, a view fully endorsed by the parents who met with the inspector.
- In the lessons observed a few comments from pupils when they were told the end of the lesson was close typified their engagement and enjoyment of learning. More than once pupils said, 'Miss, do we have to stop'.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	133421
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	448025

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	5–14
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	49
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Blythe
Headteacher	Rohit Naik
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2012
Telephone number	0151 2351410
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	p.anderson@hope.liverpool.sch.uk

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