

Hope Community School

167 Rectory Lane, Sidcup, Kent DA14 5BU

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that the school has remained good since the last inspection. It requires improvement because the quality of teaching varies, and too many pupils have underachieved.
- Leaders' plans for improvement are not sharply linked to pupils' attainment and progress to help drive more rapid improvements.
- Middle leadership is not yet fully established and effective in raising standards.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils has been inaccurate in the past, so pupils who were expected to do well have underachieved. However, they are now beginning to catch up.
- Not all teachers have high expectations of pupils or enough subject knowledge to provide sufficient challenge for the most able.
- Sometimes, teachers do not match learning and work carefully to pupils' needs. Some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers' expectations of the quality and quantity of pupils' work are inconsistent.
- Teachers are not consistent in ensuring that pupils take pride in their work.
- Staff do not consistently teach pupils to apply their phonics (letters and the sounds that they represent) and early reading skills well.
- Adults' expectations of pupils' behaviour is not consistently high. Consequently, pupils become restless and lose concentration.
- Pupils' attendance is below the national average, in particular for disadvantaged pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher provides strong direction, ambition and drive for the school and is leading improvement.
- Leaders ensure that children get off to a good start in the early years foundation stage.
- Governance is effective. The trust has taken effective action to challenge underperformance in the leadership of the school.
- The school's Christian ethos is consistently embedded in the values and ethos of the school.
- Pupils feel that the school is a friendly and safe place to be. They speak strongly about the school values and respecting everyone regardless of their background.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:
 - leaders at all levels take effective action, including the development of plans for improvement that are sharply linked to pupils' progress and attainment, to help drive more rapid improvement and to better hold staff to account
 - they further develop the roles of middle leaders so that they have sufficient time to ensure greater impact on improving pupils' outcomes in their areas of responsibility
 - they check pupils' progress in phonics and ensure that all staff have the skills and accurate assessment information they need to help pupils make rapid progress
 - they improve attendance, especially for disadvantaged pupils, by building on the successful work already undertaken with even more rigour, to ensure that the small numbers of pupils who are persistently absent attend well.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to develop more consistency in the approach to accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment by ensuring that teachers:
 - have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in all subjects
 - set work that is better matched to the needs of pupils with low prior attainment and develops their independence
 - use accurate assessment information about pupils' learning to match work to pupils' needs, so that they are appropriately challenged
 - rigorously and more effectively teach pupils to acquire and apply their phonics and reading skills to their writing in all subjects
 - have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and ensure that pupils remain on task during lessons and show positive attitudes to learning and pride in their work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher has an accurate grasp of the school's strengths and aspects which need to improve. She is effectively addressing a legacy of low expectations, poor behaviour and pupils' underachievement. Leaders have introduced a range of actions to improve standards, many very recently. However, leaders are not rigorous enough in checking that all staff consistently and effectively apply their initiatives. The pace of improvement in some areas is not as rapid as it could be.
- Some improvement plans do not always set sharp targets for improvement that are linked to improving pupils' progress and attainment. Consequently, leaders have not always been as effective as they could be in holding staff to account to secure more rapid progress in pupils' outcomes.
- The development of a middle leadership structure is at an early stage of development and is currently supported closely by the headteacher and the trust. Staff who spoke with inspectors say that they value the professional development opportunities now being developed. They are developing their roles in monitoring and evaluating standards. However, middle leadership roles are not yet fully established and effective in raising standards across all subjects.
- Leaders, trustees and councillors (governors) have ensured that the pupil premium funding and physical education (PE) and sports funding is used effectively. For example, funding is used to support the family liaison officer to work with vulnerable pupils and their families to improve attendance. Leaders are using the PE and sport funding to enable pupils to participate in school events, sports competitions and dance classes, for example. However, leaders have not carefully checked that the funding is having the maximum impact on improving rates of participation, the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- The systems for identifying the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and putting in place appropriate provision, are being strengthened rapidly. Relevant training has been provided for some support staff to help pupils with specific emotional needs. However, leaders do not have a sharp overview of the impact of teaching and support for these pupils.
- Leaders demonstrate the capacity to bring about improvement in the areas on which they focus. Leaders are providing a range of staff training as well as more programmes of support to help strengthen the quality of teaching. This has brought about improvements in, for example, the early years, teaching of mathematics and behaviour management. Many initiatives are at an early stage of development. Leaders are clear that there is still work to be done. Nonetheless, the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes are improving.
- The recently appointed headteacher, with the support of the trust and school councillors, has brought about stability and challenge after a period of weak leadership. The headteacher is rapidly establishing a culture of high expectations. Leaders and staff who spoke to inspectors say that staff morale is improving and feel that the school is making good progress.

- Leaders have developed the effectiveness of the curriculum to ensure that it is broad and balanced. They have broadened the curriculum to include languages such as Chinese and more opportunities in sport and swimming. The curriculum incorporates the promotion of British values. Pupils enjoy and value taking responsibility, for example in the school parliament and taking part in educational trips. These deepen their understanding of the subjects they study. The school provides a wide range of community-based extra-curricular activities. The curriculum effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The significant external support from the trust, school councillors and the external adviser is effective. The trust took rapid and appropriate action to improve the underperformance of leadership in the school. The trust and councillors have supported improvements in curriculum development, building links with the local community and the quality of teaching and learning.
- Most parents and carers who spoke with the inspectors or responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were positive about the school. They commented on the impact of the headteacher and how the school is improving after a period they described as 'drift'.

Governance of the school

- Councillors and trustees ask challenging questions of senior leaders, such as: 'What went wrong in 2018?' They are well supported by their independent school improvement adviser.
- Councillors and trustees have an accurate understanding of the school's performance. They know the outcomes achieved last year were not good enough and have made difficult and rapid decisions to improve the effectiveness of leadership in the school. They are committed to supporting new leaders to make improvements.
- Councillors and trustees are well organised and meet all of their statutory duties. They make regular visits to the school. A nominated councillor carries out termly checks of the school's safeguarding procedures.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of vigilance and all staff are aware of the action to take if they have a concern over a child. The designated safeguarding leads keep meticulous records, tenaciously following up concerns with external agencies. Staff at all levels are well trained.
- The single central record of the suitability of staff is maintained and checked regularly.
- Pupils are safe in school and their parents agree. They know who to speak to if they have a problem in school and are confident that adults will help them. As one parent said: 'This is a kind and caring school.'
- Councillors and trustees make regular visits to the school to check safeguarding and that the school is meeting all statutory requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. Inspectors observed strong teaching practice in some classes. However, in too many classes, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Teachers do not consistently ensure that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with low and high prior achievements, make the progress of which they are capable. Analysis of school information and scrutiny of work confirms this point.
- Sometimes teachers do not use accurate assessment information about pupils' learning to plan work that is well matched to pupils' needs, or to decide when to move learning on. In some lessons the pace of learning is too slow.
- In some classes pupils make good progress in writing. However, this is not consistent. Teachers do not always challenge pupils to write with quality and at length.
- Staff promote positive attitudes to reading. The library stimulates pupils' interest in a range of reading materials in a pleasant environment. Recent training and support, as well as a more structured approach, is beginning to improve the teaching of phonics. However, staff are not equally skilled or rigorous in reinforcing and consolidating pupils' early reading and phonics skills in English, and in writing across all subjects.
- Teaching assistants and volunteers often provide effective support, particularly when working with individual pupils and small groups. However, sometimes teachers do not deploy teaching assistants carefully enough in whole-class work to ensure that they can have the maximum impact on pupils' learning and progress.
- Teachers are mostly enthusiastic, and relationships are positive. Where teaching is strongest, teachers use their subject knowledge to ask questions to check pupils' understanding or develop their thinking. They explain clearly and demonstrate tasks so that pupils understand what is expected. Pupils' learning is part of a logical sequence which builds on learning over time.
- Teaching of mathematics is improving. The increasing use of imaginative resources is supporting pupils' understanding of key mathematical concepts and helping them make faster progress. In the most effective mathematics teaching, teachers provide increasingly effective and challenging opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are not consistently positive. A range of initiatives are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning, particularly for older pupils. Pupils in Year 5 said: 'I enjoy school and learning.'
- In too many classes, pupils are not taught and encouraged to take care and pride over their work. Poor-quality work is sometimes not challenged.
- Staff promote pupils' social and cultural awareness by helping pupils to value and

celebrate their experiences from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. The school's Christian ethos is consistently embedded in the values and ethos of the school. Pupils speak strongly about the school's values and the importance of respecting everyone regardless of background.

- Relationships are positive in most classes. Staff encourage pupils to be responsible. Inspectors observed, for example, older pupils being very supportive of younger pupils on the playground.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including road safety, 'stranger danger' as well as online. Pupils say bullying is very rare now and most are very confident that adults will rapidly resolve any concerns they have. Leaders carefully record incidents and any concerns they may have about individual pupils and actions they have taken in their efforts to resolve issues.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In some classes pupils lose focus when expectations of behaviour are not sufficiently reinforced. This is because the pace of learning is too slow or work is not carefully enough matched to pupils' learning needs.
- Leaders have made improvements to the school physical environment. The school site is tidy and well organised. There is a calm atmosphere. Pupils have good manners and mostly conduct themselves well at playtimes, lunchtimes, in assemblies and in school corridors at all times of the school day. Pupils are friendly and polite.
- Attendance is below the national average especially for disadvantaged pupils. The improvements in behaviour management have ensured that the number of exclusions is falling. Leaders have worked determinedly with other agencies and the family worker to address attendance issues.
- Despite this improvement in attendance, there are still a small number of pupils who are persistently absent and are disadvantaged because they miss too much school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes are inconsistent. Published and school information show that the proportion of pupils who achieved a good level of development in the early years is in line with that found nationally. The proportions of pupils achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 were below those found nationally.
- Pupils have generally positive attitudes to reading. Some pupils read confidently. Recent changes to teaching of phonics are beginning to show improvements and pupils are making more progress than in the past. Pupils who did not meet the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check are now supported to catch up more quickly. However, the teaching of phonics is inconsistent. Adults' use of phonics assessment is not matched to the needs of lower-ability pupils, and their progress is slow.
- Too many pupils do not make the progress they should. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that while there is evidence of some improvements, this is not consistent or sufficiently

secure. Teachers' expectations of the quality and quantity of pupils' work are inconsistent. Standards of handwriting and presentation are inconsistent.

- Pupils of different abilities are often given the same work to complete which is not fully informed by their previous work. Pupils including those who are disadvantaged, the least and most able, and those who have SEND are capable of more.
- In some classes, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers provide increasingly effective and challenging opportunities, including problem-solving in mathematics and appropriate homework to diminish the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Early years provision

Good

- From starting points which are broadly typical for their age, children go on to make good progress in the early years because of the rich learning environment and good teaching.
- Over the past three years, the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of Reception has improved to match the national average.
- Children are independent in their learning and have access to resources which support them well.
- Children behave well and there is a highly nurturing culture across the Reception class. Children are well cared for and safe.
- Adults are highly effective in supporting children who speak English as an additional language or have speech and language difficulties. They model language and swiftly correct errors in children's speech and extend their vocabulary.
- Parents contribute to their children's learning through well-developed communication links with staff that ensure that they understand their children's progress.
- Children who have SEND make good progress because their needs are met by adults.
- Leaders have an accurate view on the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. They rigorously evaluate their work and their plans for development show that they are taking the correct action to improve provision further, especially the progress of lower-ability children. Professional development opportunities are used well to continue to improve teaching.
- Phonics is well taught in the early years. Children can apply their growing phonic knowledge, both when working with adults and in independent activities.

School details

Unique reference number	139561
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10088826

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	162
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Paul Weston
Principal	Anne Wood
Telephone number	020 3223 2000
Website	www.hopecommunityschool.org
Email address	principal@hopecommunityschool.org
Date of previous inspection	17–18 June 2015

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed to her post in September 2018.
- Hope Community School, part of the New Generation Schools Trust, is a smaller than an average-sized primary school. The trust works closely with the local advisory councillors who support the school. The school is expanding and is currently organised into six classes from Reception through to Year 5.
- The proportions of pupils who speak English as an additional language and/or are disadvantaged and/or come from minority ethnic backgrounds are broadly average. The proportion of pupils who have SEND has increased from below average in 2018 to well above average in 2019.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings were held with the principal, the coordinator for the provision for pupils who have SEND, middle leaders, teachers, groups of pupils, parents, teachers, support staff, advisory group members, chair of the trustees, trustees and the school improvement partner.
- The inspectors observed teaching in all classes as well as the teaching of phonics. During these visits, inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke with them to evaluate the quality of their learning. Some lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. The inspectors scrutinised pupils' work with leaders. The inspectors met with a group of pupils and listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. Account was taken of the 70 responses to the Ofsted Parent View free-text survey and 12 staff responses. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- A range of documents were scrutinised, relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, pupils' attainment and progress, and staff performance. The inspectors looked at plans for improvement, reports from external advisers as well as leaders' evaluation of the school's performance. The inspectors also considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

Inspection team

Phil Garnham, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Noeman Anwar

Her Majesty's Inspector

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