

Hope High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119898
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339547
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Michele Crichton

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	44
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr William Hodgson
Headteacher	Mr Nick Joseph
Date of previous school inspection	16 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited eight lessons and observed every teacher. The inspector held meetings with governors, staff, groups of students and representatives from agencies linked to the school. The inspector observed the work of the school and looked at documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, its plans for improvement, records relating to safeguarding and the school's data on students' progress and attendance. The inspector took into account four questionnaires from parents and carers. The inspector also read questionnaire responses from staff and students.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. She looked in detail at the following:

- the progress of students and if they are sufficiently prepared for the future
- the improvements in the school since the previous inspection and the impact of leadership and management in driving this improvement
- the school's strategies for raising attendance
- the effect of unsatisfactory behaviour on students' progress.

Information about the school

Since the last inspection, the school has been renamed from Beacon School, which catered for pupils aged 5 to 16. All students have a statement of special educational needs for either behaviour, emotional and social difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders. The vast majority of the school's population is male and of White British heritage. The school currently serves the whole of West Lancashire, Chorley, Leyland and Preston. Approximately 10% of students are in the care of the local authority. There has been a recent appointment of a new headteacher and a predominantly new senior leadership team. The school will move to purpose built premises in 2011 when its admission number will increase.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Its strengths lie in the range of activities that promotes students' good understanding of what makes a healthy lifestyle and also the positive contribution the majority of students make to their school and wider community. For example, students regularly enjoy taking part in a range of sporting activities that are linked to other schools and providers in the area. The school council is proactive and fund-raising events take place regularly.

Although there is some good teaching, in the main it is satisfactory. In some lessons, activities capture students' interest and are well-matched to their needs, but sometimes tasks do not interest students enough and are not meeting their level of understanding. Staff knowledge and expertise is appropriate in some subjects, and the school ensures that, where there is a shortfall, this is covered through links with other schools. However, the deficit of specialist staff means that staff training is crucial and there is currently not enough sharing of good practice.

Overall, students' progress is satisfactory. It is stronger in English and science than in other subjects. Students themselves recognise the progress they make. There is, however, some inconsistency in the monitoring of students' progress across all subjects. This slows the progress of those students that are not identified quickly enough when they begin to fall behind. There are a few students who do not attend regularly, mostly living locally, and this affects their learning, so they do not achieve as well as they might. The majority of students understand what is expected of them and abide by the clear rules and code of conduct that all staff promote. Routinely, behaviour is orderly and the school is safe and calm. However, a very small minority of students still find it difficult to comply with teachers' expectations of their behaviour, and they become easily frustrated and lack the perseverance to cope with appropriately challenging work. Poor behaviour sometimes results in poor progress for some students. Exclusions are used to remind students that rules apply to everyone. Although governors oversee this process appropriately, the school has not employed sufficient strategies to lower the rate of exclusions.

The predominantly new senior leadership team has been formed since the last inspection. They are motivated to seek further improvements and are effective in focusing the school's efforts on priorities. Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate. The leadership recognises that a revised system to monitor and evaluate progress across all subjects is yet to be fully effective. The number of students whose attendance and behaviour has improved since attending Hope High has risen. This is shown by the increase in merits and student rewards in school. Further, in the last two years, every student has left school with at least one nationally recognised award, and the level of

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attainment has risen, although by a very small margin. This indicates that there is satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the overall level of attendance to be closer to the average for this type of school by implementing, monitoring and evaluating the school's plans to increase attendance for those students who live locally.
- Reduce the number of exclusions by 20% within the academic year 2010-2011.
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching and assessment by:
 - raising the level of expectation for students
 - achieving a whole-school ethos to teaching and learning through well targeted professional development and the sharing of good practice
 - ensuring that all teachers provide tasks that engage students and match their learning needs
 - developing an effective tracking system that informs progress across all subjects and signals timely intervention strategies.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In the majority of lessons, students are keen and willing to learn. They enjoy learning especially when work is practical and closely matched to their needs and abilities. Individual learning programmes are in place and there is a range of courses that students can access. These include GCSE exams as well as more vocational qualifications such as motor vehicle maintenance on-site, or hairdressing at a local college. Students say they feel they are making progress since attending Hope High School. Reading and writing programmes show slow but steady improvements in literacy skills. Key factors, including the below average attendance, mean that overall standards are below age-related expectations. However, school data show there are rapid improvements in some students' attendance when compared to that of their previous schools. Overall, students develop satisfactorily the wider skills and personal qualities needed to equip them for their next steps.

Students agree that the reward system in place is fair and that all staff are consistent in their expectations. Students' good behaviour is rewarded with enrichment activities such as rock climbing, break dancing, cooking or paint balling. Students know exactly what is acceptable behaviour and what is unacceptable, even though a very small minority of students choose not to follow the school's code. These students then later have to face the consequences of their actions through exclusion from events or school. However, the vast majority of students have respect for their school community and the staff who teach and support them. Students hold clear views about their school and are able to

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express these openly with staff. Mutual respect and honest relationships means that students are consulted regularly and are influential in decision making about their own learning and well-being. Currently, there is much collaboration about the design and move to their new school building planned for 2011. Students make the best of their present accommodation by painting rooms and displaying charts and graphs of their personal achievements. The healthy food choices made at snack and lunch times and the nourishing and wholesome dishes they prepare in food technology, along with their many sporting activities gives them a good understanding of a healthy lifestyle.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory overall, but with some evidence of good teaching. For example, this is when students are actively involved in meaningful tasks that are matched to their own interests, such as in a lesson in design technology when students cast and made medals for the school to be awarded at their forthcoming sports-day. In art, students work conscientiously on individual and creative portfolios to submit for their coursework. In other lessons, when teachers' expectations are not high enough, explanations are too

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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long and activities are repetitive or fail to engage, students' interest in learning wanes. Occasionally these lessons can also be the instigator of disruptive behaviour.

Progress is monitored regularly, for example, through discussions with students and comments in their work. Useful feedback is given to students about the quality of their work and what they need to improve. There are also more formal systems to record and compare progress which guide teacher's planning. However, these systems and procedures of monitoring and analysis are not uniform across all subjects.

The curriculum is appropriately matched to students' needs and interests. Enrichment activities such as pottery or break dancing are earned through good behaviour. Lessons such as 'open minds' make a positive contribution to students' personal, social and cultural development. For example, students discuss ethical issues and explore their reasons for holding certain beliefs and attitudes. Links forged with other schools enable specialist teachers to teach Hope High students on-site, for example, in sports and modern foreign languages.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory and personalised to the needs of the students. A learning mentor has been recently appointed and each student has access to a key worker. The majority of students have had no exclusions within the last year and now regularly earn rewards for managing their behaviour successfully. However, there is a small percentage of the school's population who find it hard to conform to expectations and the school works creatively to engage them. For example, plans for membership to a gym are being explored as a new incentive for students.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is effectively focusing the new leadership team, including the governors, on improving outcomes for students. This can be seen in the improved attendance of many. However, many of the school's improved strategies have yet to impact on outcomes for students. Governors, leaders and managers know accurately the strengths and weaknesses in the school. The senior leadership team is a positive mix of experienced members and those that are new to this professional level. They are aware of the current inconsistencies in the quality of provision in certain subject areas, and the need for more training and the sharing of good practice. They are seeking partnerships and links with other schools to address this. Although this is strengthening provision it is too soon to comment on any impact in relation to students' outcomes.

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The school ensures that procedures and duties regarding safeguarding students are in line with the latest government requirements. Links with parents and carers are satisfactory. They are kept informed about their children's learning through, for example, annual reviews, newsletters and open days. Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school understands its context in Skelmersdale and plans are in place to promote this when students, parents and carers to the new school have been consulted. Analysis of the profiles of current students and the progress they make demonstrates that the promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. The school ensures a predominance of satisfactory outcomes and provides satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

The number of questionnaires returned was very low, only four in total. The responses indicate that these parents and carers were happy with the school. The inspector found no reasons to disagree with their comments.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hope High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 4 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 44 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	1	25	3	75	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	2	50	2	50	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	2	50	2	50	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	2	50	2	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	2	50	2	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	1	25	3	75	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	1	25	3	75	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	2	50	2	50	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	2	50	2	50	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	0	0	4	100	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	2	50	2	50	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	2	50	2	50	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



8 July 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Hope High School, Skelmersdale WN8 6BA

Thank you for being so open and honest with me when I inspected your school in early July. I enjoyed talking to you and wished I could have spent longer chatting. I thought Hope High was a satisfactory school. I was impressed with the range of sports you did and your involvement with other schools. Your cooking was another good thing. I thought the chicken curry that some of you were making smelt delicious. You were very knowledgeable about the things that keep you healthy and the things that do not. I thought the way the vast majority of you were polite and respectful to the adults in school was a credit to you. I saw you working well together and helping each other. Please keep doing that when you have more students in your new school.

However, I was concerned about a few things. There are some students who do not attend regularly. When this happens, they do not make as much progress and do not leave with as many qualifications as they could. As a result, I have asked your teachers to do all they can to make sure everyone attends school, especially those who live closer to Hope High. These students have no excuses to make such as they missed the taxi or bus. I was also concerned about the behaviour of some students, which means that they are excluded. I have asked your teachers to work hard on reducing the number of exclusions but, of course, it is really up to the students concerned to realise they must improve their behaviour if they are to get the full benefit from their education.

Those of you who do not behave appropriately or attend regularly are letting your teachers down, but, more importantly, you are letting yourselves down and affecting your future. Those of you who stay at school and behave make the most progress. I congratulate you for doing this because I know how difficult it is, but you do it anyway. I hope you enjoy, and work hard, in your new school. Good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Dr Michele Crichton

Lead inspector

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