

# Inspection of Hope House School

Barnby Road, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG24 3NE

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Inspection dates: 28–30 January 2020

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Sixth-form provision

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**No**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils engage positively with their learning. They want to achieve well. They enjoy receiving rewards when they do. They particularly like spending time with the school's animals as a reward for showing positive attitudes to their learning and to others.

Pupils learn that it is important to be kind to each other. They say that, sometimes, others may be unkind to them. However, they know that staff will support them if this happens. Pupils have strong relationships with staff. They say that they can tell staff if they are worried. They are confident that staff will listen to them and help.

Pupils have many opportunities to learn how to be independent. For example, they visit the local shops and the library. In school, pupils learn about democracy by voting for the pupil parliament. Older pupils have recently talked about Britain leaving the European Union.

Some staff do not check what pupils already know when they learn something new. They do not check that pupils have understood their learning. This can limit how well pupils learn.

Pupils say that they feel safe. However, leaders have not made sure that their safeguarding practices and procedures keep all pupils safe.

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

Pupils study the full range of subjects. Those who are able to complete appropriate qualifications, including in English and mathematics. Pupils develop their independent living skills. This helps to prepare them for when they leave the school.

Across the different subjects, staff develop individual plans for learning for each pupil. They adapt what pupils study to cater for their additional needs. In most cases, these plans identify the order in which pupils learn new concepts. This helps pupils to build on what they already know. This is particularly the case for older pupils as they work towards achieving qualifications. Some staff do not check well enough what pupils already know when introducing new learning. They do not help pupils to link what they are learning with what they have studied previously. When this is the case, pupils do not develop their understanding as well as they should.

Some staff's subject knowledge is not strong enough. They have not had the right training to know how best to teach the different subjects. For example, staff sometimes do not check pupils' understanding well enough to identify when they have made mistakes and require further support. This limits pupils' opportunities to become secure in their knowledge and skills.

Their positive relationships with staff help pupils to engage with their learning. Staff model well the behaviour they expect of the pupils. They respond sensitively when

pupils struggle to manage their own behaviour. When pupils become frustrated or distracted, staff calm them and help them to focus back on their work. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They know that staff want them to do well. This helps them to grow in confidence.

There are many opportunities for pupils' social and emotional development. Pupils learn to listen to each other in their daily 'social interaction' lessons. Therapy sessions help pupils to discuss how they feel. By caring for the school's animals, pupils learn to take on responsibility.

Pupils learn about the need to respect people who are different to them. They learn about different religions and celebrate different cultural events and festivals. Pupils visit the local area to find out about the different shops and services available to them. This helps them to find out about the people who live near the school.

Staff support well those students studying the post-16 curriculum as they progress towards achieving appropriate qualifications. Some students take courses at local colleges. Students receive well-planned careers advice and guidance. This helps them to prepare for their next steps. They complete work placements to explore different career choices. They also have opportunities to learn how to live and care for themselves independently. For example, students go shopping to buy food, which they then cook for themselves. When students leave the school, they move on to further study at college or into supported living arrangements.

A number of staff have recently taken on new leadership roles. Some have not received any training or enough support to be effective in their new roles. Some staff do not feel that senior leaders provide them with the support that they should. Some say that leaders make decisions without consulting or informing staff. They feel that leaders do not trust them or treat them respectfully.

Trustees and senior leaders do not understand all the independent school standards. The school does not meet every standard.

Senior leaders have not ensured that all aspects of the site are safe. For example, inspectors found that the temperature of the water in some taps was too hot. This posed a risk of scalding to pupils of all ages. The school's weekly health and safety checks show that leaders have been aware of this failing for some time. By not resolving this, senior leaders have failed to follow their own health and safety policy. Senior leaders resolved this concern during the inspection.

Individual risk assessments for pupils lack detail. They do not identify all the risky behaviours that pupils may engage in. They fail to provide precise guidance to help staff manage any identified risks. Staff do not have the information they need to reduce the chance of pupils harming themselves or others.

The school's safeguarding policy is available on the school's website. It does not reflect the latest guidance. It does not provide staff with the information they need to keep pupils safe.

Senior leaders' checks on fire safety are not fit for purpose. The school's fire risk assessment is inaccurate. The required checks on the school's fire safety procedures have not been completed. Checks on the suitability of some fire extinguishers are not up to date. In one building, we found fire extinguishers locked in a cupboard which staff did not have access to. This placed both pupils and staff at risk. The fire extinguishers were removed from the cupboard during the inspection.

Senior leaders have not made available all the required information and policies. They do not provide reports to local authorities on the school's use of the money received for teaching children who are looked after. At the time of the inspection, some policies failed to provide correct information. These included those related to special educational needs and to complaints. Information about the provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language was not available. Senior leaders created or amended policies when we brought these failings to their attention.

The arrangements for caring for pupils who are ill are not suitable. The first aid room does not contain a wash basin.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders have not given safeguarding the high priority it requires. Their safeguarding practice does not follow the latest guidance.

Staff do not receive regular training in how to keep pupils safe. Staff who have recently joined the school have yet to receive safeguarding training. Leaders' safeguarding records are not always accurate. Leaders do not always take timely or effective action to respond to concerns about pupils' welfare.

Leaders have not made the necessary checks on staff's suitability to work with children. Due to a lack of training, over time, leaders have not known which checks to undertake.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- Safeguarding procedures and practice do not reflect the latest guidance. This has placed pupils at risk. Trustees must ensure that leaders have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding procedures. They must ensure that safeguarding practice is effective.
- Staff do not receive regular training in safeguarding or health and safety. This includes those staff who are new to the school. Not all staff know their

safeguarding duties. Leaders must ensure that all staff receive regular, thorough safeguarding training, so they know how to keep pupils safe.

- Senior leaders have not ensured that recruitment procedures follow the latest guidance. They have not undertaken all the necessary recruitment checks. This has potentially placed pupils at risk. Senior leaders must ensure that they complete all the required checks on the suitability of staff in a timely manner.
- Individual pupil risk assessments do not identify the risky behaviour that pupils demonstrate. The risk assessments do not provide guidance to manage identified risk. This prevents staff from reducing the chance of pupils harming themselves or others. Senior leaders must ensure that staff receive guidance on the possible risks each pupil poses, and how to manage such risks.
- Over time, senior leaders have not maintained the school site to an acceptable standard. This has put pupils' health and safety at risk. Trustees must make sure that the school is maintained to a standard that ensures pupils are safe.
- Staff who are new to leadership have not received sufficient training. They do not have the knowledge or time to be able to fulfil their roles as well as they should. Senior leaders should ensure that all staff, including leaders and those new to role, receive training and support to fulfil their roles well.
- Some staff do not feel that senior leaders support them well enough. They feel that senior leaders do not trust them and do not treat them respectfully. Trustees must ensure that senior leaders' treatment of staff is fair and that all staff feel valued.
- Some staff do not assess what pupils already know when they introduce new learning. As a result, pupils are not able to build on their prior learning to develop their understanding further. Staff should ensure that teaching enables pupils to build on what they have previously learned, so that they know and remember more.
- Some staff do not have secure subject knowledge. This prevents them from identifying when pupils have made mistakes and providing appropriate support. Leaders should ensure that staff are secure in their subject knowledge.

## 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135393
<b>DfE registration number</b>	891/6032
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottinghamshire County Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	10124548
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent residential special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	27
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	5
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Hope House School Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Monica Darnborough
<b>Headteacher</b>	Terri Westmoreland
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£45,000 to £60,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01636 700380
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hopehouseschool.co.uk">www.hopehouseschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:enquiries@hopehouseschool.co.uk">enquiries@hopehouseschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25–27 April 2017

## Information about this school

- Hope House School is an independent residential special school.
- The school admits pupils aged five to 19 who have a range of behavioural, social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Many of the pupils have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.

- The Department for Education's public information about the school does not provide accurate information about the proprietor. This record does not show that Hope House School Ltd is the school's proprietor.
- The members of the proprietorial body, the trustees, are all new to role this academic year. This includes the chair of the board. All trustees formally took up their role in November 2019. It is unclear that the Department for Education is aware of this change to the membership of the proprietorial body.
- The school owns a residence that it uses for pupils and students to learn independent living skills. This residence is located at 24 John Gold Avenue, Newark, NG24 1RU.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school's previous inspection took place on 25–27 April 2017.

## **Information about this inspection**

We 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 has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- We met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other leaders.
- As lead inspector, I met with three trustees, including the chair of trustees.
- We looked closely at the quality of education in English, mathematics, physical education (PE) and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. We met with the lead members of staff for each subject. We visited lessons, looked at pupils' workbooks, and met with staff and some pupils who took part in those lessons we visited.
- We met with other staff and pupils, both formally and informally.
- I met with the safeguarding leaders to discuss safeguarding. Documentation relating to safeguarding, the school's single central register and the system for undertaking checks on new staff were considered.
- I spoke by telephone with a representative from the local authority.
- We took account of the 10 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the eight responses to the free-text service. We also took account of the 47 responses to the staff survey and the 23 responses to the pupil survey.
- I toured the school site to check the school's compliance with Part 5 of the independent school standards.
- At the same time as the school inspection, an inspection of the school's residential provision took place. The findings from this inspection are reported separately.

## **Inspection team**

Simon Hollingsworth, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Joanna Hall

Ofsted Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school failed to meet the following independent school standards**

#### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
  - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
  - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 8 Where section 87(1) of the 1989 Act applies in relation to a school the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
  - 8(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and
  - 8(b) such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools or the National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Students under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges.
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
  - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
  - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

#### **Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if:
  - 18(2)(f) in the case of staff who care for, train, supervise or are in charge of boarders, in addition to the matters specified in paragraphs (a) to (e), the proprietor checks that Standard 14 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, Standard 14 of the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools, is complied with.
- 20(6) The standard in this paragraph is met in relation to an individual ("MB"), not being the Chair of the school, who is a member of a body of persons corporate or unincorporate named as the proprietor of the school in the register or in an application to enter the school in the register, if:
  - 20(6)(a) MB:

- 20(6)(a)(i) is not barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act where that individual is or will be engaging in activity which is regulated activity within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 4 of that Act; and
- 20(6)(b) subject to sub-paragraphs (7) to (8), the Chair of the school makes the following checks relating to MB:
  - 20(6)(b)(i) where relevant to the individual, an enhanced criminal record check.
- 21(6) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation each member ("MB") of a body of persons named as the proprietor appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether the checks referred to in paragraph 20(6)(b) were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained.

## **Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- 23(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
  - 23(1)(a) suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of pupils.
- 24(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including:
  - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility.
- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.
- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
  - 28(1)(b) toilets and urinals have an adequate supply of cold water and washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water.
- 30 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that, where the school provides accommodation, regard is had to Standard 5 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, Standard 5 of the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools.

## **Part 6. Provision of information**

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that:
  - 32(1)(b) the information specified in sub-paragraph (3) is made available to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate;

- 32(1)(h) where a pupil wholly or partly funded by a local authority (except where funding is solely for free of charge early years provision in accordance with the duty contained in section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006) is registered at the school, an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil is provided to the local authority and, on request, to the Secretary of State.

## **Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
  - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
  - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
  - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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