



Hope School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 133421
LEA Liverpool
Inspection number 282308
Inspection dates 5 October 2005 to 6 October 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs Sonja Oyen HMI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Naylorsfield Drive
School category	Community special		Netherley
Age range of pupils	5 to 16		Liverpool, Merseyside L27 0YD
Gender of pupils	Boys	Telephone number	0151 4984055
Number on roll	37	Fax number	0151 4984868
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms Rachel Roberts
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Rohit Naik

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an HMI with the support and cooperation of the headteacher and staff of the school. The inspection was spread over two days and an Additional Inspector was present on the second day.

Description of the school

Hope School opened fully in September 2003. It is a school for boys with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. All of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs or are undergoing assessment. Most have a history of disrupted schooling and poor attendance at other schools. Pupils join and leave throughout the year. Eight pupils are in their first weeks at Hope. Of the 36 pupils currently on roll, eight are in Years 5 and 6, and 28 in Years 7 and 8. One pupil is being taught in a mainstream school. Six pupils are in the care of the local authority. One pupil is a traveller seeking refugee status. A small number of pupils are from English speaking Black and mixed race backgrounds. The school offers outreach support to pupils in mainstream schools in the south of Liverpool. This is the first time the school has been inspected.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Hope School is reasonably effective but has some way to go to be as good as it judges itself. It is right in its view that it is particularly successful in getting pupils to attend school, to improve their behaviour and to take a positive interest in learning. All members of staff know each pupil extremely well and have close contact with parents, carers and other agencies. The good level of care and concern for each pupil is a strength of the school. The parents and pupils value the understanding, commitment and efforts of the staff. For many pupils, this is the first time in a long while that they are attending school regularly, enjoying it and making personal progress.

The teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Changes in staffing have added to the quality. The adults are skilful in managing pupils' behaviour but the teaching does not consistently push the pupils enough in their academic work. The school has only patchy and often unreliable information on each pupil's educational progress and is not making the very best of its resources, including staffing, to meet individual needs. A few pupils do well but most are working well below the level expected for their age, especially in literacy and numeracy.

The headteacher has been highly influential in establishing Hope as a place where pupils behave and learn. The commendable policy of non-exclusion has given needed stability to many pupils. The school faces changes in how it works, especially in meeting the needs of the growing number of older pupils and the increasing demands for outreach work. Too little has been done, however, by the governing body, headteacher and senior staff to review the school's performance and develop a clear vision for the next few years. Overall, Hope gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the teaching is geared to meeting the specific learning needs of individual pupils across the curriculum.
- Establish robust systems to track the pupils' personal and academic progress and use the information to identify where and why pupils are experiencing problems.
- Improve the quality and the rigour of the procedures used by governors, senior managers and other staff to ensure that resources are used to best effect in the school and in the outreach provision.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school rightly judged the personal achievement of the pupils to be good but over-estimated their academic achievement. In each of the four classes, there is a wide spread of attainment and the pupils' rate of progress varies considerably in lessons and over time. This is due to many factors, not least because of pupils' emotional upsets which disturb their and others' learning, but also because the teaching does not consistently challenge individuals to improve. This is particularly evident for pupils

in Years 7 and 8. Progress is more marked for some pupils who, irrespective of background, start to show what they know and can do. There were examples of good attention to detail and the mature use of different techniques in displayed artwork. Similarly in football, where the school is having some success, pupils showed developing skills in passing the ball and shooting at goal. In speaking, reading, writing, mathematics and science, achievement and standards are much more erratic. Most pupils are well below the level expected for their age. The school has little information on the pupils' attainment in different aspects of each subject. The pupils' targets are therefore not always challenging enough.

There are signs that good teaching is helping the pupils in Years 5 and 6 to raise their achievement. They had included some interesting ideas in writing based on the book 'Harry's mad!' Although their work had errors in spelling and was poorly punctuated, it was neatly set out. This also typified much work from other year groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good overall. This confirms the school's judgement. Pupils respond positively to the good model set by the adults and thrive under their close supervision and encouragement. Apart from a few minor incidents during the inspection, pupils got on well with each other in and out of lessons. Pupils interacted positively with the adults and accepted their authority although a few were quick to test decisions. Pupils' comments, included in their last school report, showed a fair recognition of what they needed to do to improve; for example, to stop swearing or to get better in writing. Several pupils said that coming to Hope School had helped them to be more self-controlled. They had fewer time-outs than before and liked the chance to wind down and 'chill out' in the multi-sensory room.

Given the school's context, pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils know the boundaries, like the rewards and tolerate the sanctions. They are keen to gain '5s' (the highest level) in their personal records at the end of each lesson. The school's records show a significant decrease in the number of serious incidents last year compared with the year before. During the inspection, pupils were generally polite and well mannered in and out of class. Not all pupils truly enjoy school but like the chance to choose the last activity of the day, to have toast before school as well as a choice of fresh fruit mid morning and healthy lunches. One parent commented that, much to her delight, her child could not wait to get to school.

The rate of attendance is better than that of similar schools and many pupils have very good attendance records. The school is working hard with parents, carers and other agencies to get pupils to come to school. Two pupils have not attended so far this term.

Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is satisfactory. Although pupils have a good awareness of how well they are behaving and why they have had a good day or not, they, and their parents and carers, are less sure about their academic success. Pupils know that anti-social behaviour, racism and bullying are not tolerated. They listened with interest to a visitor talking about her school days in Nigeria. In craft

lessons, pupils accepted the need to wear safety glasses and they knew of the value of exercise in keeping healthy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The school judged it to be good. Inspection evidence supports the school's view that strengths lie in the positive relationships between pupils and staff and in the skilful, often quiet but firm way that the teachers and support staff manage the pupils and deal with situations. This was very evident in a good English lesson where the teacher and support assistants encouraged individuals to offer their ideas and praised their efforts. The use of the interactive whiteboard helped to sustain pupils' interest and to show them what they were expected to do on their own. There is much scope for the whiteboards and other resources to be used to enliven and individualise the pupils' learning, especially for those pupils who dislike writing. Although lessons were thoughtfully planned and prepared, little emphasis was given to small steps for success. When the adults prompted pupils to use helpful strategies, such as breaking words into parts to help spelling, the pupils lifted their effort. The teachers' expectations are not always high enough particularly in exacting the best from the older pupils. Not all the teachers use their marking to give pupils points for improvement. The instances of unmarked work undermine other good steps to raise the pupils' self-esteem as learners.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory and all pupils participate fully. Statutory requirements are met but the school has limited expertise and resources to ensure a rich experience in many subjects for the older pupils. The development of the computer suite and refurbishment of the art and technology rooms have ensured the school can offer good practical experiences but work has yet to start on updating the science area. The impending formation of another class provides the school with a useful opportunity to look again at the curriculum and timetable. Many of the lessons are too long given the pupils' difficulty in sustaining their concentration. Opportunities are missed to use time, space, staff and resources to support individuals, particularly in helping them to move on in literacy and numeracy. Visits and links with other organisations extend pupils' experiences in and out of school. Camping trips, for example, are a useful context to foster pupils' awareness of social responsibilities. All pupils are encouraged to develop a healthy lifestyle and to discuss issues of citizenship, drugs abuse and hygiene as part of planned programmes and special events.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The strong pastoral care for all the pupils is a key factor in the calm, positive atmosphere in school and the good level of trust between pupils and staff. There are effective procedures and systems to safeguard pupils and adults. The school is quick to inform the parents of incidents and to seek their cooperation in taking action. Parents and carers were pleased that the school understands their problems and works with them to help their children. Good links with outside agencies ensure the school is able to draw on other support when necessary. The school has much information about each pupil's attendance and behaviour. It has far less on each pupil's attainment and progress in different subjects. As a result, it is difficult to gain a rounded overview of how well the pupils are doing in meeting their targets and to gauge whether the targets are challenging enough.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The school has too rosy a view of its effectiveness in judging them to be good. The headteacher has given a strong lead in setting up the school and has been successful in turning his vision of non-exclusion of pupils into established practice. He has fostered good team work and encouraged teaching and support staff to take on management responsibilities. The three assistant headteachers are inexperienced in leading programmes of improvement but are benefiting from professional development. The school has the capacity to improve. Teaching and support staff are committed to the pupils and are introducing new assessment procedures. Much is planned or in the early stages but the pace is slow. The school has accrued substantial reserves to finance the upgrading of the buildings and increased staffing but there are no specific plans of action. The governing body has been lax in holding the school to account and has relied on the headteacher and senior managers to decide the direction for the next years. The newly appointed chair of governors is keen to tighten procedures and work with the school to take it forward. The draft development plan reflects relevant points for improvement raised by the staff, other agencies and the local authority. It omits some key strands, most notably the need to raise standards in English, mathematics and science.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being polite and cooperative when we visited your school to see how well the headteacher and staff are helping you. It was good to talk with some of you and hear your opinions.

Here are some of the good things we found about Hope School.

- You are coming to school! Many of you have super records of attendance. It was good to see you interested in learning, especially in using the computers, playing football and making a coffee table.

- You behaved well in lessons and around school. A few of you 'kicked off' a little now and then but it was not for long. We are pleased to hear you say that the adults are helping you to improve your behaviour.

- Your work so far this term is quite neat and tidy. You are trying to get better at writing even though you don't like it much. Class 2's chapters for 'Harry's mad!' had some really good ideas.

- All the teachers and support assistants put a lot of time and effort into encouraging and helping you.

We have asked your headteacher and teachers to improve a few things, which we know will help you.

- To make sure that they plan lessons which will keep you interested.

- To keep track of how well you are doing in subjects so that they can plan programmes especially to help you to be better readers, writers, spellers and number crunchers. We also think that shorter lessons would stop some of you getting restless? You can help by giving your views about this.

- To be more clever in deciding how well things are working in the school and what can be done to help you (and the children in other schools that your teachers help) to have an even better time as learners.