

# Inspection of Hopefields Education CiC

Hopefields House, 16 High Force Road, Riverside Park, Middlesbrough TS2 1RH

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Inspection dates: 4 to 6 July 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

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

From the moment they start at this inclusive and friendly school, pupils are welcomed as valued individuals in the school community. The calm, caring environment is unashamedly woven with high ambition for all pupils. For the great majority of pupils, that ambition is realised. For many, the change in them is transformational.

Pupils benefit from the happy and supportive learning environment that is consistently in place. They are helped by kind adults who know them well. Lessons are calm and purposeful. Pupils use a range of strategies to enable them to meet leaders' high expectations for their behaviour. Incidences of bullying are rare. Pupils are confident to report any concerns to staff. They know that these trusted adults will act swiftly to help them.

Pupils readily engage with the learning opportunities in place. They benefit from the knowledge-rich curriculum that is in place. This is enhanced by extra-curricular activities, including lunchtime clubs and trips further afield, which are linked to the curriculum. These activities help pupils to develop both social and employability skills. Pupils become increasingly self-confident and resilient. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

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

Leaders have united all staff in their vision of addressing disadvantage and transforming lives. Working together, they are committed to ensuring that pupils have the support they need to benefit from a knowledge-rich curriculum. Pupils, almost universally, engage positively in lessons. Many see lessons and learning in a new light. They are now proud of their increasing success.

In some subjects, leaders have carefully considered how new knowledge builds from what pupils have learned before. Teachers have clarity about how pupils' learning deepens over time. Teachers make links between subjects, such as history and English. This enables pupils to see the connections between what they are learning in different lessons. However, other subjects are not as well developed. Units of work are sometimes taught in isolation from what pupils have studied before. In these subjects, there are missed opportunities to develop pupils' learning more comprehensively.

School leaders support subject leaders to develop their subject curriculums. However, there are still leadership roles to fill and strengthen, including in curriculum leadership. There is not a consistently strategic approach to subject leadership. For example, leaders have not carefully considered what assessment tells them about how well pupils are learning. As a result, leaders miss opportunities to review and improve subject curriculums.

All pupils in the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders

and teaching staff know the individual needs of each pupil well. Teaching staff make appropriate adaptations to their teaching, and the teaching environment, so that all pupils can access learning.

Some pupils who are at the earliest stages of learning to read do not benefit from a phonics-based approach. Currently, they would struggle to cope with the intensity of such a programme. However, some may soon be able to access this approach to learning to read. Leaders have not currently identified a plan to help them with this.

Before coming here, many pupils had poor attendance at school. As a result of the support they receive, this changes. Many now attend well. They achieve appropriate qualifications which enable them to go on to meaningful next steps in education, employment or training. Pupils display high levels of respect towards staff and each other. Pupils are highly supportive and understanding of those who may be having a difficult time at school or in their personal life. The exceptional peer support helps pupils to flourish both academically and socially.

As part of the learning offer, pupils visit the nearby farm each week. Some have responsibilities for taking care of the animals as part of an accredited course. Pupils benefit from what is both a vocational and therapeutic offer.

Leaders support staff well. Staff feel valued and know that leaders consider their workload and well-being. Staff know the importance of the work that they do. They receive training and support to be able to help the pupils in their care.

The proprietor ensures that all the independent school standards are met. The school building is maintained to a high standard. All necessary policies are in place. The proprietor ensures that all duties required by the Equality Act 2010 are met.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that pupils learn how to recognise and avoid potential safeguarding risks. Pupils are taught about the importance of using the internet safely. Leaders consider the local geography and have arranged for pupils to learn about the dangers of swimming in open water courses.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates. They report any concerns about pupils' safety and well-being promptly. Leaders follow these up swiftly. They liaise with wider safeguarding partners so that pupils and their families quickly get the help that they need.

## **What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)**

- In some subjects, leaders have not considered how new learning builds on what

pupils have been taught before. Some pupils struggle to place new learning in the context of what they already know. This makes learning more difficult. Leaders should ensure that all subject curriculums consider what pupils already know so that the path to new learning is made as easy as possible.

- Some pupils may benefit from a phonics-based approach to learning to read. Leaders should continue to enhance staff skills and expertise so that pupils at the early stages of learning to read are supported appropriately. This is needed to ensure that pupils are helped to improve their phonic knowledge from their different starting points.
- Leaders do not have a clear picture of how well pupils are learning over time in each subject. This is because there is not a clear quality assurance process or school improvement approach that critically evaluates all aspects of the curriculum. Leaders should strengthen subject and senior leadership to enhance curriculum development in all subjects.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	149109
<b>DfE registration number</b>	806/6005
<b>Local authority</b>	Middlesbrough
<b>Inspection number</b>	10267730
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	17
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Hopefields Education CiC
<b>Headteacher</b>	Emily Greenhalgh
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£24,350 to £49,950
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 205233
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hopefields.org.uk">www.hopefields.org.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@hopefields.org.uk">admin@hopefields.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Hopefields Education CiC is an independent school. It caters mainly for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Many pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is registered to educate pupils between the ages of 11 and 18. At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils receiving post-16 education as they had just completed their academic year.
- The school has a main site on the outskirts of Middlesbrough. Pupils also attend a farm at the nearby village of Wolviston.
- The proprietor is currently running an alternative provision on the same site as the school. The school does not use any external alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## 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.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, who is also a director, and one other director. They also met with the assistant headteachers and other leaders in the school. An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, humanities and equine studies. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke with the designated safeguarding leads. They scrutinised records related to safeguarding, including the single central record, and spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of attending the school and observed social times.

- Inspectors undertook a tour of the school and visited all areas, including classrooms, social spaces and other facilities. They checked the school buildings and grounds against the independent school standards.
- The views of staff were considered through formal and informal meetings with staff and through their responses to Ofsted’s staff questionnaire.
- The views of parents were considered through the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and telephone conversations with some parents.

### **Inspection team**

Eleanor Belfield, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Lee Elliott

His Majesty’s Inspector

Debbie Redshaw

Ofsted Inspector

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