

Hope Corner School

70 Clifton Road, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 4TD

Inspection dates

16 July 2018

Overall outcome

The school is unlikely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2, 3 and 4

- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is well designed for pupils currently at the school. Current pupils benefit from schemes of work that are well matched to their ages, aptitudes and needs. They gain relevant accreditation that helps them to access post-16 destinations that are well suited to their aspirations and interests. The current key stage 4 curriculum provides an appropriate balance between academic and vocational learning.
- Leaders have a clear and appropriate rationale for wanting to teach pupils aged from 11 to 13. Leaders indicate that there is an increased demand for their service among pupils in key stage 3. They also feel that they would be able to have a greater impact on pupils' development if they were able to teach pupils from a younger age.
- Leaders have considered the likely social and behavioural needs of pupils who may join the school in key stage 3. They have begun to consider how they will structure the school day differently, particularly in relation to the provision of different activities for these pupils during social times. They have also begun to consider how they will adapt the school's behaviour policy to provide a sharper focus on rewarding pupils more regularly.
- The school's current accommodation is well suited to the admission of younger pupils.
- Leaders have not ensured that the proposed curriculum for key stage 3 pupils is sufficiently developed. The curriculum policy refers to the current curriculum that is delivered to older pupils. It does not reference what prospective pupils from key stage 3 will be taught.
- Leaders have not prepared exemplar schemes of work that outline what key stage 3 pupils are likely to learn. They have begun to consider introducing a thematic curriculum for younger pupils, but these plans are in their infancy.
- As part of their application for a material change, leaders submitted several schemes

of work. However, these schemes outline what pupils in key stage 4 currently study and do not provide an indication of what younger pupils are likely to learn.

- Leaders have begun to work with other schools to help them prepare the school for younger pupils. However, this work is at a very early stage.
- The personal development curriculum is a clear strength of the school. Pupils are taught systematically how to maintain their emotional and physical health. Where appropriate, the school utilises support from the Halton Health Improvement team to lead sessions on topics such as alcohol, healthy eating and mental health.
- Pupils benefit from caring and supportive relationships with adults. Adults question pupils thoughtfully. Teaching helps pupils to gain a range of qualifications that boost their self-esteem and enable them to access a range of appropriate post-16 destinations.
- Pupils learn well in a range of subjects including French, mathematics, beliefs and values, and citizenship.
- Leaders have developed effective systems for monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress with their academic studies and personal development.
- Pupils receive good, impartial careers guidance which is appropriate to their age. Leaders provide pupils with excellent support that helps them to move successfully to an appropriate destination after leaving the school.
- The standards relating to the proprietor ensuring the provision of a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work are unlikely to be met. This is because leaders' current plans do not take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of pupils aged from 11 to 13 who could join the school.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraph 5

- The school's work focuses closely on the promotion of equalities. For example, pupils learned about the history of slavery as part of a recent 'history week'.
- Leaders have ensured that the promotion of British values weaves throughout the curriculum. Pupils learn about democracy and the rule of law as part of citizenship lessons. Their cultural awareness is also enhanced through 'culture weeks' which provide pupils with the opportunity to learn about different countries and parts of the world.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is enhanced by their involvement in events organised by the church that is run by the same trust. For example, pupils were involved in a recent visit from a Ugandan children's choir. Pupils have a strong understanding of Christianity and other faiths.
- Pupils benefit from the school's open, respectful and supportive culture.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7

- Leaders have created a strong safeguarding culture. The leader for safeguarding is a

registered social worker. Alongside the headteacher, she leads this area of the school's work effectively.

- Staff benefit from regular training that enables them to remain alert to the symptoms of neglect and different types of abuse.
- Leaders have ensured that the school's safeguarding culture compensates for pupils' added vulnerabilities. For example, leaders have ensured that the school's work to keep pupils safe when online is a strength. They have also devised systems that keep safeguarding as the 'absolute priority'. One of these systems involves staff recording pupils' mood during each lesson to enable leaders to track this important indicator of pupils' well-being.
- The school's personal development curriculum plays a vital role in helping pupils to keep themselves safe when away from the school.
- The school's safeguarding policy is clear and thorough. It takes into account guidance issued by the Secretary of State and is available via the school's website.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34

- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards are met for pupils who are currently at the school. However, leaders have not ensured that their planning for prospective key stage 3 pupils is sufficiently developed. As a result, not all of the standards are likely to be met if the school were to admit younger pupils.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is unlikely to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that are relevant to the material change.

The school is unlikely to meet the following independent school standards

- The proprietor must ensure that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate schemes of work, which take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, is drawn up and implemented effectively (paragraph 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b) and 2(1)(b)(i)).

School details

Unique reference number	138597
DfE registration number	876/6014
Inspection number	10055755

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Independent school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Hope Corner Community Church Trust
Chair	Mr Mark Finch
Headteacher	Mrs Maria Houghton
Annual fees (day pupils)	£29,778–£41,057
Telephone number	01928 580860
Website	www.hopcornerschool.co.uk
Email address	maria@hopecorner.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	29–31 January 2018

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	14 to 16	11 to 16	11 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	5	12	12

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	12	12
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	12	12
Of which, number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	12	12
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan	12	12

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	3	3
Number of part-time teaching staff	2	2
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	Not applicable

Information about this school

- Hope Corner School opened in September 2012. It occupies the first floor of a building which serves as a church and community centre for Hope Corner Community Church Trust, the owners of the school.

- The school is an independent special day school which is registered for up to 12 boys and girls aged from 14 to 16 years who have autistic spectrum disorder, moderate learning difficulty and/or social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- There are currently five pupils on roll, all of whom have an education, health and care plan.
- The school accepts pupils who have been excluded from other schools and other provision who are nearing the end of their statutory education. Pupils are typically in school for less than two years and have gaps in their education.
- The proprietor and headteacher plan to extend the school by providing education to pupils aged from 11 to 16.
- The school has a Christian ethos. It accepts pupils of any or no religion.
- The school aims to help pupils to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education in relation to the school's request to change its age range from 14 to 16 years to 11 to 16 years to allow it to admit pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. The school has not requested a change to the number of pupils it is registered to have on roll.
- The inspection was the first material change inspection concerning these proposed changes.
- The regulatory authority required the inspection to consider the following parts of the independent school standards:
 - Part 1. Quality of education provided, paragraphs 2, 3 and 4
 - Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, paragraph 5
 - Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils, paragraph 7
 - Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools, paragraph 34
- The inspector held meetings with the proprietor, headteacher and the leader responsible for teaching and learning.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning, scrutinised a sample of work in pupils' books and spoke to pupils.
- The inspector scrutinised school policies and other documents including those relating to safeguarding and the curriculum.

Inspection team

Will Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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