

Hopewell School

Harmony House, Baden Powell Close, Dagenham, Essex RM9 6XN

Inspection dates

15–17 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is variable. Some teaching gives insufficient consideration to pupils' special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Some of the many teaching assistants are not effectively deployed to support pupils' learning.
- The quality of science teaching is weak.
- Pupils' personal development requires improvement. Pupils' complex social and emotional needs are not being fully met because therapeutic support is too limited.
- The school's assessment system does not sufficiently take account of pupils' complex needs. It also does not measure pupils' progress in the development of social skills and emotional well-being. Leaders say the accuracy of checks on pupils' skills and abilities when they enter the school is unreliable.
- Pupils' outcomes require improvement. According to the available assessment information, pupils' progress is variable.
- Impartial careers education, advice and guidance is not provided regularly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is highly effective and has established productive and positive relationships with pupils, staff and parents.
- Since September 2016, the headteacher has led the transformation of what was an inadequate school. She has facilitated significant positive change and has a realistic understanding of the work ahead to bring about continuing school improvement.
- New systems for monitoring teaching and checking the performance of staff are beginning to show positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff, pupils and parents confirmed the inspection's findings that the school is a safe place.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Where pupils arrive at the school with challenging behaviour, this improves over time.
- Parents, staff and pupils are all overwhelmingly positive about the school's transformation over the past year.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.

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 teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - the quality of teaching improves rapidly, especially in science
 - bespoke training is provided on planning for and teaching pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - a review of the effectiveness and training of teaching assistants is completed and action taken to ensure that all staff are effectively deployed.
- Improve pupils' outcomes and personal development, by:
 - significantly strengthening the school's therapeutic support for pupils
 - reviewing how pupils' academic and personal progress is monitored, recorded and evaluated, ensuring it is meaningful, accurate and credible
 - increasing the frequency of the current high-quality careers education programme, ensuring that pupils have access to more regular impartial information, advice and guidance to help them plan for their futures.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The proprietor and the headteacher share a vision to 'restore hope' for pupils at Hopewell School. They have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- When, in September 2016, the current headteacher took up her position, this was an inadequate school. She had to take rapid, decisive action and prioritised the establishment of a vision, the setting of boundaries, the implementation of basic structures and professional expectations, and the building of relationships with staff and pupils. These actions have successfully transformed the school's culture and ethos. However, there is much more work to be done. Leaders now have the capacity to do what is required to improve the school.
- The quality of teaching has improved as a consequence of the new and increasingly effective system used by leaders to monitor lessons, teachers' planning and pupils' work. This monitoring is effectively linked to a new system for checking on staff members' performance and professional development needs. However, the quality of teaching remains inconsistent. In particular, the headteacher acknowledges the need to raise teachers' expectations rapidly, especially in relation to the teaching which is not meeting pupils' needs.
- The overwhelming majority of parents, staff and pupils who completed questionnaires or spoke with the inspector were positive about the changes and the new direction of the school. Parents said, for example: 'I have never come across such a dedicated team of staff' and 'Since the new headteacher has been here she has tried very hard to implement many changes for the better.'
- The school's commitment to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The curriculum is enriched with regular activities, fundraising events and themed days. During the academic year to date, pupils have enjoyed World Science Day, Black History Month, International Day of Democracy, International Women's Day, Fairtrade Fortnight and organised a coffee morning to raise money for Cancer Research UK. Displays around the school exemplify pupils' work on themes such as the monarchy and the government of the United Kingdom, as well as topical issues including 'Brexit'. They also celebrate the work of the democratically elected members of the school's pupil parliament. As a result of the school's excellent work in this area, pupils are being very well prepared for life in modern London and Britain.
- The curriculum meets pupils' academic needs. It includes all the required areas of learning and, at key stages 2 and 3, is based on the national curriculum. Pupils at key stage 4 take accredited courses in English, mathematics, science, computing and citizenship. They also have vocational pathway choices such as motor mechanics, construction, hair and beauty, catering, land studies and animal care.
- The curriculum is not currently meeting pupils' complex personal, social and emotional needs because of the very limited therapeutic offer. The school currently only offers music therapy two days a week, and has only recently employed a psychotherapist. There are no sensory spaces and no full-time staff with the skills, knowledge and experience required to work with pupils, and train staff, to understand, for example, the impact of trauma, attachment disorders and adverse childhood experiences. As the proprietor's

vision is to create a 'therapeutic community', leaders acknowledge the current situation is not good enough. The school's development plan identifies the urgent need for a therapy leader and multi-disciplinary team to ensure that pupils' speech and language, physical, emotional and social needs are being addressed.

- The school's assessment system, which was brought in quickly by leaders in the absence of any system whatsoever, does not yet meet the school's needs in accurately identifying and recording progress for pupils with complex needs. The recorded information is unreliable because it does not take account of the small steps of progress pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make and is not moderated. It does, however, identify an overall picture of the progress pupils are making. Leaders are reviewing how pupils' academic and personal progress is monitored, recorded and evaluated.

Governance

- Governance is improving. The proprietor, also the school's chair of governors, holds termly meetings. Although these cover a range of pertinent school management issues, they are poorly recorded. Governors have increased their number of visits and a new external governor with teaching expertise has been appointed to increase capacity.
- Governors have a generally accurate view of the school's performance. They acknowledge that they have struggled to realise their original vision for the school, having had a significant period of crisis management. They recognise the headteacher's transformation of the school's culture and the need to support and resource the next steps required to improve the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A strong safeguarding culture ensures that the school's pupils, all of whom are highly vulnerable, are kept as safe as possible. There is regular training, twice daily briefings and frequent checks on staff's understanding of national safeguarding guidance. Concerns are well documented and referred on to external agencies in a timely way, where necessary.
- Leaders ensure that all activities on and off the school premises, including for off-site vocational education, are thoroughly risk assessed. When learning off-site, pupils are always accompanied by a member of the school's staff.
- The school's safeguarding policy reflects the latest statutory guidance. It is published on the school's website alongside all other required policies and information.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent.
- There is some weak teaching which is not appropriately pitched to meet pupils' specific needs and interests. Some activities do not hold pupils' attention. Some teachers have inappropriate expectations, such as requiring pupils to read aloud in front of others, which can increase their anxiety and likelihood of opting-out. In the weakest of teaching, too much time is wasted, such as in science where pupils' progress is poor.

- The deployment of additional adults requires improvement. There are many teaching assistants in the school and a significant proportion do not have enough to do. They lack direction and the skills to facilitate learning. Often, they watch pupils learn.
- However, teaching is improving as a result of good leadership. Where teaching is good, activities are well pitched, engaging and suitably challenging; pupils are spoken to and asked incisive questions kindly and calmly; and pupils are proud of the work they produce. Such teaching enables pupils, who typically have mixed, complex needs, disrupted educational histories and difficulties with attention and concentration, to engage in learning successfully. There are generally strong relationships between pupils and staff, which facilitate good behaviour for learning and pupils' willingness to engage.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils' personal, social and emotional needs are not fully met because of deficiencies in the school's therapeutic provision. In addition, leaders have only recently begun to consider how to record the personal progress that pupils are making in a meaningful, accurate and tangible way.
- Pupils say they feel safe and that there is no bullying. They are taught effectively about how to stay safe, including online. They are also taught about equality and the importance of British values through assemblies, personal, social, health, economic and citizenship education lessons and the various activities that enrich the curriculum.
- Pupils who engage in off-site vocational sports, mechanics or horticulture education enjoy their learning, are kept as safe as possible and are well supported to succeed.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils learn to be respectful and kind to each other. When teaching and other learning activities are well considered and thoughtfully planned to meet pupils' needs, levels of pupils' engagement are very high.
- Pupils' behaviour is monitored closely. Over time, this monitoring shows that behaviour improves as a result of being in the school.
- Staff understand that incidents of difficult behaviour are generally borne out of pupils' SEN and/or disabilities, such as their autistic spectrum disorder or social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The vast majority of staff understand the pupils well and deal with difficult and challenging behaviour calmly and effectively. Incidents are carefully recorded and reviewed.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and the vast majority attend very well. Where pupils' attendance is too low, leaders take decisive action to work with external agencies to facilitate improvement.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' workbooks show that they are making variable progress, in direct correlation with the variable quality of teaching that they receive. The school's assessment information confirms this variability. It identifies that pupils are making better progress in reading and writing, modern foreign languages, design technology and physical education, while their progress is weaker in science and mathematics.
- Despite pupils' difficulties and complex needs, they are making progress in relation to their attendance, behaviour, emotional well-being and social skills.
- Last year at the end of key stage 4, pupils left the school having achieved accreditation in GCSE subjects including English, mathematics and science. However, the school's lack of an assessment system at that time means that the progress these results represent is unknown.
- All leavers last year successfully proceeded to further education. However, current pupils have not met with the external careers adviser during this academic year. Leaders acknowledge it is imperative that pupils have more regular access to the existing high-quality impartial information, advice and guidance to help them consider their next steps.

School details

Unique reference number	134388
DfE registration number	301/6002
Inspection number	10038168

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 day school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Herman Allen
Chair	Herman Allen
Headteacher	Susan Mayo
Annual fees (day pupils)	£45,000 to £65,000
Telephone number	020 8593 6610
Website	www.hopewellschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@hopewellschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–13 November 2014

Information about this school

- Hopewell School is an independent special day school in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. It is located within a shared premises, Harmony House.
- The school provides placements for pupils who have a range of complex SEN and/or disabilities. These include autistic spectrum disorder and social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The school does not provide sixth-form provision, though sometimes individual pupils stay beyond age 16.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils have education, health and care plans or are in the process of being assessed for one.

- The school's last full inspection was in November 2014 when it was judged to be inadequate in all areas.
- Additional off-site training activities are made available to pupils as follows:
 - vocational education at Motorvations, Romford RM7 0JB
 - vocational education at Lambourne End Centre for Outdoor Learning, Lambourne End, RM4 1NB
 - sports education at Footsteps Football Academy, Tottenham N17 0SL.

Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed learning alongside the headteacher in all timetabled subjects. He also observed the school's anti-bullying week assembly.
- The inspector met with several pupils, many at their request, to discuss their learning, behaviour and well-being.
- The inspector considered the 13 contributions to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. He also met with a parent.
- The inspector had several meetings with the school's leaders. He also met with all staff and considered 25 staff questionnaires.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's information about pupils' progress and attendance.
- The inspector spoke by telephone with a representative from a placing local authority and the school's external improvement partner.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation, including school policies, logs, evidence of staff training and information related to safeguarding and health and safety.
- The inspector also toured the premises and considered additional information and evidence in relation to the independent school standards.

Inspection team

James Waite, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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