

# Hope Wood Academy

Crawlaw Road, Easington Colliery, Peterlee, County Durham SR8 3LP

## Inspection dates

6–7 July 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Requires improvement**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early Years provision	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Require improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, although improving, is still too variable. The system developed to check the progress pupils are making in lessons is not used well enough by some teachers to plan activities that move pupils on quickly from their starting points. Sometimes the work set by teachers is not sufficiently challenging for the most able.
- Some teaching assistants are not deployed effectively to support learning in the classroom.
- Pupils do not make consistently good progress in subjects beyond English and mathematics. This is because improvements in the broader curriculum are too new to have had the desired impact.
- The history of underachievement and previous lack of appropriate courses has resulted in some older pupils, particularly the most able, not achieving the standards or qualifications of which they are capable. The sixth form requires improvement for similar reasons.
- The early years requires improvement. Sometimes opportunities are missed to capture children's learning in activities they choose for themselves. Children's individual learning plans focus on their communication, social and behavioural goals well but not as effectively on other areas of learning.
- Targets against which trustees can measure the impact of the school's work are often unspecific.

### The school has the following strengths

- Current leaders have worked with relentless determination to eradicate the significant weaknesses evident at the last inspection. They are driving improvement rapidly.
- Leaders are rebuilding the previously shattered morale of the school community effectively. Older pupils report how much better the school is and how it is no longer a 'chaotic place to be'.
- Support and challenge from the Ascent Academies Trust's leaders and trustees are contributing to the continuing improvements in the school.
- Pupils are generally making good gains in English and mathematics. They achieve highly in their GCSE art work.
- Pupils' personal development and behaviour are good. Pupils say they behave well because rules are clear, fair and used consistently by staff.

## Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress and outcomes in a wider range of subjects and for all year groups, including for those in the early years and sixth form by:
  - building on improvements already secured and raising expectations further to reduce the variability in the quality of teaching
  - ensuring that teachers use the information they gather about pupils' previous learning to plan lessons which challenge and motivate all pupils to achieve their best, especially the most able
  - ensuring that all teaching assistants are as productive as the best by training, coaching and by making sure that teachers identify clearly the expectations of teaching assistants' contribution to pupils' learning activities
  - making sure that children's individual learning plans in the early years link to both the nationally determined early learning goals and the school's own goals for children's social, communication and behavioural development
  - ensure that early years staff keep a close eye on children's learning when they are carrying out tasks chosen for themselves, enabling consistent assessments of children's achievements
  - making sure that each strand of the 16 to 19 study programmes is fully embedded for all students, taking into account their individual starting points and personal aspirations.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that the school improvement plan and middle leaders' plans have sufficient measurable targets against which trustees can check the impact of leaders' collective work on all pupils' progress and outcomes.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Since their involvement in the school around 18 months ago, leaders' uncompromising vision, that pupils will achieve their best, has been at the heart of their work. This vision is driving the rapid improvement seen across the gamut of the school's work. Leaders have rescued the school from a quagmire of inadequacy and are moving it forward successfully. They know they are still on a journey and that actions have yet to show their full impact. Consequently, although improving well, the quality of teaching, pupils' progress and achievements across the school require further improvement to be consistently good.
- Regular monitoring of the school's work means that leaders have an accurate knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have developed a detailed plan to tackle weaknesses. However, leaders have not used the information they have about pupils' starting points and achievements to identify sufficiently measurable improvement targets to inform the plan or the plans developed by middle leaders.
- Strong leadership of teaching and learning has been instrumental in driving improvements to pupils' current achievements. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated and work is ongoing to ensure that all teaching is as good as the best.
- Middle leaders are developing their roles effectively. They speak enthusiastically about how they are contributing to the school's improvement. They value the training and support they have received from the wider trust's leaders and leaders in school to sharpen their skills and effectiveness.
- Staff in school speak of a transformation of all aspects of the school's work. The staff inspection survey indicates that virtually all are fully committed to the leaders' vision in driving the school forward.
- Arrangements to manage staff performance are now in place. Leaders know more needs to be done to ensure that targets set are focused sharply on the impact of teachers' work on pupils' achievements. They are currently tackling this.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used well. As a result, achievements of these pupils are at least in line with those of their peers. Their attendance rates are above those of their peers.
- The school's new curriculum is building on earlier effective work to develop pupils' communication, English and mathematical skills. It incorporates all national curriculum subjects but it is too soon to see the full impact of the changes.
- Work to promote equality of opportunity and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is already making its mark. Pupils learn successfully about people of different faiths and cultures, and to value and respect the differences of others. The curriculum, assembly time and sessions at the start of each day enable pupils to develop a growing understanding of other qualities essential to being active citizens in modern Britain. For example, the topic 'Rule Britannia' provides an array of experiences to help them understand the rule of law, the monarchy and how democracy works.
- Individual transition arrangements, and increasingly strong partnerships with parents and professional agencies, smooth pupils' moves into school, across classes and key stages, and when preparing to leave.
- Improving the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of independent careers advice and guidance for pupils has been one of the priorities of the deputy headteacher since her arrival in September. She is making effective inroads into tackling previous deficiencies and knows there is still more to do. A growing range of work experience placements and enterprise activities are extending pupils' employability skills.
- Parents and partner agencies, such as staff from the local authority's looked after children's educational services and educational psychologists, report positively on the vast improvements in the quality of relationships with the school. One parent's written comments to the inspection team astutely reflected the views of others: 'The management structure has gone through changes over the last year and we are confident the change will continue to benefit the staff and pupils of the academy greatly... (Our child) has developed and progressed beyond all expectations and continues to be happy and contented.'

## ■ The governance of the school

- Governance arrangements are strong. The trustees have reconfigured accountability arrangements and removed a developing but still ineffective local governing body. Trustees have direct oversight. Leaders are held to account effectively through the one-to-one meetings with the chief executive and regular monitoring challenge and support group and academic board meetings. Trustees visit often. Minutes of their meetings show the challenge brought to bear. However, they have yet to ensure that action plans provide sufficient measurable targets. This means that trustees cannot check the full impact of the school's work on pupils' progress over time. Nevertheless, they check closely that additional funding, such as the pupil premium, physical education and sport funding for primary schools, and Year 7 catch-up grant, is being well used, and reports show the good impact of such funding on pupils' progress and achievements. Trustees' oversight of arrangements to manage teachers' performance is developing more rigour. Consequently, they are assured that teachers are appropriately rewarded for the impact of their work.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding concerns at the last inspection have been tackled. Leaders have developed a strong culture of safeguarding. Policies are up to date and staff are trained regularly on all aspects of keeping children safe, including from risks of extremism. Recruitment procedures are robust. Individual behaviour plans and risk assessments for pupils ensure that risks to their safety are identified and minimised. Timely liaison with appropriate external agencies takes place to protect pupils when any safeguarding concerns are raised.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **requires improvement**

- Teaching has improved measurably since the last inspection and particularly in the past year, as noted in school records and the monitoring reports of one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. Leaders know it is still not consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils make rapid progress, particularly the most able. Sometimes teachers' expectations are not high enough and pupils are set work that is too easy for them, or they are only able to complete harder work when they have finished the easier work.
- Teaching for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is also too variable. When learning is most effective, staff plan an appropriate range of activities. They carefully observe the pupils' reactions and consistently respond to them. Over time, these pupils make good progress in the key area of communication and begin to make sense of the world around them. Less effective teaching is over-exuberant and lacks precision, so staff cannot accurately record and develop the individual pupils' responses.
- The teaching of communication, English and mathematics has been a priority and there is more consistency in its quality. This is ensuring that pupils' achievements in these areas are improving well. Opportunities to write across subjects is helping to improve matters further. However, there are still too many occasions where work sheets are used that do not enable pupils to practise their developing skills.
- Good relationships between pupils and staff are consistent in all classes. Staff know their pupils well and this contributes to the way that pupils usually knuckle down to their learning promptly.
- Staff usually use a range of different methods to develop pupils' communication skills and this enables pupils to access learning appropriately. Signing, symbol-based or sensory resources are used where needed. Occasionally these are not used consistently well to develop pupils' skills at a fast enough rate.
- The effectiveness of the deployment of teaching assistants is too varied. In some cases, teaching assistants contribute expertly. They know pupils well and support the good progress pupils are making in class by checking, challenging and supporting pupils alongside the teacher. On other occasions, teaching assistants sit passively while the teacher does all the work.
- Recent systems to track pupils' learning and to help teachers plan activities that move pupils on from their current achievements are not being utilised well enough by all staff. Consequently, in some lessons, work is not pitched at the right level, which slows the pace of learning. In some lessons, pupils spend too long watching others take part in the whole-class activity, which also slows the pace of learning down.
- Where teachers' expectations are high, for example in GCSE art, pupils' achievements are impressive. It was delightful to observe a group of four Year 10 pupils reviewing, with the teacher, the high-quality examination portfolios and exhibits of Year 11 pupils. Pupils were challenged to critically evaluate the work against the examination criteria. Their observations and comments reflected a good understanding of the conventions and language of art, the criteria and the impact of the use of different media. The teacher's probing questions pushed them to express their views and reflections successfully.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Staff understand pupils' individual needs and provide tailored support to develop their communication, social, emotional and personal qualities successfully – a significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils new to the school report positively on their sense of well-being after unhappy school experiences previously.
- Pupils report that they feel safe and well looked after. They say that staff are always on hand when they are having a difficult time or need support, and keep a 'good eye on them'. 'Student voice' buddies provide ready support at breaktimes when pupils want a friend to turn to or if they are feeling low.
- Assemblies, the personal, social, health and economic curriculum, and the first lesson each day ensure that pupils are well grounded in how to keep safe from risks to their personal safety, including from social media. These opportunities enable pupils to gain a good understanding of qualities such as respect and valuing others' points of view. They also provide opportunities for pupils to learn about and reflect on topical moral dilemmas like those raised during discussions on the Chilcot Inquiry and the war in Iraq.
- Attendance rates are below those found nationally but improving. Improved partnership working with parents has helped to reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent by around 5% points.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school's positive approaches in managing behaviour, and in helping pupils to learn to manage their own behaviour, are used effectively. Pupils say behaviour has improved significantly since the last inspection when it was poor and pupils did not always feel safe.
- The majority of pupils behave sensibly in class, as they move around the school and at breaktimes. Lunchtimes are calm and friendly occasions. Pupils chat and socialise happily with staff and their friends.
- Unacceptable behaviours manifest themselves occasionally. Staff know their pupils well and usually tackle such emerging behaviours promptly so lessons are not often unduly disrupted.
- Procedures for tracking incidents of poor behaviour have been improved in recent months, including those where there has been a need to restrain pupils for their own safety or that of others. This is ensuring more robust checking of incidents over time. Regular reports to trustees show the significant decrease in incidents as the behaviour policy has been more fully embraced by staff across the school.
- Pupils gain a good understanding of bullying in all its forms in an age-appropriate way. Their understanding has been enhanced recently by the research undertaken by the 'student voice' group. The group shared their findings through an interactive presentation in a recent assembly. The thorny issues of different forms of name-calling, including about disabilities, were tackled frankly.
- Pupils display a sense of pride in the school, which they say was not there previously. They report an allegiance to the school community and, usually, a willingness to try their best for the staff.
- Leaders are resolute in finding solutions to avoid pupils being excluded and there have been no exclusions since November 2014. Two pupils have moved to another of the trust's schools to avoid missing out on education, and are in provision that is better-matched to their needs. Extended work experience for a small number of pupils is providing opportunities that will lead to employment in the future.

## Outcomes for pupils

## require improvement

- Outcomes are improving, particularly in pupils' communication, social and emotional development, and in the progress most pupils are making in English and mathematics. However, the history of poor teaching and inadequate progress has meant that there has not been enough time to tackle previous weaknesses fully, particularly for older pupils and the most able. Observation of learning and scrutiny of books confirm leaders' views of the variation in rates of progress in subjects, classes and over time.
- Pupils' progress is now hastening because of the improvements in the quality of teaching and the more accurate assessment of learning. Disadvantaged pupils are making at least similar progress to their peers because of the additional support and opportunities provided.

- Leaders set appropriately challenging targets for all pupils in English and mathematics, and, when needed, for their social and communication development. Targets are based on pupils' starting points and primary special educational needs. Recent assessment information shows that virtually all pupils are making the progress expected in English and mathematics from their starting points but not enough are making more than expected. A few are making exceptional progress. Progress is more uneven in other subjects.
- The focus on developing pupils' phonics skills (sounds that letters make) and reading skills is contributing to the improvement in pupils' skills in communication and English. Pupils read regularly. Extra small-group sessions for pupils who struggle are helping them to improve their reading skills effectively.
- Pupils in the past have not been suitably prepared for their next steps after school. Partnerships with local colleges and adult social care services have enabled all young people to move on to their next steps but not in a way that was suitably ambitious or linked to pupils' interests and skills.
- Improvements since September are ensuring a better match between older pupils' aspirations, achievements and future destinations. The new qualifications framework builds on previous limited GCSE subjects offered, such as art, to include a range of entry level qualifications, GCSE English and mathematics. All Year 11 pupils will move on to their next steps in education with qualifications. This has not been the case previously.

## Early years provision

## requires improvement

- Improvement in the early years, including in leadership, has been rapid since September but there is still more to do to make sure that provision and children's outcomes are consistently good. The more regular assessments of progress show that the majority of children are making expected gains in their learning and development from their often low starting points. A few are making more than expected gains.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed by staff to ensure that more children move on rapidly in their learning. For example, in a biscuit-making activity, children took turns weighing and mixing the ingredients and then putting them onto the tray to bake. Some lower-ability children were restless while waiting their turn. The most able were not able to take more responsibility or think for themselves.
- Staff are diligent in ensuring that children taking part in tasks that are led by an adult are well supported and are challenged by captivating activities. Staff do not always notice how other children who are involved in tasks they have chosen for themselves are doing. This is because while they are focusing on their small group, they are missing examples of good achievement or times when children are off-task.
- Each child has a detailed individual learning plan that identifies clearly their social, communication and behavioural development goals. Activities are planned to help children achieve these goals effectively. Activities to develop other areas of learning within the early years curriculum are not expressed as clearly within children's learning plans, so it is sometimes hard to gauge how well the activities teachers plan will improve those areas. That being said, children's learning journals do provide evidence of children's work across the nationally determined early years requirements.
- Relationships with parents are strong. Parents receive good support to help them contribute to their children's learning. Home visits help smooth children's transitions into school. Learning journals showcase the wide range of activities the children enjoy. Parents can track easily their children's progress over time in their early literacy and number work. Progress across other learning goals is less easy to follow.
- Leaders have ensured that all welfare requirements are met and children are safe. Leaders work closely with specialist agencies, such as speech and language therapy or educational psychologists, to ensure that children's additional needs are identified early and to secure the support needed to help children benefit from all the setting has to offer.
- Relationships between staff and children are of a high quality. This helps children to settle in and enjoy their experiences. It also helps children to gain the confidence to 'have a go' at the wide array of activities on offer both indoors and out. Children learn to develop the qualities they will need as they move through the school and are prepared effectively for their next steps into Year 1.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

## require improvement

- Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for the future and set about improving matters with gusto, following the appointment of the deputy headteacher in September. They are aware that it is too soon to show the full impact of their endeavours. Their own written evaluation report accurately identifies that previous accreditation opportunities at key stage 4 and in the 16 to 19 study programmes have not been ambitious enough to enable learners to reach their full potential.
- Urgent work was undertaken to broaden the curriculum and qualifications on offer, and to improve learners' achievements in English and mathematics. A greater proportion are now making good progress. The school's assessment information shows the rate of progress is not consistent in other subjects.
- Weaknesses in teaching identified in the main school are echoed in the sixth form. For example, the deployment of teaching assistants is variable. Some teachers do not use what they know about learners' current achievements to plan activities that move them on as quickly as possible. This was seen in the variation in lessons for learners with complex needs. In one English lesson, skilful staff provided bespoke communication aids to involve learners productively in their activities and to achieve well. As a result, learners thrived in describing the qualities of characters in the book they were reading. In another lesson, the purpose or rationale for the activities was not clear. As a result, time was lost in learners being able to quickly get to grips with what they needed to learn.
- A focus on community-based learning has been instrumental in improving learners' confidence, independence and life skills in preparation for the world they face when they leave school. Activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's award, the John Muir award (a national environmental scheme that encourages pupils to connect with, enjoy and care for wild places) and enterprise activities broaden learners' horizons and build teamworking skills and other qualities they can utilise in the future effectively.
- The impact of improvements to the curriculum and provision in the sixth form is evident in the higher than average proportion who attend regularly each day, when compared with pupils in other key stages.
- Improved partnerships with parents are helping to raise their aspirations for their children's futures and broadening their view of what is possible. Leaders know the full effect of this work is yet to be realised but early indications are positive.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138718
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10011660
This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.	
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy special sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	181
<b>Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	14
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Trustees
<b>Chair</b>	Dame Dela Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachel Ireland
<b>Telephone number</b>	01915691420
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hopewood.org.uk">www.hopewood.org.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:hopewood@ascenttrust.org">hopewood@ascenttrust.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 June 2014

## Information about this school

- Hope Wood provides education for pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities, including moderate learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, autism, physical and medical disabilities, and sensory impairments. All pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs.
- Children who attend the early years provision attend on either a part-time or full-time basis, depending on their age. Two pupils who are under the age of five attend one of the two specialist classes for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- There are more boys than girls.
- A much higher proportion of pupils than is found nationally are entitled to the pupil premium (this is additional government funding for pupils known to be entitled to free school meals and children looked after by the local authority).
- A much higher than average proportion of pupils are of White British heritage.
- When last inspected in June 2014, the school was judged to require special measures. It was subject to five monitoring visits by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- There has been significant change in staffing since the last inspection. In November 2015, the school became part of the Ascent Academies Trust. At this point, the school changed its name from Glendene Arts Academy to the name chosen in consultation with pupils – Hope Wood Academy. School leaders from the trust started working with the school in October 2014, and more intensively from September 2015.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning in 17 lessons. Three observations were carried out jointly by the lead inspector and the headteacher. One inspector visited a pupil who was attending an eight-week work placement at Shaw Trust, a horticultural charity.
- Meetings were held with four trustees including the chief executive and chair of trustees, as well as the headteacher and executive headteacher, senior leaders and middle leaders. Inspectors talked to pupils informally in classes, at lunch and breaktime. They also spoke formally to a group of key stage 2 pupils and a group of key stage 4 pupils to hear their views of the school.
- Inspectors took account of 24 responses to the online staff inspection survey. There were too few responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Parent View, for these to be published. However, written responses from parents who added comments to the survey were taken into account.
- Inspectors also took account of an email sent to them by a parent, and also emails and letters from three different professionals in the local authority who are working with pupils in the school.

## Inspection team

Margaret Farrow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Susan Hayter

Her Majesty's Inspector

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