

Hope Wood Academy

Crawlaw Road, Easington Colliery, Peterlee SR8 3LP

Inspection dates

11–12 September 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- School leaders and trustees are highly effective and very ambitious. Together, they have successfully changed the culture of this school. Rapid improvement has already taken place and the school continues to improve.
- Thorough systems are in place to check the quality of teaching and learning. Teaching has improved considerably and, as a result, pupils' standards of achievement are rising.
- The knowledge and dedication of trustees have had a very positive impact on school improvement. They hold leaders effective to account and provide a high level of challenge.
- Leaders know the school very well. They effectively identify relevant priorities for further improvement and act swiftly to address them. Plans are now firmly in place to further strengthen the accuracy and reliability of records collated of pupils' achievements.
- Staff feel highly valued and listened to, and they support school leaders well. Staff provide a very positive, meaningful and enjoyable learning experience for pupils.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are exceptional. Pupils grow in confidence. Their ability and willingness to interact with others increases greatly.
- Behaviour around school and in classrooms is outstanding. Pupils respect all members of the school community. They are polite, welcoming and kind.
- The school is a very safe and welcoming place. Pupils love attending school. They enjoy lessons and activities that staff plan for them. Pupils develop into confident and enthusiastic learners.
- The school's curriculum is well planned and structured to meet the pupils' needs. A wide range of academic and vocational opportunities, as well as additional activities, are provided, which promote pupils' personal development and welfare exceptionally well.
- Good teaching ensures that pupils in all key stages make good progress from their starting points. Even so, opportunities to challenge the most able pupils are sometimes missed.
- Students achieve well in the sixth form. They develop the skills and knowledge that they need for their futures. Courses of study prepare them exceptionally well for the next stage in their lives.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment even further by making sure that:
 - teachers use information about what pupils already know and can do and provide activities that consistently challenge the most able pupils
 - targets that are set for pupils are realistic and achievable for all pupils.
- Implement plans to improve the accuracy of recording of assessment information so that it provides the school with reliable information about pupils' achievement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- School leaders and trustees continue to be uncompromising in their vision that pupils will achieve their best. Strong collaboration between school leaders and trustees means that very strong processes and practices are embedded throughout all areas of the school. This has already resulted in the much-improved quality of education on offer and in more positive outcomes for all pupils.
- Senior leaders have significantly improved the culture of the school. A very strong ethos of care, support and progress permeates the school. Most pupils, staff and parents support the changes with enthusiasm.
- Monitoring of the school's work is regular and robust. School leaders have a thorough and in-depth knowledge of the school's strengths. Using this knowledge, they have identified and effectively tackled previous weaknesses in the quality of teaching. Systems are in place to continually check and challenge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that it continues to improve even further. Leaders are very clear, for example, that teaching still needs to ensure that the most able pupils are consistently challenged. Advanced plans are already in place to improve the accuracy of the information collected that shows how much progress pupils are making.
- The headteacher tackles all areas for improvement with gusto. She does not shy away from difficult conversations. She acts swiftly and positively on decisions that will improve the school. The headteacher is supported by her capable and determined deputy headteachers. They lead their areas of responsibility effectively, playing an active role in raising standards throughout the school.
- Middle leaders support school improvement well. They are highly knowledgeable about their roles. They identify and successfully lead areas of school improvement. Changes to the content of the mathematics, science and English curriculum have led to increased pupil progress. Regular reviews of action plans and moderation take place. This enables leaders to change and adapt the curriculum content to meet the needs of pupils.
- The headteacher and trustees hold middle leaders to account. Senior leaders provide significant challenge in their regular planned meetings. This means that leaders develop a deeper understanding of how the school is improving.
- Staff feel extremely well supported. Those who have been at the school for longer periods report that the 'school has come a long way, we have a great team'. Staff acknowledge that a lot has been achieved and that leaders manage the workload well. Staff fully uphold the school's values and are proud to be part of the Hope Wood Academy team. Morale is high among staff.
- Staff are provided with many opportunities for their professional development. Personal interests are developed and used to good effect to support areas of improvement. Internal opportunities for career advancement are encouraged. Members of staff have been supported in their new roles through high-quality mentoring and training by members of the leadership team.
- The school is strongly supportive of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC)

education throughout the curriculum. There are structured and embedded activities throughout all key stages. The school has a planned schedule of visitors and planned visits to support the SMSC content, which enables the pupils to have a wide range of new experiences.

Governance of the school

- Governance arrangements for the school are highly effective. The trustees work hard to support and put in place rapid improvements in the school. The arrangements to challenge and support leaders are carefully thought out and effective. The trustees exercise their duties effectively.
- Trustees use their professional skills to ask searching and pertinent questions. Leaders at all levels are held to account and receive challenge.
- Trustees monitor school finances, including the use of additional funding well. They ensure that leaders are using funding wisely to get the best value for pupils and students who attend the school.
- Trustees ensure that the structures for leadership and management are fit for purpose and have capacity to lead further improvement. For example, the development of effective middle leaders has had significant impact on the improvement of the curriculum and the quality of teaching.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff understand that they all have a role to play in keeping pupils safe. There is a whole-school focus on pupil well-being. Staff receive a high level of safeguarding training and can identify signs of neglect or abuse. They report all concerns to ensure that help can be arranged if it is required.
- Pupils feel safe at school. Most parents report that their children are happy to go to school and feel secure when they are in school.
- The trustees ensure that the school meets the legal requirements for safeguarding. These include the detailed checking of the suitability of adults to work in school.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding records are detailed, well organised and stored securely.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching across the school has strengthened considerably and is now good and, as a result, pupils in all key stages make good progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants understand the needs of their pupils well, planning lessons that engage and interest them. As a result, pupils work with enthusiasm and enjoyment. There is a strong culture of learning throughout the school.
- Routines in classrooms are already well established and pupils are settled in their classes. Pupils know their way around their classrooms and can correctly retrieve or put away items that they have used. Staff encourage pupils' independence by making sure

that a wide range of support tools are available, such as common spellings, mathematical examples and practical resources. Teachers typically have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and pupils respond well.

- Teachers use their knowledge of pupils' prior learning and their education, health and care plan targets to plan lessons. For the most part, assessments of what pupils know and can do is used well to ensure that learning is differentiated, personalised and well matched to pupils' varying needs and abilities. However, at times, the most able pupils are not suitably challenged and find work too easy, and this inhibits their progress.
- Staff encourage pupils to communicate using their chosen method. Pupils respond well to adult instructions. Pupils with more profound needs are very well cared for in a calm environment. Staff use their knowledge of these pupils' needs to sensitively support them in their activities. Pupils engage and respond to staff as well as specific stimuli. Staff keep individual records of learning which show the small steps of progress that these pupils make over time. Staff utilise specialised equipment appropriately. They are confident and skilled in recognising and acting on non-verbal responses from pupils.
- Teachers regularly review pupils' progress over time. They can quickly identify any pupil that is falling behind. Middle leaders ensure that programmes of support are swiftly put in place to enable pupils to catch up where needed.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled. They support the learning and pastoral needs of pupils effectively. They have exceptionally good relationships with their pupils and this further consolidates pupils' learning.
- Staff are skilled in asking questions that promote a deeper understanding and check that pupils understand, using a variety of questioning techniques to draw out answers from pupils. Pupils are given the time that they need to be able to form their own answers. This develops pupils' abilities to think carefully, to understand their work and encourages them to develop skills that they can use and build on.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils thrive due to the extremely supportive, warm and caring environment that the staff create. The exceptionally positive relationships between staff and pupils helps them to gain confidence. Pupils have complete trust in staff to keep them safe. They know that staff will support them if they have any concerns or worries.
- The school's methods to address pupils' welfare requirements are high quality and wide-ranging. Therapeutic services for pupils include occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, music therapy and animal therapy. This varied approach is highly effective in supporting the wide range of pupils' needs.
- Pupils show a strong understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They can list the important things that they must not do when online. They acknowledge the difficulties that can arise when using social media. Equally, they are aware of how to keep themselves safe when they are outside school. Pupils know how to cross roads

safely. They understand the importance of telling parents where they are at all times.

- Pupils can explain clearly how to keep themselves healthy. They understand the importance of a balanced diet and exercise. They accurately name food and drink which is high in sugar and are aware that they are unhealthy if consumed in large quantities.
- Pupils care for each other and show concern in situations when others struggle with their emotions due to their special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. One pupil said, 'Different people have different conditions. Sometimes it means that they get upset and can't cope very well.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The school has created an extremely harmonious culture that encourages all to conduct themselves in a very calm and well-ordered way.
- In classrooms and around school, the expectations of behaviour are very high. Pupils know and understand the rules. They are confident that if they need support to manage their emotions, there are always adults to support them.
- The school's approach to managing behaviour is extremely positive. It enables pupils to be in control of managing their own behaviour.
- Pupils move around school in a very calm and orderly way. Loss of learning time due to inappropriate behaviour is extremely rare.
- The use of effective behaviour strategies has had a significant impact over time. The number of incidents, particularly those involving restraint, have reduced dramatically.
- Pupils report that there is no bullying at the school. They note that if there were any incidents, the staff would deal with them quickly and with a satisfactory conclusion.
- Pupils really enjoy and value their school experience and, as such, are rarely absent. Leaders have implemented highly effective strategies to overcome some necessary absence, such as attendance at specialist appointments. Some specialists now hold appointments at school to allow pupils to miss as few lessons as possible.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes for pupils have improved rapidly, with most pupils now making good progress in most areas of the curriculum. This is due to the good standard of teaching that is now taking place at the school. Leaders have taken highly effective measures to ensure that this happens.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to their peers. This is due to the effective spending of additional funding that the school receives. While the most able also make good progress overall, sometimes their progress is hampered because work lacks challenge.
- Targets for what pupils should achieve are set individually, using the school's assessments of what pupils already know and can do. However, some targets that are set are overly ambitious for some of the pupils. These pupils are not able to meet them

due, in part, to the very small steps of progress that they can make. Some information that is collected suggests that pupils are not making as much progress as they actually are. Leaders are well aware of this and plans are already underway to revise the way in which such information is collated to ensure that it presents a more accurate view of pupils' attainment and of their progress.

- A strong determination to improve English standards by improvements in the teaching of phonics and a school-wide reading programme has had a positive impact on pupils. Pupils enjoy reading and use this skill well in other areas of the curriculum where their understanding is clear to see.
- Pupils are prepared well for their next stage in their education. Transition arrangements between key stages are organised and thorough. These arrangements take pupils' vulnerabilities and individual needs into good account.
- Those who attend 16 to 19 study programmes are prepared exceptionally well for the next stage of their lives. Robust study programmes and an extensive course of enrichment opportunities and experiences provide students with confidence and awareness of the world.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- 16 to 19 study programmes have improved considerably. Leaders have embedded their plans and there are now positive results for students. Attainment and progress are now rigorously tracked. Most students have appropriate targets. Each has personal aspirations to make a positive contribution to society. All students have a defined study plan.
- Safeguarding in 16 to 19 study programmes is effective. Students enjoy the strong safeguarding culture which runs throughout the school. Learners know how to stay safe online and receive high-quality road safety and independent travel training.
- Students study mathematics and English for accreditation, developing previously learned skills. The curriculum content is set in line with preparations for life, including a focus on handling money and time.
- Students benefit from a wide variety of vocational courses, including independent living, cooking, media and employability skills. The curriculum is enriched by many positive experiences to support the special educational needs of the students. Students take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, sensory regulation activities, soft play and weekly visits to the library.
- Staff structure almost all lessons well. They use previous assessment information and an understanding of each student's needs to plan activities that support and enhance learning. Students engage well in lessons. However, some lessons are not challenging enough.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is well supported. Their access to the range of experiences on offer allow them to build on their communication skills well.
- Those on the 16 to 19 study programmes behave extremely well. They follow the very high expectations of their behaviour that is set by school leaders and they say, 'We

have school rules which we follow.'

- Careers guidance is good. Students are provided with possible career opportunity information. This information is structured throughout the school. The students have been able to experience the first careers fair that has taken place at the school this year. There has been a large increase in the work-related curriculum. The majority of students take part in regular work experience opportunities.

School details

Unique reference number	138718
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10053313

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	19
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Nick Hurn
Headteacher	Adele Pearson-Atkinson
Telephone number	0333 999 1454
Website	www.hopewood.org.uk
Email address	hopewood@ascenttrust.org
Date of previous inspection	6–7 July 2016

Information about this school

- Hope Wood Academy provides education for pupils who have a range of SEN and/or disabilities, including moderate learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, autism and sensory impairment. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The academy is a member of the Ascent Academies Trust. The academy does not have a local governing body. Members and trustees act as governors for the school.
- There has been significant change in the senior leadership of the school since the last

inspection. The headteacher and both of the deputy headteachers are new in post.

- There has been a considerable change in teaching staff since the last inspection.
- There are too few children in the early years to separately evaluate this aspect of the school's provision.
- Occasionally, the school uses East Durham college as alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across all key stages, including the 16 to 19 study programmes.
- Meetings were held with trustees, including the chief executive, as well as the headteacher and executive headteacher, senior leaders and middle leaders. Inspectors spoke formally to pupils across all key stages and to students attending the 16 to 19 study programmes about their experiences and views of the school.
- Inspectors took account of 69 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and 17 responses to the online survey for parents, Parent View. Also considered were seven written responses to the survey, one handwritten letter to the lead inspector and one telephone call to Ofsted.
- The lead inspector spoke to the local authority's leadership review adviser and virtual school headteacher.
- Inspectors examined a range of policies, including the safeguarding policy, and other documentation, including the school's own self-evaluation.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of pupils' and students' work.

Inspection team

Sara Roe, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Penny	Ofsted Inspector
Zoe Westley	Ofsted Inspector

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