

Hope House School

Crosses Farm, Moss Lane, Catforth, Preston, Lancashire PR4 0HP

Inspection dates

26–27 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Hope House is well led and managed. It is an exceptionally well organised and effective school.
- Building on the good track record of the Care4Children group, the headteacher and proprietor have ensured that the school has got off to an excellent start. All independent school standards are met.
- The headteacher and proprietor have an in-depth understanding of how children learn. Together they ensure that pupils make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in subjects such as English, mathematics, sports and health and social care.
- The school's curriculum is still developing to include a wider range of subjects. Too few books are available for pupils to read for pleasure.
- The quality of teaching and monitoring and assessment procedures are good. Teachers know pupils very well and make learning interesting. Evaluations of the quality of teaching are not as precise as they should be.
- Safeguarding procedures are stringent, comprehensive and adhered to by all staff.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils attend regularly and enjoy the calm and purposeful nature of the school. Pupils say that they feel safe, cared for and listened to.
- Mentoring and therapeutic support are outstanding. Pupils are highly responsive to the intensive one-to-one support they receive.
- Staff cater for pupils' personal, social and emotionally needs exceptionally well. They care deeply about pupils and form strong bonds with them.
- Parents, and social workers from placing authorities, praise the school highly. Parents say that their children are 'transformed' from vulnerable school refusers, with poor attendance, to well-adjusted citizens.
- The school's work to promote British values, and to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good.
- Staff morale is high. Staff are trained well and appreciate opportunities, including from within the Care4Children group, to learn from others and improve their practice.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - broadening the curriculum further to include a wider range of subjects and provide more opportunities for pupils to engage in practical activities in science
 - making sure that observations of teaching are precise, clearly indicating to teachers how they can improve their practice.
- Improve the quality of the curriculum by providing more opportunities for pupils to read for pleasure.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and proprietor are highly ambitious for the school. Both are determined to make a difference to the lives of pupils, most of whom have been out of school for lengthy periods and have significant gaps in their learning. All pupils have either been involved with gangs or vulnerable to the influence of gangs.
- In less than a year, leaders have created a haven where pupils can start to catch up on lost learning and develop insight into their own behaviour and experience. Staff are well motivated and morale is high.
- All staff completed the inspection questionnaire. They indicated that they are well supported and said that they know exactly what the school is aiming to achieve. Staff appreciate professional development opportunities, which they say help them in their teaching, mentoring, care and support work.
- With the full support of the proprietor and the steering group for the gang, radicalisation and intervention programme (GRIP), and senior leaders ensure that teaching and learning are good, safeguarding procedures are stringent, and all independent school standards are met.
- Performance management procedures are good. Targets for teaching staff are clear and linked to the main priorities of the school, which rightly focus on improving pupils' basic reading, writing and mathematics skills and developing their personal and social skills.
- The school is meeting its main aim to develop pupils' confidence, speaking, listening, reading, writing and mathematical skills and enrich their experiences. The school's curriculum is still expanding as senior leaders draw on a wider range of teachers to deliver specialist subjects, such as music and languages. Science is taught, but facilities for pupils to engage in investigative work are limited, as are opportunities for them to read for pleasure.
- The headteacher and staff positively prepare pupils for life in modern Britain and enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school celebrates cultural diversity and provides many opportunities for pupils to explore, and reconnect with, their own culture, faith and traditions. Visits to various places of worship, including a synagogue, mosque and churches, give pupils an insight into the values and beliefs of others.
- Pupils' ability to empathise and connect with others is carefully fostered. Pupils enjoy raising money for charity. They recently secured funds, and gained awards, through a sponsored car wash. Pupils understand the rule of law and learn about the consequences of their actions. They have debated issues such as Brexit, modern slavery and Britain's colonial history, visited museums and produced their own drama performance.
- Pupils benefit from a rich array of extra-curricular activities which help to develop their leadership skills and promote their health and well-being. Recent activities include rock climbing, jet skiing, cycling, 'power kiting' and outward bound activities. The school has generous grounds and good on-site facilities, including those for basketball and football.
- Parents are highly complimentary about the school and say that their children are well looked after, safe and making good progress. Parents are impressed with the changes

they have seen in their children's attitudes to learning and improved attendance. Social workers from placing authorities are of the view that communication is good and typically comment that, 'you can't fault the school'.

Governance

- Good, effective arrangements for governance are in place. The headteacher reports regularly to the proprietor, also to the director of education for all Care4Children schools, on a range of matters. These include pupils' progress, work with local authorities and families, and pupils' behaviour and personal development. In turn, the proprietor reports to senior leaders, including the chair of the governing body, within the wider Care4Children group.
- The headteacher and proprietor report to a steering group for the school's gang, radicalisation and intervention programme (GRIP). The group contains various specialists who are knowledgeable and experienced in areas relating to gang culture, exploitation and gun crime.
- Weekly internal 'multidisciplinary meetings', involving the headteacher, teaching staff, social care workers, the school mentor and the therapist, ensure that any issues or concerns regarding pupils are efficiently communicated between staff.
- The proprietor challenges and holds the headteacher to account and sets clear performance management targets. The headteacher draws support from GRIP specialists. This has helped him to hit the ground running and rapidly establish a good school, with good outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding procedures are stringent and consistently applied by all members of staff. Designated safeguarding leaders are trained to a high standard. All staff are familiar with the latest government guidelines on keeping children safe in education. In addition, staff are trained well to understand all forms of abuse and to spot pupils in need of help and support.
- All pupils are vulnerable. Staff have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the potential dangers that pupils face and are familiar with the detailed risk assessments drawn up for each pupil.
- Checks to ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified, and suitable to work with children, are comprehensive and up to date.
- Staff know exactly what to do should they have a concern about the safety of a pupil. The school's work with specialist partners, including those from social, health, medical and police services, and with in-house specialists from within the Care4Children group, is highly effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- When in school, pupils learn in one main well-resourced classroom. Here pupils are taught

to be proud of their work, which is displayed alongside their certificates of achievement, the code of conduct for behaviour and photographs of visits and outdoor pursuits.

- Pupils learn in small groups and are supported on a one-to-one basis by the headteacher and teaching assistant. Teaching centres on developing pupils' confidence, engaging them in learning and expressing their ideas.
- Pupils' books show that there are many opportunities in English for them to hone their debating skills, understand different points of view and recognise persuasive aspects of different texts. While all pupils' skills are weak in these areas, consistently good teaching and intensive support are helping pupils get to grips with the fundamental skills needed to read and write fluently.
- Mathematics teaching is good, supporting pupils to make good progress in this subject. Typically, teaching focuses on getting pupils to see the relevance of mathematics in everyday life. To this end, activities mainly focus on supporting pupils to develop and master their calculation skills, which they then apply to a range of different activities such as counting money, devising shopping lists and spending.
- In cookery and food hygiene, pupils have a good understanding of how to keep food free from cross-contamination by using different chopping boards for fresh meat, vegetables, salads and dairy products, and by thoroughly washing their hands. In contrast, pupils have limited opportunities to gain practical experience in science.
- Teachers follow the school's assessment and feedback policy, checking pupils' work regularly and giving them good advice on how to improve it. The quality of some pupils' work is poor. However, pupils' presentation improves over time as their writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling skills develop and they start to take pride in their work.
- Teachers' work is good to promote equality of opportunity and explore the experience and perspective of people with protected characteristics (as defined by the 2010 Equality Act). The work in pupils' books shows they have explored issues such as sexuality, disability and the role of women in society. In one session, pupils were given limited information about various people and asked to make judgements on who would be most useful on a desert island. Pupils were forced to confront their preconceptions. After a good discussion, they came to the conclusion that gender, ethnicity and sexuality are irrelevant when considering a person's usefulness, or value in society.
- Teachers are highly skilled at getting pupils to come out of their comfort zone, and this includes reading in class. Teachers take every opportunity to get pupils, even the most reluctant, to read prompt-cards, learning objectives and instructions in class. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to discover the work of various writers and poets and to read for pleasure.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff are highly effective in developing pupils' self-confidence and self-awareness. Pupils have weekly therapy sessions which help them to come to terms with past trauma and past negative experiences. Therapy supports pupils to build productive relationships with

staff, their peers and families, and to become self-reliant individuals who do not feel the need to find support and acceptance within gangs.

- The school mentor brings a wealth of experience to the school and is contributing significantly to helping pupils to become independent thinkers, with coping strategies to support them to make the right decisions and understand the consequences of their actions. Pupils learn about the impact of violence on families and communities.
- An effective initiative is the opportunity for pupils to listen to presentations given by mothers whose children have experienced violence and death at the hands of gangs. Pupils who spoke with the inspector said that these talks had a significant impact on their view of gangs and their often-destructive nature.
- Pupils are taken on visits to football clubs, the gym and for walks on Lytham St Anne's beach. This helps to develop their communication skills and confidence in interacting with members of the public.
- Pupils benefit from impartial careers advice and information on employment, education and training opportunities. They have supervised access to online careers advice. In addition, pupils attend college open days, 'taster sessions' and can access work experience placements.
- The school supports pupils in writing personal statements and runs mock interview sessions. All pupils have transition plans. Opportunities are available at other Care4Children schools for pupils to sample vocational courses in areas such as bricklaying, mechanics and plumbing.
- The school has a good track record in working in partnership with various local vocational and further education colleges. After leaving the school, pupils have gone on to continue their education in areas such as health and social care, cookery and food hygiene.
- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to engage in independent learning activities, some of which require them to use computers and access the internet. Pupils have limited, supervised access to the internet and are not allowed to use mobile phones. They fully understand what cyber bullying is and know how to stay safe while using the internet.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They are happy and appreciate the remoteness of the school which makes them calm and reflective. Pupils know exactly what racism and homophobic bullying are. They are clear that neither take place in school.
- Pupils learn about dangers and risks through the personal, social, emotional, citizenship and health aspects of the curriculum. They are encouraged not to smoke, take illegal drugs or drink alcohol. Pupils know that these activities can be detrimental to their health. They understand the importance of regular exercise and healthy eating.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave sensibly most of the time. They welcomed the inspector into the school and were inquisitive and very communicative throughout the inspection. Pupils are usually respectful and well mannered.
- Staff take a consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour and support pupils with

strategies to manage their own behaviour. Most pupils are developing their resilience to persevere and learn from their mistakes. For most this is a slow process as they have been excluded from other schools, and pupil referral units, because of poor behaviour.

- Staff are skilled at employing de-escalation techniques. The school's behaviour log shows that incidents of physical restraints diminish soon after pupils settle into school life.
- Pupils' behaviour is managed consistently well in class. Teachers know when 'flash points' can occur and are trained well to intervene, prevent poor behaviour and avoid disturbances. Teachers challenge pupils and make it clear why certain language, such as swearing, is inappropriate and not to be tolerated.
- The school has an excellent record in improving pupils' attendance, punctuality and participation in lessons. Pupils' attendance is rigorously monitored. The attendance of all pupils has improved since starting the school.
- The school values good attendance highly and recognises and rewards pupils for coming to school regularly. Pupils are in no doubt about the relationship between good attendance and good achievement and are aware of the positive impact of their changing behaviour on their progress.
- Pupils behave sensibly during lunchtimes and breaktimes and when moving around the school. During the inspection, the school was calm and purposeful.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Hope House is only in its first year. To date, seven pupils have either passed through the school or are still being educated there. Senior leaders have been careful to monitor pupils' destinations. Of those who have left, some have continued their learning in regional colleges, others have gone back into mainstream education.
- All pupils are in the care of different local authorities and attract additional funding. All have either a statement of special educational need, or an education, health and care plan. Given the small number of pupils on roll, it is not possible to compare their attainment and progress with similar groups of pupils nationally. Such funding is used highly effectively to support eligible pupils' good progress and engagement in learning.
- The school's own assessment data indicates that pupils enter the school with weak skills in all areas of learning, including in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' poor skills development is directly linked to the extended periods they have spent out of school.
- Information from tests, coupled with available information from pupils' previous schools, is used as a baseline from which teachers can plan personalised programmes of learning for pupils. Pupils' books show that they make consistently good progress from their low starting points. In addition, pupils have been awarded various certificates for short courses they have completed. These include participation in art and drama activities, peer mentoring, functional skills in English and mathematics, food technology and hygiene and other AQA- and ASDAN-accredited courses.
- Given that all pupils are still in the early stages of acquiring basic skills, none is yet in a position to work towards attaining GCSE qualifications. Senior leaders' and teachers' main priority is to interest and engage pupils in learning and develop their basic study skills.
- Pupils' folders show examples of discursive writing, requiring pupils to present arguments

from different points of view. They make good progress in writing because teaching staff support them well in refining their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills. Pupils fully appreciate the relevance and importance of mathematics. Teachers build on pupils' interest by providing ample opportunities for them to practically apply their developing skills.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because they benefit from well-trained, patient and supportive teachers, who have high expectations of them.
- The practical and social skills and abilities that pupils gain during their time at Hope House prepare them well for the next stage of their learning in other schools and colleges. Pupils' interpersonal and team-working skills prepare them well for future employment.

School details

Unique reference number	143041
DfE registration number	888/6064
Inspection number	10038937

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Tariq Verpalen
Chair	Kamran Abassi
Headteacher	Alex Newton
Annual fees (day pupils)	£24,000
Telephone number	0345 521 5155
Email address	tariq.verpalen@care4children.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Hope House is an independent school operated and owned by Care4Children. The school opened in December 2016 and has not been previously inspected. Hope House is one of nine schools based in different parts of the country. A pre-registration inspection took place at the school on 17 November 2016.
- The school's mission statement is, 'To offer unconditional positive regard to all young people, irrespective of their background. To achieve demonstrable and measurable positive outcomes by putting the young people at the centre of everything we do.'
- The school has one full-time teacher, the headteacher, and one full-time teaching assistant. All other staff, including the school mentor, are part time.
- The school specialises in working with young people who have been in gangs or who are at risk of joining gangs. All pupils attend the school's gang, radicalisation and intervention programme (GRIP).

- The school currently caters for fewer than five boys. All have social and emotional difficulties, some have behavioural difficulties. All pupils are in the care of various local 'placing' authorities. The maximum number of pupils on roll at any one time is four.
- The school offers a two-year education and therapeutic programme. All pupils are part way through this programme. In total, seven pupils have attended the school.
- All pupils have either a statement of special educational need, or an education, health and care plan. Residential accommodation for pupils is provided on site.
- The school does not have a website. However, all necessary documentation, including safeguarding and complaints policies and procedures and admissions criteria, are made available to parents and placing authorities.
- The school uses alternative provision. All pupils currently on roll are aged 16 or under. The school works with a number of external providers, including Preston, Blackpool and The Fylde and Myerscough Colleges. Each pupil's curriculum is tailored to meet his specific needs and is linked to his progress in relation to the school's therapeutic programme.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed all pupils in various lessons, including English and mathematics. A joint observation was carried out with the headteacher. Pupils' work was scrutinised during lessons and separately.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the proprietor and the school mentor. Questionnaires submitted by four members of staff were scrutinised.
- The inspector met formally with pupils and had ad hoc discussions with them throughout the course of the inspection. The school's own surveys of pupils' views were considered.
- There were too few responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, to consider as part of this inspection.
- Telephone discussions were held with the school therapist, parents and social workers from placing authorities.
- The inspector examined a range of documentary evidence. This included the school's records and checks on the suitability of staff to work with children, development plans, checks on the quality of teaching, safeguarding documentation, including risk assessments, and various records of pupils' attendance and behaviour. In addition, the inspector scrutinised the school's reviews of its own performance.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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