

# Hope School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 106543             |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Wigan              |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 324423             |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 12–13 January 2009 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Michael McDowell   |

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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| <b>Type of school</b>  | Special  |
| <b>School category</b>   | Community special  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>   | 2–19   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>  | Mixed  |
| <b>Number on roll</b>  |  |
| School (total)   | 175  |
| Sixth form   | 38   |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 0  |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years                                     | 0  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>   | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair</b>   | Mr John Mason  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>   | Mr P Dahlstrom   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 16 November 2005   |
| <b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>                              | Not previously inspected                                       |
| <b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>   | Not previously inspected                                       |
| <b>School address</b>  | Kelvin Grove<br>Marus Bridge<br>Wigan<br>Lancashire<br>WN3 6SP |
| <b>Telephone number</b>  | 01942 824150   |

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**Fax number**

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Hope School provides for pupils, from Wigan and adjacent local authorities, who have a statement of special educational need because of their severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Because of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities all pupils work at levels very much lower than those expected for their age. There are almost twice as many boys as girls. Almost all pupils are White British and in all cases English is spoken at home. Very few pupils are looked after by the local authority. The school has been awarded specialist school status for cognition and learning. The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, (EYFS) in its incorporated Early Excellence Children's Centre. The EYFS was inspected during this inspection but other provision made by this centre was inspected separately in January 2008. The school provides an outreach service for pupils with physical disabilities and severe learning difficulties.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Hope School is outstanding. Parents are in no doubt that it offers something very special to their children. Parents praise it for its openness, the dedication of its staff and its commitment to inclusion and equality for all. Pupils love it too. Parents say that their children ask if they can go back to school even during the Christmas holidays.

Achievement is outstanding. Across the age range pupils make progress that is exceptional in relation to their capabilities. Children in the EYFS make rapid gains particularly in their communication skills and social development. Pupils in Key Stages 1 to 3 continue to make excellent progress in all areas and notably in communication, literacy and mathematics. Those pupils in Key Stage 4 for whom it is appropriate successfully complete externally accredited courses. The progress of pupils with more profound learning difficulties who follow a sensory curriculum is also exceptional.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding because the curriculum meets their needs extremely well and they are given excellent teaching and support. The success of teaching is founded on exceptional teamwork between teachers and other classroom staff. All know their pupils very well and are highly skilled in encouraging and enabling them to learn. Lessons are very well planned and activities are imaginative and greatly enjoyed by pupils.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. This is evident in their cheerful demeanour, excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. They have an open-hearted acceptance of others and make no distinctions between people on grounds of ethnicity or disability. Their commitment to their own community is exceptional. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exemplary. The school provides exceptional care, support and guidance. The health, safety and well-being of its pupils are at the forefront of all that it does. The child protection policy is reviewed annually and child protection procedures are well known to staff. To ensure that it has all the support that it needs to safeguard its pupils the school subscribes to the services of the local authority child support team that provides guidance on good practice and practical help. Pupils and students are given all the information and guidance they need in order to make progress towards their challenging targets. The school works very effectively with other agencies to promote pupils' well-being.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The school has coped with major changes since it was last inspected. The learning difficulties and/or disabilities of pupils now being referred to the school are increasingly severe. More than half of the pupils are now described as having profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLDs). The number on roll has also increased significantly. Despite these challenges the school has improved and has successfully attained specialist status. It has also increased its involvement in the community. It has met its objectives as a specialist school through its strong outreach and training programme, which is very highly regarded. Members of the leadership team are very secure about the direction the school must take in order to improve further. They keep a close eye on performance and know the school exceptionally well. They promote inclusion and community cohesion very effectively. This is apparent from pupils' positive attitudes to people of races and cultures other than their own. Governors have played a full part in the school's success. Governance is excellent. The school is exceptionally well placed to continue to improve. It gives outstanding value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 1**

The sixth form is outstanding. Students are keen to join the sixth form, in which there is an excellent emphasis on helping students to do as much as they can for themselves. The most independent students are very proud of being able to travel to school or to the local further education college unaccompanied by adults. This has been brought about by the innovative appointment of an independent travel coordinator. Other students shop for ingredients and cook their own midday school meal. Personal development and well-being are very strongly promoted and consequently are outstanding. Students are carefully introduced to the world of work. The school makes use of an advisory service to provide them with essential information and guidance about relationships. Community involvement is exemplary. The older students have day-to-day contact with the local community, for which they provide services that are greatly appreciated. They run a caf, at the community centre and they also provide lunch for senior citizens. Teaching and learning are exemplary as is the curriculum. Assessment of students' capabilities and achievements is first-rate. Teachers and teaching assistants know their students very well and as a result the courses they teach precisely match pupils' requirements. A very broad range of practical and basic skills programmes is provided. Students are very successful in gaining external accreditation for their hard work. Members of the leadership team of the sixth form are enthusiastic and exceptional in their commitment. They are fully aware of the quality of the provision. Safeguarding procedures meet present government guidelines. Very good use is made of resources to promote high achievement and personal development. There has been significant improvement to the sixth form accommodation, resources and learning programmes since the last inspection.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The EYFS provides an exceptionally good learning environment for all children. Very high quality planning and organisation promotes children's personal, social and emotional development and their communication extremely well. Because of their complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities, children have extremely low starting points. However, they make outstanding progress in these areas and also in their creative work. Children benefit enormously from being taught in a fully integrated setting with mainstream children. For example, they often make excellent progress in developing skills such as mark making because they have good role models to watch and copy. There is a good balance between staff-led activities and activities that children choose for themselves. Very good use is made of outdoor space. However profound the learning difficulties and/or disabilities of children, staff take every opportunity to promote children's independence by including them effectively in all activities. Children's welfare is promoted exceptionally well in all respects. Behaviour is very well managed and children receive expert and sensitive support. Very effective communication with parents or carers ensures that children make a strong start and settle into school quickly. The EYFS is led and managed extremely well. Members of the leadership team have been highly effective in bringing staff and children together to create happy and successful learning.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

There are no specific areas for improvement arising from this report. The school has already identified the right priorities to further improve the outstanding quality of education it presently provides.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils build on the excellent start they make in the EYFS. Across the age range their achievement is exceptional. The great majority surpass the challenging targets that are set for them. Progress in developing communication skills is particularly good. Pupils make excellent use of signing, picture exchange and symbols. Those who need to use electronic aids to support speech develop high levels of competence in using these forms of information and communication technology (ICT). This contributes strongly to their personal development and independence. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils attain a variety of academic and vocational qualifications including Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) unit Awards in history and geography, entry level certificates in English and science, and the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) awards. Many then enter the sixth form, in which they successfully complete further academic and work-related courses. Pupils with the most profound and with multiple learning difficulties also make exceptionally good progress. This is largely because of excellent teaching and a new innovative curriculum which meets their needs particularly well. Pupils with degenerative conditions continue to make progress owing to the sensitive management of their learning by all staff.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils of all ages respect one another. They are considerate, helpful, friendly and extremely well behaved. They contribute their time generously to local community projects, including litter picks and recycling and they take part in fundraising for charities. Pupils express with humbling innocence a deep commitment to the ideals of inclusion and community cohesion. It is their strong belief that people of all races and beliefs should be treated alike. Attitudes to learning are extremely positive. Lessons are thoroughly enjoyed. Pupils love their school and show this with their exceptionally good attendance. They are attentive to their teachers and act safely when they use tools or move about the school. They are not fearful and they do not think that there is any bullying or racism. Should bullying occur they are sure about what to do and would report it to an adult. They are very well informed about healthy eating and give examples of foods that are part of a well balanced diet. They are very keen on keeping active and taking part in sport. The school sports clubs are fully subscribed. Pupils feel that their voice is listened to. They are proud that the school council has helped to improve the school, for example by campaigning for the ready availability of drinking water and by using its budget to improve facilities in the playgrounds. Pupils and students in the sixth form develop high levels of independence that together with their notable achievement promotes their economic well-being to the greatest possible extent.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

In all lessons teaching is characterised by outstanding teamwork among classroom staff. Individual pupils are given excellent support so that all can take a full part in lessons. Pupils are assessed very thoroughly and their needs and capabilities are very well known and carefully recorded. As a consequence, the level of work is extremely well matched to each individual.

Lessons are lively and it is clearly evident that pupils enjoy the many stimulating activities in which they are engaged. Resources are very well chosen. Very good use is made of ICT. Pupils are kept very well informed about how well they are getting on and are asked to comment on their own efforts. There is a high level of expertise among those teachers and classroom staff who work with pupils whose difficulties and/or disabilities are most profound and who are hardest to reach. Great efforts are made to seek a response by making use of all the pupils' senses. The school has very good links with pupils' parents and carers through home school diaries and through electronic recorders that are used to record events at home that can later be shared with fellow pupils during daily news sessions.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The requirements of the National Curriculum are met and the curriculum is exceptionally well adapted to the individual needs of pupils. There is excellent emphasis on the development of communication skills. Full use is made of ICT, signing, picture exchange and symbol writing to enable pupils to understand and to convey meaning. The curricular objectives arising from the school's specialist status are met. Pupils are given a very broad range of opportunities to gain external accreditation for their work at their own level. The curriculum for those with PMLDs has been developed exceptionally well. It is strongly linked to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority criteria for judging the achievement of those for whom a sensory curriculum is appropriate. Provision for pupils' personal development is exemplary and opportunities for pupils to learn alongside their peers in mainstream schools are extensive. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by school journeys and the many clubs that offer pupils the chance to learn beyond the confines of the classroom and the school day.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Commitment to promoting the health, safety and well-being of pupils is very strong. Arrangements to protect pupils are well established. All necessary risk assessments are undertaken. The school takes exceptional steps to promote the health and well being of its pupils. For example, it has recently appointed an additional school nurse so that medical cover will always be available. From admission a named key worker oversees the progress and well-being of each individual. Parents affirm that the school welcomes them as partners in the education of their children. The school is vigilant in safeguarding the interests of its most vulnerable pupils and their families. Where necessary it takes a lead in marshalling the support of other agencies to work with families in times of crisis.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Since the last inspection there have been significant positive developments. The school has been awarded the status of a specialist school for cognition and learning. It has also worked with the local community to develop the Grange building which now houses a community library, a large sensory room, community leisure facilities and a base for students in the sixth form. In addition, the school now offers a very well developed outreach programme that serves local schools and a training facility that provides courses for their staff. The leadership team closely monitors pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning. The school has an



accurate view of its strengths and potential areas for development. It plans for future improvement thoroughly and correctly places priority on measures that will bring about improvements in pupils' welfare and achievements. The nature of the school is complex but is manageable because key leadership roles have been effectively delegated. Excellent communication between those with specific leadership roles ensures that management is very assured and that the school runs smoothly. Resources are used very effectively and efficiently. Current government requirements for safeguarding and vetting those who have contact with children are met. Governors play a full part. They are well informed about the school's performance and act when necessary to initiate improvements or to question proposals.

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**Annex A**

**Inspection judgements**

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

**Overall effectiveness**

|  |     |     |
|--|-----|-----|
| <b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b> | 1   | 1   |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection   | Yes | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?  | 1   | 1   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements  | 1   | 1   |

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>       | 1 |  |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve?   | 1 |  |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 1 |  |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?                     | 1 |  |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?                          | 1 |  |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?                                 | 1 |  |

**Achievement and standards**

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 1 | 1 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 4 | 4 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 | 1 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress                           | 1 | 1 |

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

## Personal development and well-being

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                          | 1 | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 1 | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 1 | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 1 | 1 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education  | 1 | 1 |
| The attendance of learners  | 1 | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 1 | 1 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community                                    | 1 | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 | 1 |

## The quality of provision

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>       | 1 | 1 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 | 1 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?   | 1 | 1 |

## Leadership and management

|  |     |     |
|--|-----|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 1   | 1   |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1   | 1   |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards  | 1   | 1   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 1   | 1   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated   | 1   | 1   |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?   | 1   | 1   |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money  | 1   | 1   |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 1   | 1   |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?  | Yes | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures?   | No  |     |
| Does this school require a notice to improve?  | No  |     |

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave to us when we came to inspect your school. As I told some of you I would, I am now writing to you all to say what we found out about Hope School.

As I am sure you will have guessed, we found your school to be as wonderful as you said it was. You told us how much you like it and gave us very good reasons why you love it so much.

You said that you feel safe in school and that your teachers and all the staff will help you if you need help. You did not think there was any bullying but you were sure that you would know how to deal with any if it happened. You told us that you believed that all people, whatever their race, should be treated as you would like others to treat you. You felt that the work you are given to do is neither too hard nor too easy and you think that you are doing well. Those of you in the school council told us that you will make good use of your budget to make the school better. Some of you told us a lot about keeping healthy, eating the right food and keeping active.

We agree that your school is outstanding. This includes the sixth form and the provision for children in the early years. We found that you do very well in your lessons and that you learn to make your ideas and feelings known in lots of ways. As you get older you become very independent. You are polite and generous and behave extremely well. We think that you are excellently taught and are given many exciting and interesting things to do. The adults in the school take very great care of you and try very hard to keep you safe. We believe that your school is led and managed exceptionally well.

We believe that your headteacher has very good plans to make the school even better and we are sure that these will be carried out.

Thank you once again for being so kind to us and every good wish for the future.