

Hopedale School

Hopedale House, Wall Lane Terrace, Cheddleton, Staffordshire ST13 7ED

Inspection dates	7–9 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The outstanding leadership, vision and ambition which the two principals have brought to founding this wonderful school have resulted in the pursuit and achievement of excellence in all aspects of the school's work.
- Staff at all levels and in all areas of the provision work as a highly cohesive team, fulfilling the belief that, 'we work best when we work together'. There is a total commitment from everyone to ensuring that only the very best is provided to pupils.
- The therapeutic and nurturing approach makes sure that pupils who have become disengaged from learning settle quickly and begin to make huge strides in their learning, and personal and social development.
- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is outstanding. The individualised approach to planning and the way that lessons are structured ensure that every pupil makes the best possible progress they can.
- Careful assessments when pupils join the school and frequent checks on their progress quickly identify any gaps in learning or areas of underperformance so that steps can be taken to support pupils to succeed.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning because their needs are so well met. These attitudes, together with the outstanding teaching, result in gaps in pupils' learning being rapidly closed. Pupils achieve an increasingly wide range of qualifications by the time they leave the school.
- Behaviour is excellent. The mutual respect shown between staff and pupils and the support pupils give to each other quickly build self-esteem and the desire to do well.
- The curriculum is sharply focused on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Exciting and innovative topics re-engage pupils in learning. Staff go to great lengths to offer subjects which enable pupils to pursue individual passions and interests. At key stage 4, pupils cover topics which prepare them exceptionally well for their future lives.
- Senior and middle leaders are relentless in ensuring that only the very best is good enough for their pupils. Referring local authorities and parents and carers are extremely happy with the successful placements of their children, who have usually struggled in other settings.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management even further by:
 - increasing the knowledge and skills of the non-staff members of the proprietorial board so that they can more effectively hold senior leaders to account
 - further developing middle leaders' skills in checking on the quality of teaching and learning across the school and in their subject responsibility areas.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The two principals, of the school (the headteacher), and children's home (the registered manager), who are also proprietors, had a very clear vision of what they wanted to achieve when they established Hopedale School. Both had experience of pupils who struggled with schooling and wanted to offer an approach that might better meet their needs and enable them to flourish. They have achieved this extremely successfully and provide outstanding leadership across the school.
- The headteacher, together with the other principal, has created a philosophy for success by establishing and developing a team of like-minded individuals who are highly skilled practitioners at all levels. The school's leadership has paid great attention to the personal and professional development of all the staff and has ensured a common approach to pupils' learning and welfare. Leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching has improved from the previous inspection so that it is now outstanding.
- Staff morale is very high in this vibrant school. As a result, pupils are very happy too. Teachers and teaching assistants are very clear about the high level of satisfaction they gain from their work and the support provided to them by senior leaders to develop their skills. This contributes highly effectively to the excellent progress pupils make during their time at the school. All staff have regular reviews of their performance and are set targets which fully develop them and make use of their expertise.
- Middle leaders make an outstanding contribution to the effectiveness of the school's provision in their fields of responsibility. They have not yet had the opportunity to fully develop their skills in assessing the quality of teaching in classrooms.
- Pupils' progress is regularly reviewed to make sure that pupils are on track to meet their challenging targets. Those struggling to meet their targets are quickly identified and provided with support to close gaps in their learning. Pupils' work is checked against external standards so that teachers are confident about their own assessments.
- Staff are committed to providing each pupil with an equal opportunity to succeed. Great attention is paid to pupils' individual needs, skills and interests. The curriculum is outstanding. It is imaginative and engaging and very varied, especially for older pupils. Staff go to great lengths to find out as much as they can about sometimes quite obscure topics and subjects, in order to match the particular interests of pupils. They ensure that pupils gain awards and knowledge which might be useful in their future lives. Pupils' social and moral learning to become good citizens and their understanding of British moral values are threaded throughout the curriculum.
- Because of the personalised approach to learning, the very high proportion of disadvantaged pupils do at least as well as other pupils in the school and the gap with all pupils nationally has narrowed.
- Pupils are provided with high-quality careers guidance and preparation for their future working lives. The school has careers specialists among its own staff and brings in external guidance to ensure that pupils are able to make well-informed choices about their next steps on leaving Hopedale.
- Therapists make a highly significant contribution to pupils' welfare and to their excellent personal and social development. Therapies such as in speech and language, cognitive behaviour, reflection, massage, music, and art and design technology of all kinds play an intrinsic part in the Hopedale offer.
- The partnership with parents and carers is exceptionally strong. Information is shared on at least a weekly basis through phone calls, written information and emails and by newsletters and reviews. Parents are very well informed about how their children are doing and what they are learning. Staff willingly take on additional responsibilities such as making home visits to support parents experiencing difficulties with their children at home, and they always respond positively to frantic phone calls from parents. Parents are very appreciative of the support the school provides to them when advocating for their children at multi-professional meetings.
- Referring local authorities cannot speak more highly of the school's successful work with their pupils. As one officer put it: 'If I could bottle Hopedale's ethos and approach and share it with other schools I would be very happy'.

■ The governance of the school

- Governance is provided through the small proprietorial board. The proprietors undertake financial checks and health and safety checks, and ensure that the school meets the independent school standards. They receive extremely high-quality information from the headteacher and registered manager of the children’s home. They know how well the performance of staff is checked and ensure that salary increases are awarded appropriately. They receive information about incidents and behaviour management.
 - The proprietorial board engages well in strategic planning for the development of the school. The premises and staffing have been extended since the previous inspection to accommodate the increase in pupil numbers. The board is currently seeking approval to extend pupil numbers further to include post-16 and key stage 1 provision and is very supportive of the principals to achieve this.
 - The two principals provide significant challenge to each other to continually raise standards, but the non-staff members of the board have insufficient knowledge to hold them to account for how well pupils are achieving.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding is given the highest priority and all staff are highly trained and knowledgeable about all aspects of child protection and safety. Safeguarding is led by an extremely vigilant and responsive team.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

is outstanding

- Senior leaders make frequent checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in a variety of ways, including classroom observations, examination of pupils’ work and checks on lesson planning. This has informed a professional development programme for staff which has resulted in considerable improvements in the quality of teaching and learning over time, and has led to outstanding teaching.
- In-depth assessments of what pupils know and can do, and how best they learn, are carried out when they arrive at the school. Teachers use this information to plan personalised work and activities which take each pupil to the next step in their learning. All lessons are supported by resources which are carefully thought through to secure pupils’ interest and help them to make the best possible progress they can.
- Throughout lessons, teachers continuously carry out checks on the learning of individual pupils and adapt work to ensure that their progress is as rapid as possible.
- Teachers and teaching assistants all share high expectations for their pupils and are extremely skilled and sensitive in their support. This results in pupils’ growing confidence and trust. For example, in an English lesson on characterisation, a pupil who was reluctant to act out a role in front of others was allowed to go outside and complete the task individually with the teacher.
- The teaching of English and mathematics is reinforced through all subjects in the curriculum. Many pupils exceed the ambitious targets set for them because lessons are so well planned for their individual needs. This is partly due to the excellent lesson structure adopted across the school. Pupils eagerly learn new things in their lessons, practising their individual targets and developing their independent working skills. Work is very well focused to match the needs and abilities of each individual pupil. Classrooms are calm and well managed, and pupils are on task throughout a lesson because their learning needs are met so well.
- Information technology is used extremely well in lessons to encourage pupils to research and find things out for themselves.
- The excellent curriculum supports teaching and learning extremely well. It is imaginative and responsive to pupils’ interests. This is particularly true at key stage 4 where pupils are supported to gain awards in a diverse range of subjects. Teachers and teaching assistants willingly learn new subjects for themselves so as to support pupils’ particular interests. For example, staff go to great lengths to find resource materials and schemes of work to enable pupils to follow separate, individual GCSE subjects.
- Teaching assistants make an outstanding contribution to pupils’ learning. The school has developed their skills as educators exceptionally well and makes use of the assistants’ hobbies and areas of expertise to support pupils in the extensive curriculum. Teachers and teaching assistants encourage independent learning extremely well and use questioning highly effectively to help pupils to find answers for themselves. Relationships are clearly very strong and pupils respond and behave exceptionally well in lessons.

- Staff teams show an overwhelming commitment to their pupils. They meet very regularly to share information so that all staff are very clear about learning intentions and the support to be provided in lessons, as well as about any issues affecting pupils' performance.
- Feedback to pupils about how well they are doing is highly effective. Pupils' responses to comments made show that they have a clear understanding of what they need to do next.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils usually arrive at Hopedale after difficult experiences in previous settings and many have had periods of time with no education. As a result, their self-esteem is usually very low. The therapeutic and nurturing approach is an essential element of the school's ethos. It helps pupils to settle quickly and begin to thrive so that learning can take place.
- Almost all pupils participate in therapy sessions during the school day which help them with their social and emotional development. Teachers ensure that pupils are supported to catch up with any work missed during these sessions. Pupils report that the therapies help them to learn, and this is very evident in the happy, positive attitudes they show in lessons.
- School leaders regularly seek pupils' views about their learning and about school life. For example, pupils contribute to deciding the reward system and understand it well. They enjoy working for their short-, medium- and long-term rewards, such as being given time on a chosen activity, small items from a shop or a trip out. Pupils self-evaluate their learning and behaviour in the group reflection sessions which happen three times a day, and take pride in their achievements and the steps they make towards rewards.
- Pupils make great progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout the excellent curriculum. They are well informed about British moral values through citizenship, and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons. They enjoyed a democracy day earlier in the year, run campaigns and vote on all manner of subjects. For example, pupils voted on the pudding they would like to be served at the tea party to be held to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday and regularly vote for the charities they will support through their fund-raising.
- The school is a cohesive community where all staff are committed to the well-being of the pupils. Healthy eating forms part of that commitment and the lunches and snacks are of an extremely high and healthy quality. Administrative and domestic staff know the pupils well and take part in whole-school training to promote pupils' welfare.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Behaviour rarely disrupts learning because staff are highly skilled and sensitive in recognising possible triggers. This enables them to take positive action to avoid incidents occurring. Pupils who present with challenging behaviour when they arrive at the school respond extremely well to the therapeutic care and respect they are shown and to a consistent approach to their behaviour. They soon begin to learn to manage their own behaviours so that they can focus on learning.
- Pupils say how much they value the opportunities Hopedale is giving them and the contribution it makes to their personal and academic development. They say that they feel extremely safe in school and that bullying is not tolerated. Their parents and carers agree with them.
- Pupils also have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They all took part in an e-safety day recently and key messages are revisited frequently. Posters on staying safe are apparent in all classrooms and opportunities are frequently taken to remind pupils about all aspects of staying safe due to their vulnerability.
- Pupils are caring of each other. The respect they enjoy from staff helps them to learn to empathise with other pupils as far as they are able about the difficulties each experiences. Older pupils support younger ones with their reading, and in a meeting with the inspector, pupils showed their tolerance of each other's opinions.
- Attendance is very high compared with that of similar schools because pupils enjoy coming to school.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Pupils enter the school at all ages and stages of their education. Almost always they have significant gaps in their learning due to missed schooling, but these are quickly identified and work is planned which enables them to catch up. Assessments on entry are very thorough and ensure that support is well targeted to close the gaps.
- Because of the outstanding teaching and care they receive, all pupils make at least good, and the large majority make outstanding, progress from their starting points. Work in books clearly evidences the exceptional progress which many of them make, particularly in their numeracy and literacy skills, as their self-confidence builds.
- Those pupils who arrive at the school with poor literacy skills are provided with a phonics approach which is visual and motivating, so that they quickly make progress with their reading and writing. All pupils are given opportunities to read every day and do this through a structured approach until they are competent readers.
- By the time they leave school, all pupils gain an external award in English and mathematics, with an increasing number gaining GCSEs in these subjects. Additionally, pupils achieve qualifications in a range of subjects that match their abilities and interests and prepare them exceptionally well for the world of work, such as science, geography, art, hospitality, food technology, money and finance, and health and social care. The curriculum is extensive and personalised for key stage 4 pupils.
- The vast majority of pupils are eligible for free school meals or are children looked after by the local authority. Additional funding is not always received by the school, but the individualised approach ensures that no pupil is disadvantaged and all are given an equal opportunity to succeed. There are no gaps in the achievements of different groups of pupils. The most able pupils are given challenging targets and personalised programmes of work which ensure that they achieve as well as they possibly can.
- Progress is not only outstanding in terms of pupils' academic development, but is particularly outstanding in their personal and social development and feelings of self-worth. As a result, pupils are as well prepared as they possibly can be for their future lives by the time they leave Hopedale School.

School details

Unique reference number	138243
Inspection number	10010818
DfE registration number	860/6040

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Special school
School status	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	7–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Number of part time pupils	2
Number of boarders on roll	15
Proprietor	Dr Amy Hopkin, Sarah Deaville, Jon Armitage, Vivienne Hopkin
Chair	Jon Armitage
Headteacher	Dr Amy Hopkin
Annual fees (day pupils)	£30,000
Telephone number	01538 361886
Website	www.hopedale.org.uk
Email address	admin@hopedale.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 June 2013

Information about this school

- Hopedale School and Children's Home was founded in 2012 by two of the proprietors, referred to as the principals, who are the headteacher of the school and the registered manager of the children's home (management of the children's home is subject to a separate inspection). It provides therapeutic, 52-week residential or day education to pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs. It is situated in a rural setting, but close to urban amenities.
- Almost all pupils have associated behavioural difficulties on arrival and additional needs such as speech, language and communication needs or autism spectrum conditions. All pupils have either a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, or are in the process of being assessed.
- The large majority of pupils are referred from the Stoke-on-Trent or Cheshire East local authorities, with a few from other neighbouring local authorities.
- The school has increased its pupil numbers since the previous inspection and there are now 50 pupils on roll with appropriate additional staffing and extension to premises.
- Almost all pupils are considered disadvantaged and eligible to receive the pupil premium because they are entitled to free school meals or are children who are looked after by the local authority. However, the school only receives the additional government funding for some of these pupils. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proprietors have applied to the Department for Education to increase numbers by a further eight pupils in order to offer day places to pupils at key stage 1 and post-16. They are awaiting approval for this increase.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Teaching and learning were observed in all classes and in some more than once. Most of these observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders.
- Samples of pupils' work were examined jointly with the two deputy headteachers.
- Informal discussions were held with individual pupils throughout the inspection and a more formal meeting was held with a group of pupils to explore their views.
- Staff questionnaire responses were taken into account, but there were no responses on Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire). However, the inspector took into account responses made by pupils and by parents in the school's own surveys, as well as a range of feedback received by the school from current and ex-pupils and their parents.
- Meetings and discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, with two members of the proprietorial board to discuss governance, with therapists, and with a group of teaching assistants.
- The inspector had telephone conversations with special educational needs officers from the two main referring local authorities.
- Various documents were reviewed, including those relating to safeguarding, incidents and behaviour management, pupils' progress and examination results, curriculum policies and schemes of work, careers advice, the school's own self-evaluation and development planning.
- A separate inspection of the children's home was undertaken at the same time as this inspection and a separate report will be found on the Ofsted website.

Inspection team

Hilary Ward, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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