

Inspection of Hopespring Newcastle

Chesters Avenue (on corner of Aydon Gardens), Longbenton, Newcastle upon Tyne
NE12 8UZ

Inspection dates: 16 to 18 November 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their time at school. They turn up nearly every day. Parents and pupils describe the work of staff as 'transformational' in terms of pupils' more positive views of education. Staff go the extra mile to ensure that pupils receive carefully considered support, guidance and pastoral care. Pupils appreciate the way staff treat them like adults and take an interest in the things they enjoy. Pupils say they feel safe. They value the opportunity to discuss and learn more about safeguarding issues.

Staff want the very best for all pupils. From day one, staff seek to understand what pupils want to do when they leave school. Careers education is strong. Pupils enjoy a range of opportunities to experience the world of work or hear from guest speakers, such as general practitioners and representatives from the army. Most pupils are successful in securing appropriate employment or placements at college when they complete their time at the school.

Pupils are tolerant. They present balanced arguments and considered opinions based on a range of evidence. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. In lessons, pupils enjoy debate. They engage enthusiastically in discussion relating to topics such as freedom of speech, the right to protest and the Black Lives Matter movement.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have carefully considered the curriculum pupils learn. It is challenging and provides pupils with many opportunities to revisit their learning and build on what has gone before. Staff assess and check pupils' understanding at different points in the year. This helps to ensure that lessons and most learning activities are closely matched to pupils' needs. However, formal assessments and the questions staff ask pupils in class do not sufficiently check pupils' understanding of the main concepts and ideas as set out in the curriculum. Additionally, while pupils receive appropriate support to be successful in class, opportunities for them to work independently are less common.

The school's transition arrangements are particularly strong. Leaders spend a lot of time speaking with families, care teams and pupils before new arrivals start at the school. This helps staff prepare care plans and risk assessments that are appropriate and meet the needs of each pupil. Arrangements and activities to help pupils prepare for adulthood are of a high standard. Staff work well with external professionals and pupils to improve pupils' understanding of finance, bus routes to work or further education and basic food preparation. A large proportion of pupils make an effective transition to semi-independent living.

Pupils are encouraged to read each day. They particularly enjoy reading daily newspapers and discussing current affairs. Leaders frequently purchase new reading materials that match pupils' interests. Some pupils need a lot of support to read

fluently and understand the text they are reading. This is, in part, due to the extended periods of time many pupils have been out of education prior to starting at the school. At present, the school's leaders have not considered how the weakest readers will learn phonics in a structured way so they can read with increased speed and confidence. Pupils' progress in reading is not as strong as it might be.

The first and second national lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic were a particularly tough time for the pupils and staff at the school. Pupils and the school community suffered bereavement. The school's leaders and staff responded with integrity and compassion. For example, leaders introduced additional pastoral support for pupils, parents and carers. Staff met more frequently with each other to debrief and discuss pupils' anxieties. Furthermore, leaders ensured that staff had the opportunity to speak with trained professionals both in school and independently.

Leaders and the proprietor work well together. The proprietor receives weekly management reports and visits the school regularly. There are clear lines of accountability across the school. Evidence demonstrates that leaders and the proprietor ask searching questions of each other. Leaders are reflective and respond swiftly to instruction and/or advice. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Nevertheless, school improvement plans and activities are not as considered as they could be. It is not sufficiently clear when improvement activities should be completed. Additionally, plans do not highlight who is expected to monitor and evaluate each action. Governors and trustees do not have the information they need to pinpoint more precisely how quickly the school is improving or appraise the effectiveness of leaders' actions.

Staff have a strong understanding of the learning needs and pastoral requirements of every pupil with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders with responsibility for SEND ensure that the detail in each education, health and care (EHC) plan is regularly shared with teaching staff. Pupils with SEND who have an EHC plan do well in school because staff plan appropriate learning activities to meet their needs.

Staff enjoy coming to work. They appreciate the 'Wednesday Workshop' training sessions. During this time, leaders provide staff with a wide range of opportunities to develop their professional expertise. Staff are heavily involved in therapeutic training and mindfulness sessions, and they often take part in relevant safeguarding activities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Many pupils attending the school are particularly vulnerable, having spent such a long period of time out of education. As a result, leaders and staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. They believe that 'every interaction with a pupil is an intervention'. During discussions and planned activities, leaders ensure

that pupils learn about important safeguarding matters, including drug trafficking, peer-on-peer abuse, and radicalisation.

All staff are trained to be a designated safeguarding leader. Without exception, staff know each pupil well. They understand in detail the signs that may suggest pupils could be at risk of harm outside the school. Staff are vigilant and share any nagging doubts with safeguarding leaders swiftly.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Curriculum plans and assessment policies do not align as closely as they might. Leaders have not planned in sufficient detail what curriculum content they should assess pupils on and why. While the outcomes from current assessments help staff plan learning activities that meet the needs of pupils, it is less clear whether pupils know and understand in sufficient detail the most important parts of the curriculum. Furthermore, curriculum plans do not consider how staff should withdraw support for pupils and encourage them to become independent learners. Leaders must ensure that sufficient consideration is given to all forms of assessment so that they understand more clearly what pupils know and remember in the long-term. Additionally, leaders should develop more opportunities for pupils to work independently during their time at school.
- There are pupils who require additional support to become fluent readers. Some pupils learn to decode and blend words in the wrong order. Leaders should teach early reading with fidelity to one programme and ensure that pupils have more books to read that are at an appropriate level for their stage in reading.
- Strategic improvement plans lack sufficient detail. It is not clear who should do what and when. This means that the proprietor, governors, trustees, and leaders themselves do not have a detailed understanding about the effect of their actions. Leaders should ensure that school improvement documentation includes appropriate milestones and the details of who will oversee and evaluate each action.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	143049
DfE registration number	392/6005
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10203742
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Lois Gott
Headteacher	Jacob Vart
Annual fees (day pupils)	£29,260
Telephone number	0191 218 9459
Website	www.hopespringeducation.org.uk
Email address	jacob.vart@hopespringeducation.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 to 8 February 2018

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Hopespring charity and aims to meet the needs of a small number of pupils aged 11 to 16 years, most of whom have social, emotional, and mental health needs. Most pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Most pupils are at risk of permanent exclusion or have been permanently excluded from their mainstream schools.
- Pupils have access to a wide range of therapeutic support from teaching staff who are trained as therapists.
- The school is located on the outskirts of Newcastle, Tyne and Wear.
- The school admits pupils from a range of local schools.
- The school is located in a former community centre.
- Pupils join the school at different times of the year. Currently, pupils on roll are in key stage 4.
- The school is registered to admit 12 pupils. At the time of the inspection, there were 2 boys on roll.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, trust leaders, trustees, governors, staff, one pupil and the proprietor.
- Inspectors evaluated the school's safeguarding procedures by scrutinising a wide range of evidence, including attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding files

and recruitment checks. They observed the work of leaders and talked to staff and one pupil.

- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with school leaders from the commissioning schools, a representative of the local authority and several parents and carers of pupils.
- Inspectors toured the premises and looked at a range of documentation to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Lee Elliott, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Pauline Rowland

Ofsted Inspector

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