

Hope High School

Carfield, Skelmersdale, Lancashire, WN8 9DP

Inspection dates

27–28 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leadership is robust. The headteacher leads by example and staff are empowered to focus on improving the achievement and outcomes of students. The morale of staff is high and their confidence in the school's leadership is strong.
- Rapid improvements have been made since the previous inspection and have become consistent practice in the school. The headteacher has gained confidence from the support given by the local authority and has established positive links with other local schools to maintain and develop school-to-school support.
- Governance is strong and provides the level of support and challenge the school requires.
- The behaviour and attitudes of students are good. Attendance has improved and there have been no exclusions during the current academic year.
- Students treat staff and visitors with respect. They interact well with each other and the atmosphere in the school is calm and purposeful; this enables good learning to take place.
- The curriculum has sufficient breadth, balance and flexibility to meet the individual needs of the students. Students are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Off-site provision offers a wide range of vocational qualifications.
- The quality of teaching has improved. Teaching is sharply focused on individual students' targets so gaps in their learning are quickly plugged to accelerate their achievement. As a result, there are high expectations of what students can achieve.
- Teachers and other adults work as an effective team: they know the students well and work with parents to help students reach their potential.
- Parents say the school treats students fairly and is approachable, flexible, responsive to their views and keeps them informed about their children's progress.
- Students make good progress in literacy and numeracy. Any students who struggle with reading catch up quickly as result of effective extra reading support.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A minority of students, mainly in Year 11, have not had the same high expectations and support offered to them for long enough to impact positively on improving their progress and attainment; their achievement is not as good as that found in other year groups.
- A small minority of students do not have a deep enough knowledge and understanding of the diversity of modern Britain to help them further develop respect and tolerance towards others.
- Information provided to parents on the school's website does not accurately reflect the work of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, the senior leadership team, the teaching staff, members of the governing body, and representatives from the local authority to gather views of how the school had progressed since its previous inspection in March 2013.
- The learning in lessons of all students attending school was observed jointly by the inspector and headteacher. The inspector listened to students reading.
- The inspector observed students during their 'Forest School' activity and visited four off-site providers with the leader in charge of monitoring off-site provision.
- The behaviour of students was observed during lunchtimes, in lessons and while moving between lessons. The views of students were gained informally during lunchtimes, more formally during lessons and through responses to the school's student questionnaire.
- A wide range of documents was taken into account, including: the school's analysis of students' progress and attainment and how these are tracked and monitored; the school's self-evaluation and development plans; and a range of policies and procedures relating to the quality of teaching and management of staff performance. The school's procedures for safeguarding, including referrals to the local authority, reports from the local authority, and records relating to students' attendance and behaviour were scrutinised. The inspector reviewed the minutes of meetings of the governing body, documents relating to links with external agencies, other schools and the wider community, and the school's website.
- The views of parents were taken from responses to a school questionnaire undertaken in the autumn term 2014 as there were no responses to Ofsted's on-line questionnaire, Parent View. The lead inspector spoke with two parents by telephone during the inspection.

Inspection team

Christina McIntosh, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- Hope High School provides for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Many of the students have additional needs specified by their statements of special educational needs or in their education, health and care plans.
- The majority of students have reading and spelling ages that are below their chronological ages, and have low attainment in English and mathematics when they join the school.
- The school has a high proportion, over 90%, of disadvantaged students who are supported through pupil premium funding. The pupil premium is additional funding made available to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are in the care of the local authority.
- All students speak English as their first language and the vast majority of students are White British boys.
- Some students join the school partway through their secondary education. A few students on the school roll receive all their education off-site at places approved by the local authority and monitored by Hope High School.
- The school serves a wide geographical area. Approximately half the students are from Skelmersdale and the remainder are from other parts of south and west Lancashire.
- The school currently uses seven off-site providers: TLC for construction, CAST for a wide range of environmental work, Firtree Fisheries, Be D Stressed for hairdressing and beauty, Midstream garden centre, 4techmoto for motor vehicle work, and Engine Rooms for music and music technology.
- The school is part of the Skelmersdale Headteachers' Association for Raising Educational Standards (SHARES) which aims to maximise opportunities for school to school support.
- When the school was inspected in March 2013, it was judged to require special measures. It has received five monitoring inspections from one of Her Majesty's Inspectors since then.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop more links with the wider community to increase opportunities for students to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the diversity of modern Britain.
- Update the school's website so that it more accurately reflects students' progress and the rapid developments made in the school.
- Improve the achievement of a minority of Year 11 students by:
 - developing their basic skills further through their vocational interests
 - ensuring that all students are given the opportunity to correct and improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has created a climate for staff to take ownership and responsibility for the school's development, to work as a team and to share good practice with other schools. Consequently, staff feel empowered and their morale is good.
- Strong, consistent leadership, at senior and middle leadership levels, provides clear guidance and appropriate support for staff. As a result, arrangements ensuring students' good behaviour and safety enable effective teaching and learning to take place.
- The local authority has provided consistent support for the school during its journey out of special measures and confirms the school's self-evaluation that its effectiveness is now good.
- Leaders and managers have clear roles and expectations which have led to improved communication systems, more focused professional development and a shared sense of responsibility for the vision and success of the school. The school website needs updating to reflect all the recent changes within the school and accurately reflect the progress of the students.
- Clear procedures for safeguarding are followed appropriately and the school has strong links with other agencies to support students when necessary. Recruitment and vetting practices are secure.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and its delivery is well-structured. Students are able to access a wide range of accredited vocational courses delivered by alternative providers to meet their needs and engage them in learning. Celebration assemblies are held weekly to create a positive communal spirit and celebrate the success of students making the right choices in school.
- The leader of off-site provision monitors the attendance, behaviour and progress of students attending off-site provision on a daily basis and with rigour. Swift action is taken in response to any problems that may arise.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school tackles discrimination and promotes equal opportunities within the curriculum and in after-school activities; and by encouraging students to discuss in a reasoned manner.
- Students have access to good quality provision to help them make informed decisions about their future choices. However, some students lack experience of the diversity of modern Britain. The school's range of activities to deepen students' knowledge and understanding of the wide range of diversity in the wider community, and promote respect and tolerance further, is limited.
- Improved reports inform parents about their children's academic, behavioural, social and emotional development every half-term in a clear and easily understood format. Good support for students is in place, due to the effective communication links between the school and students' families, for example, daily homework is now set to improve students' basic skills in response to concerns raised by parents in a questionnaire that was thoroughly analysed by school leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - A reconstituted and more widely skilled governing body is in place, as a result of an external review of governance. The governing body has full membership, including parent representatives, with relevant skills and expertise to support its strategic and long-term plans. The governing body carries out all its statutory duties.
 - Governors know the school well and provide a good balance of challenge and support to improve the quality of teaching and achievement of the students. This is evidenced in the recent review of all off-site provision and the governing body's understanding of the effectiveness of school's spending of the pupil premium funding.
 - The governing body has confidence that the progress made by the school will be sustained in the future. This is due to the shared vision and clear focus by leaders and managers on improving the achievement of all students.
 - Governors have a good understanding of performance data regarding the quality of teaching, the behaviour and safety of students, and the achievement of students in different subjects and key stages in the school. Senior leaders tackle any underperformance in a robust and supportive manner with the support of the governing body.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Students are polite to staff, visitors and other students in lessons and

during social times. The atmosphere of the school is calm and welcoming.

- There has been a significant improvement in the school's management of behaviour and the students' ability to control their own behaviour since the previous inspection. Students are ready to learn and focused at the start of lessons: learning time is maximised.
- Students behave well when they attend off-site alternative provision and they form positive relationships with others in different environments. Students display good attitudes to learning both in school and at alternative provision. Some students are now acting as mentors for other students; this valuable role enables them to develop their sense of responsibility and lead by example.
- The school's analysis shows a significant improvement in the behaviour and attitudes of students. There have been no permanent or fixed-term exclusions this academic year. Students show respect for their school as a learning environment.
- No derogatory language was heard during the inspection and school records show this is typical.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Good communication links exist between the school and families. Parents comment that the school is a safe environment and that any bullying is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff in the school. Students have a good understanding of different forms of bullying including cyber-bullying.
- Students are able to explain and demonstrate how to keep themselves safe. Students showed evidence of this during the inspection in workshops during 'forest school' activities and when using social media.
- Attendance has improved significantly in Key Stage 3 and is continuing to improve in Key Stage 4. Students and their families are supported by the school's family liaison officer to overcome barriers which adversely affect attendance in a small minority of cases.
- Students who spoke with the inspector said that they feel safe at school, are helped to overcome anxiety and feel ready to learn.
- The school has good links with outside agencies that provide extra support for students when necessary.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is monitored through thorough analysis of students' progress, regular joint observations of teaching and learning, scrutiny of students' work, and teachers' progress towards their performance management targets. Support and challenge are quickly put in place if any weakness appears in the quality of teaching. The school and the local authority judge the quality of teaching to be good and this judgement was confirmed during the inspection through discussions with students, direct observation of their learning in lessons, and scrutiny of their work.
- Teaching is good because it is raising students' attainment and ensuring that they make expected, or above expected, levels of progress in English and mathematics.
- Teachers use a well-structured assessment programme, alongside information they receive when a student joins the school, to establish any gaps in students' skills. As a result, teachers' planning is sharply focused on plugging these gaps so students catch up and move on quickly.
- Teachers regularly mark books and give verbal feedback. Students understand how well they are making progress and what they need to work on next. Students are able to demonstrate evidence of their progress in their work. Occasionally, students do not act upon the advice given to self-correct their work and so some opportunities are missed for them to deepen their understanding and improve their skills.
- Teachers and other adults in lessons work effectively as a team to help students overcome their significant barriers to learning. Good relationships are developed between students and their assigned, trained mentors to ensure students learn effectively and make good progress academically and in their personal development.
- Mentors, form tutors and teaching support staff meet twice a day so that they can respond quickly and appropriately to any changing needs of the students. Students say they feel well supported by staff.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are taught effectively and these skills are reinforced in other subjects across the curriculum. Opportunities to develop these skills, through the students' interests in their vocational courses, are not always fully exploited.
- Classrooms and corridors promote a good learning environment through the use of high quality, consistent displays that help students understand their progress, recognise how to improve their work and celebrate their successes.
- All off-site providers offer relevant vocational qualifications that enable students to progress in their chosen area. Students' progress at off-site provision is tracked and monitored by the school to ensure

good quality placements benefit students.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students make good progress, based on their starting point when they join the school, according to the school's tracking and information data. The school is using a robust system for assessing students' starting points and progress. Weekly assessments in reading, writing and mathematics enable teachers to track students' progress and quickly respond to any further support needed. Students' progress in other subjects is assessed and reported to parents every half-term.
- The school has high expectations of students. Teachers set aspirational targets for each student and adjust these when students make accelerated progress.
- Students read widely and often. Students who receive additional support for reading make accelerated progress, shown by the closing of gaps between their reading ages and their chronological ages.
- Whole school data currently show that the percentage of students making expected, or more than expected progress in English and mathematics is above the national average. There is no difference between the achievement of students eligible for support through the pupil premium and others in English and mathematics. The numbers of students in each cohort are too small for meaningful comparisons to be made between their performance and that of students nationally. A small minority of mainly Year 11 students has not responded as quickly as other students to the positive changes made by the school, and their achievement is not as good as that of others in the school.
- All students, who left the school at the end of Year 11 last year, are successfully continuing in education and training. This reflects a positive change in the attitudes and aspirations of the students.
- Students' attendance, behaviour and attitudes are tracked by the school, alongside their academic progress, and discussed daily by staff so that support can be put in place quickly if necessary. As a result, barriers to learning are reduced and good progress is achieved.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	119898
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	450492

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	34
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Forshaw
Headteacher	Helen Dunbavin
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2013
Telephone number	01695 721066
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