

Inspection of Hope View School

Station Approach, Chilham, Canterbury, Kent CT4 8EG

Inspection dates: 26 to 28 September 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils describe Hope View as 'amazing'. Every pupil whom inspectors talked to had positive thoughts to share. Even when prompted to suggest small things to improve, most struggled. Typical responses included, 'Everything is a big step up from my last school,' and, 'That's a tough one, because a lot in the school does not need to be changed.'

Pupils enjoy the established routine of the school day, which starts with a carefully choreographed and orderly welcome. Pupils know the rules because expectations are high and well known. Older pupils describe the 8.30am 'thumbs-up' as the sign they long to see, as it indicates that staff are ready to start the day.

Positive relationships sit at the heart of this school. Pupils enjoy the praise that they get. They feel safe. They know that staff are ready to listen and help when their anxieties build. High levels of respect are evident and flow both ways between adults and pupils. Pupils also respect each other. One striking aspect for inspectors was how quickly new pupils settle in. Staff have high aspirations but also want pupils to enjoy school. This comes across loud and clear from day one, and the impact is plain to see.

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

This is a school that understands its pupils well. Staff are skilled at supporting pupils with a wide range of complex special educational needs and/or disabilities. Every parent or carer who replied to Ofsted's survey, Ofsted Parent View, had positive views about the support the school gives their child. Many commented on the transformative impact of the school on their child's willingness to engage in education. Inspectors found the behaviour and attitudes of pupils to be excellent.

The curriculum has been designed carefully to meet pupils' diverse needs. It prepares them well for their next steps on leaving the school. All the pupils who left at the end of the last academic year gained places at college. Pupils currently at the school, both those in upper- or lower-school phases, are motivated and looking to the future. This includes the very few students who attend the school's post-16 provision. Typically, these students attend for an additional year before gaining the qualifications they need to move on to further education, training or employment.

Much of the curriculum is led by subject specialists. Clear schemes of work detail precisely what pupils will learn in most subjects over time. Pupils particularly enjoy science because their learning focuses on practical activities that are closely linked to real life. Science is also a subject where the school works hard to build confidence and dispel the 'I can't' mindset that some pupils arrive with. Building self-belief is an important factor of day-to-day life here.

A new phonics programme to support pupils to develop their reading skills is now in place. This includes the provision of appropriate resources and training for staff.

Additionally, recent work to strengthen the school's mathematics and English curriculum is paying dividends. Staff have clear plans to work from. They know what to teach in these key subjects as pupils progress through the school. The result is that pupils are gaining meaningful qualifications, enabling them to look more widely when considering options at the end of Year 11. Despite this, in some subjects, such as history or the school's information, communication and technology programme of study, curriculum planning is less clear about the key knowledge that pupils need to know and remember over time.

Staff are successful in their aim to make learning meaningful and relevant. Because of this, pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard to make the best progress they can. Pupils appreciate the small, mixed-year class groups they work in. These allow staff to focus much more on individuals and to tailor their teaching to specific needs. However, on occasion, some staff are not as skilled in checking pupils' understanding or identifying when misconceptions or lack of prior knowledge are getting in the way of pupils' learning.

Pupils' personal development has a high priority here. Much focus is given to building resilience and to developing pupils' communication skills. Some of this work is done in class or tutor groups at the start of the school day. Additionally, personal, social and health education (PSHE) features heavily on both the upper- and lower-school timetables. PSHE lessons also support pupils' understanding of the world around them. This means that they have an increasingly secure grasp of the benefits and challenges presented by living in modern Britain.

Older pupils enjoy their work linked to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Developing life skills and building a sense of social responsibility play an important part in preparing pupils for life outside the school gates. The school's careers education programme also provides pupils with the confidence to aspire beyond what might be expected.

Staff are keenly aware that pupils need to attend school to reap the benefits it offers. Their work in this area is impressive. As noted by an officer from a local authority, leaders go way beyond what might reasonably be expected to support pupils and their families when waning attendance becomes a barrier to pupils' progress and achievement.

Governance of the school is stable and effective. Simple systems are in place to deal with the multiple complexities associated with running a safe and happy school. These include effective monitoring and timely audits. This ensures that all relevant independent school standards are met, and the school is fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010. Key aspects, such as promoting the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff, are sound. A small quality assurance team, made up of the directors of the proprietor company and an independent school adviser, provides sound advice and meaningful challenge to leaders. In turn, staff are positive about the support they get from leaders that is linked to their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some lessons, teachers do not check pupils' understanding as well as they might. When this happens, pupils' misconceptions are not identified and addressed as quickly as they could be, and opportunities to consolidate or extend learning are lost. Leaders need to ensure that all staff are proactive in assessing pupils' learning during lessons, so that progress is maximised and gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding are identified more consistently.
- In some foundation subjects, curriculum plans do not detail clearly enough the key knowledge the school wants pupils to learn. Teachers do not have clarity about what pupils need to know and remember. This means that pupils are not building their knowledge consistently over time and that opportunities for them to make connections with prior learning are not as strong as they might be. Leaders need to refine curriculum plans in these subjects further, so that staff have a clearer understanding of the key knowledge that pupils need to know and remember.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

School details

Unique reference number	135438
DfE registration number	886/6123
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10286416
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	97
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Carmichael Education Ltd
Chair	Carla Lorne
Headteacher	Paul Johnson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£34,000 to £50,000
Telephone number	01227 738000
Website	www.hopeviewschool.co.uk
Email address	contact@hopeviewschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 to 27 June 2019

Information about this school

- This is a special school that provides for boys with social, emotional and mental health needs and/or autism. All pupils who attend the school are placed there by local authorities and have an education, health and care plan.
- The school operates from two sites. The upper school is based at the main registered address of the school. The lower school is situated at Perry Court Farm, Garlinge Green Road, Chartham, Kent CT4 5RU.
- The school is owned and operated by Carmichael Education Ltd. Governance is provided by the school's quality assurance team, which is made up of the two co-directors of the proprietor company and an independent school adviser.
- The school is registered for students up to 18 years of age but does not provide a traditional sixth-form education. Typically, the few pupils who attend in Years 12 or 13 are studying for functional skills or GCSE qualifications before gaining a place at college.
- The school uses a range of off-site provision that pupils attend accompanied by staff. The school also uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place in June 2019, when its overall effectiveness was judged to be good.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors 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 meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, curriculum leaders, and teaching and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the proprietor company, who was accompanied by the school's independent school adviser.
- Inspectors met with two representative groups of pupils to gain their views of the school. Pupils were also spoken with during classroom visits and as inspectors moved around the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some

pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about some other subjects.

- Inspectors toured the school's premises and accommodation. They checked a range of policies and documents, including the school's single central record. They also reviewed other records regarding the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff, linked to the independent school standards.
- Inspectors gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour, the school's wider curriculum offer and how leaders support staff with their workload.
- An inspector visited Chalkhill Farm, an unregistered alternative provider used by the school.
- Inspectors took the responses to Ofsted Parent View into account. Ofsted's staff survey was also considered.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Caroline Clarke

Ofsted Inspector

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