



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



School Name: Hopefields School

School Address: 16 High Force Road
Riverside Park
Middlesbrough
Cleveland
TS2 1RH

Head/Principal Ms Emily Greenhalgh

IQM Lead Ms Emily Greenhalgh

Assessment Date 20th October 2023

Assessor Mr Craig Wright

Sources of Evidence:

- IQM Self Evaluation Report Document.
- School Website and Policies.
- School social media.
- Parent Forum Agenda.
- Visitor Feedback Book.
- School's Ofsted Report.
- Sample of Student Books.
- Curriculum Overviews: 'on a page'.

Meetings Held with:

- Headteacher.
- Senior Leadership Team.
- Teachers.
- Parent Welfare Officer.
- Students.
- Learning walks – observation of social times including family lunch.
- Learning walks – observation of lessons.
- Intervention Session Observation (numeracy & occupational therapy).
- Review of school environment.



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Overall Evaluation

Hopefields is a special place. The staff share a common purpose to transform the life chances of the young people at Hopefields and, the words of the Headteacher, “disrupt the system within the confines of the system”. Hopefields certainly does it their own way and, as a result, all staff, parents and young people thrive in a place where they truly belong. Many students who arrive at Hopefields have had a disrupted education, some have been permanently excluded and others have had extended absences from school. Hopefields School transforms these students through well planned interventions and a therapeutic approach which all staff are well trained in. Hopefields is situated in Middlesbrough’s newest industrial estate, the heart of Middlesbrough’s second industrial revolution. This is a symbolic place to situate a school, Middlesbrough’s regeneration depends on an upskilled workforce able to take on the new jobs this estate produces. Hopefields represents a way of doing education differently, without lowering standards of expectations.

Hopefields School was created by Emily Greenhalgh and Alison Laws who recognised that the local area lacked meaningful, knowledge-rich provision for young people with additional needs. The directors established a Community Interest Company (CiC) and began to offer provision for young people in the Tees Valley. From humble beginnings, Hopefields School has grown into a formidable provision which is now oversubscribed and demand continues to increase. There are currently 35 learners on roll and the school caters for young people aged 11-18. The primary need is social, emotional and/or mental health however, the school never limits itself and the focus is on meeting the needs of each individual rather than formal designations.

The school is led by the Headteacher, Emily who also acts as a director. She is supported in leading Hopefields by Alison who is the second director and Head of Operations. There are two Assistant Principals who come with a wealth of experience of alternative provision and mainstream education. The leadership team is united in their common goal. The vision of the school permeates every aspect of the building. Every member of staff articulates the vision with clarity and passion. This flows from a dedicated leadership team who believe passionately in the mission they are undertaking.

Learners benefit from a broad curriculum that is taught in an ‘stage not age’ approach. Teachers skilfully differentiate the curriculum so that it is accessible and students experience success in every lesson. The aim for all learners at Hopefields is to enhance opportunities and to progress educationally on an accredited course, accelerating academic progress. As such, the curriculum is created to address gaps in learning and support young people to move on with their life by becoming good, disciplined and empathetic citizens.

The Headteacher is formidable. She is unrelenting in her drive to secure the very best life chances for all young people at Hopefields. She refuses to lower her standards for her learners, she said “our expectation is that our young people are exemplary”. This view flows through the school. Staff model this in lessons and expect it of all young people, as such young people are empowered to be the best version of themselves.



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Pupils at Hopefields were keen to tell me that they love their school. The young people are welcoming, dynamic and growing in confidence. They talk openly about their experiences at Hopefields as being positive. One young person said; "Hopefields is fun. They understand me a lot. We are like a family". The family ethos is evident at lunchtime when staff and students sit together to eat. The conversation is lively and it is clear the relationships between staff and students are strong.

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark's Inclusive School Award. There are only minor areas requiring development and the school is aware of these. I recommend that the school be awarded the Mark and be reassessed in 3 years' time.

I also recommend that the school should consider applying for Centre of Excellence status subject to the inclusion within its plans of the appropriate areas for development and the completion of the Centre of Excellence documentation. If the school chooses to pursue this status and it were to be awarded the school would be subject to annual review from this point forwards.

Assessor: Craig Wright

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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Joe McCann MBA NPQH
Director of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd



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Element 1 - The Inclusion Values of the School

All students at Hopefields have arrived having experienced exclusion in their previous settings. At Hopefields, they find inclusion, acceptance and love. There is a culture of relentlessly high expectations for every child and every member of staff. As such, everyone at Hopefields grows to meet these expectations.

There is a culture of high energy and relentless positivity at Hopefields. Classrooms are dynamic places where teachers seize every opportunity to praise and celebrate students. Staff are trained in the model of “The Nurtured Heart Approach” which seeks to give all of staff’s energy to the positive things they do. Negative behaviour is not ignored, but as the policy states: “Hopefields have a fundamental belief that we are responsible for placing the young person’s voice at the heart of each step of the process.” It is clear that young people at Hopefields take account of their behaviour and there is a wealth of interventions and support in place. Staff are pro-active and intervene early where issues may arise.

Every member of staff is a role model to students. Throughout the assessment day, there was no job too big or small for staff to get involved in. Staff are part of a team and this was tangible throughout the day. The Headteacher is very clear that this does not happen by accident. This is a culture that the directors have crafted by investing in their staff. The directors are hands on. They are constantly in and out of classrooms, all students know them. One learner described Hopefields as a “family”. This is lived and breathed by everyone.

Transitions are well managed at Hopefields. The nature of the cohort means that students join them at different times of the year and often late in their school career. Hopefields has a structured transition program to help students move from their past trauma to their new start at Hopefields. This therapeutic transition supports parents and young people. Leaders spoke about this transition being supported by all students at Hopefields who model the value of kindness. For example, during one new learner’s transition other students took the lead in welcoming them to the school and encouraging them to sit at their table.

Next Steps:

- Develop the new Sensory Room to support learners with sensory needs.
- Develop the training package for staff on how to use the new sensory room.



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Element 2 - Leadership and Management and Accountability

The Headteacher is inspirational. She is an excellent role model for the desired inclusive behaviour and management approach and ethos. It is apparent she has built highly positive and constructive relationships with every young person; students respond to her politely and want to show her how well they are doing. She role models the routines and expectations alongside a culture of high energy praise, which is the vision she has for all staff. A vision that is realised with consistency.

Leaders take no chances with safeguarding. There is a culture of safeguarding which is highly effective. Staff are supported by a two-week induction process which includes a comprehensive safeguarding induction that covers the school's policies and the local safeguarding context. The Assistant Headteacher brings a strong knowledge of safeguarding leadership. Young people feel safe at Hopefields and they understand how to keep themselves and each other safe.

Leaders recognise that quality assurance of the curriculum is the next stage of their journey. The half termly subject moderations are starting to bear fruit. The Headteacher plays an active role in these and the "book sharing" exercise is a collaborative approach with staff and leaders. From each moderation, an action plan is implemented and followed.

The day begins with JoinUp where all staff participate in a briefing. The concept of JoinUp comes from the horse training methods of Monty Roberts. The idea is simple, where language is ineffective then communication must be done differently. Monty's principles are that body language supports horses to overcome their natural fear response. At Hopefields, JoinUp allows staff to share information, clarify the day's events and identify any potential issues so that learners are well supported. This means, staff begin their day relaxed and informed. It is highly effective because leaders ensure it is well run and consistent daily.

Next Steps:

- Embed the work of the subject moderation so that each department understands their strengths and areas of development.
- Strengthen the collaborative work between departments and between departments and external organisations.
- Staff feedback - involve all staff in school development through regular feedback on whole-school issues or strategies.



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Element 3 - Curriculum – Structure, Pupil Engagement and Adaption

Students at Hopefields benefit from a broad curriculum that is perfectly balanced to meet the needs of each individual student. All students in Key Stage Three benefit from a knowledge-rich curriculum of English, maths, science, arts and humanities. PSHCE is given appropriate time in the curriculum and in the wider life of the school. At Key Stage Four and Post-16 this further branches out to allow time for options and consolidation of the core curriculum. Most students undertake some form of accredited qualifications which are well matched to their needs. The focus of the Hopefields curriculum is giving all students the skills they need in life, so they are able to advocate for themselves.

Hopefields vision for their curriculum is: *“Hopefields enables young people to learn how to learn by positively attuning the curriculum and scaffolding for success to meet the individual needs of all learners.”* Aligned to this vision, students benefit from a wide curriculum offer which is skilfully delivered by teachers and instructors. The curriculum is inclusive and learners develop their skills and knowledge well over their time at Hopefields because leaders have a clear focus on progression across the curriculum. This means young people experience success and develop strong academic skills that enables them to move on to their next steps.

All subjects are taught in “stage not age” approach. This is skilfully done by gifted teachers. In classrooms, students may have a breadth of starting points but teachers differentiate the curriculum through clear knowledge of the National Curriculum expectations and, most importantly, through strong knowledge and skill in how to differentiate for the young people they serve. Arts are an important part of the curriculum at Hopefields. The art teacher is a master of her craft. As such, students benefit from expert input and enriching lessons. The art curriculum perfectly demonstrates the ethos of high challenge and high support at Hopefields. For GCSE Art, students researched a wide range of challenging topics such as gender, race and religion before integrating them into their own topic. One such piece of artwork really challenged the idea of the “male gaze” in art. The Arts Mark work at Key Stage Three is equally as empowering. Students are given the opportunity to explore a wide range of arts through the award and students have attended a theatre production and an art gallery.

Cultural Capital is a component of each lesson and the whole curriculum. Alongside enriching trips to museums, galleries and community spaces there is a relentless focus on vocabulary acquisition. Lessons contain challenging language that is embraced by learners, for example one lesson on the aurora borealis students used their vocabulary to talk confidently about the atmosphere and the magnetic field. This is a direct result of the strong curriculum planning which cumulatively builds young people’s knowledge and vocabulary.

All students benefit from elements of vocational education either through catering or animal care. These practical lessons are underpinned by theory lessons which are engaging and linked to the wider world of work.



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Next Steps:

- Further develop the work of careers so that Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance (CEIAG) is high profile in each area of the curriculum.
- Develop further opportunities for young people to read both in lessons and for pleasure.
- Develop the autonomy of subject leaders so that they take greater ownership of the development of their curriculum area.



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Element 4 - Teaching and Learning – Learning Environment, Planning Resources, Pedagogy

The directors have cultivated a culture of professional investment for all staff. Many staff joined Hopefields after growing disillusioned with mainstream education but found that Hopefields do things differently. As such, staff retention is incredibly high and staff are very happy at work. This feeling of investment and care results in very positive classrooms where staff have time to plan and deliver high quality lessons. Leaders are mindful of teacher workload and so teachers benefit from increased amounts of PPA. The Headteacher has a clear view of what constitutes good teaching and learning. This is underpinned by sound understanding of 'what works', as such teachers grow in confidence and skill in meeting the needs of learners.

Professional development is purposeful and teacher led at Hopefields. The Headteacher recognises the impact of professional development on teacher retention and on student outcomes. As such, as part of supervision, staff can elect to complete their own professional development.

Lessons are purposeful because they are exceptionally well planned and resourced. Teachers have a strong grasp of pedagogy. For example, in a maths lesson the teacher delivered one lesson from the front of the room with differentiated resources. In the following hour, he utilised an iPad approach so he could sit with learners to support them better. This thoughtful and skilful approach is helping all students to rebuild their confidence in education again.

As a former industrial unit, the school has limited space. However, leaders have carefully planned and utilised every inch of space to be a useful learning environment. As such, students benefit from classrooms, break out spaces and intervention spaces. There is even a small wood workshop. Staff are equally well cared for with a staff room however, throughout the visit it was clear that students and staff utilised spaces together which further strengthened the family feel.

Next Steps:

- Strengthen staff subject specific knowledge so that they continue to provide challenging lessons for all students. Consider, for example, subject association memberships.
- Further strengthen the work that has begun on low stakes quizzing and recall.
- Improve knowledge and understanding of phonics so that students benefit from phonics-based interventions in each lesson.



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Element 5 - Assessment

Students enter Hopefields with significant gaps in their learning and, despite the best efforts of staff, students prior-learning data is not always shared. As such, staff have become well adept at completing baseline assessments to ascertain current working levels. However, assessments are a cause of anxiety for many learners due to past experiences with education. As such, assessment at Hopefields is holistic and carefully managed.

The curriculum is well structured and planned, as such assessment has become a fundamental part of this curriculum planning. Teachers are experts, because of this assessment in lessons is done exceptionally well. Live marking means that all students benefit from feedback in the moment when it matters most. Staff use this live data to plan, reshape and reteach tasks. In one book, the teacher had pitched the work too high and as such, reshaped the learning. Over time, the learner then secured that skill and closed the gap. At each point, there was clear evidence of marking, assessment and feedback. This exceptionally detailed and personalised feedback model leads to meaningful interventions for all students. On the afternoon, some learners benefit from withdrawal from lessons to receive 1:1 tuition from a teacher. This further closes the gaps in learning.

Overall, outcomes for learners are exceptionally strong. The Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) figure is 0%. 100% of learners at Hopefields with an EHCP have secured meaningful education, employment or training in the last three years. This is set against the national picture of 95% of learners with an EHCP in the UK who have not secured employment by the age of 25. This further illustrates the exceptional work done at Hopefields to prepare young people for life.

In lessons, low stakes quizzing has been rolled out and is still in its early stages of implementation. This strategy, once embedded, will further strengthen the exceptional assessment work done at Hopefields.

Next Steps:

- Embed the work started on low-stakes quizzing.
- Develop subject-specific assessment practices to further strengthen the work done in the curriculum planning for each area.



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Element 6 - Behaviour, Attitudes to Learning and Personal Development

Hopefields behaviour policy states; *"We have developed a behaviour policy which places relationship as the cornerstone for children/young people to thrive, both academically and in relation to their wellbeing. We aim for the highest standards in all aspects of Hopefields life, where each individual is intrinsically valued."* The school is filled with inspirational quotes which support students to strive for the highest standards and encourage personal responsibility, for example in one classroom "I am the captain of my soul" was written across the front of the classroom. Personal responsibility is an important part of the conversation for behaviour management at Hopefields. This school does not use excuses to lower standards for learners, instead it uses nurture, love and personal responsibility to give students ways of regulating themselves. As such, students play a proactive role in managing their own behaviour and the behaviour of each other. It should be noted that many students came to Hopefields with risk assessments for extreme behaviour, at Hopefields these are no longer applicable because of the highly nurturing and inclusive environment. Where there are incidents of crisis, staff are highly trained to hold young people so that they can regulate themselves with the help of an adult. These incidents are rare and reducing.

The pastoral care at Hopefields school is exceptional. All students benefit from highly skilled teachers who understand their needs and their story. One member of staff said "we have a real focus here on owning your story. It is part of who you are." This means young people can articulate their past but, because of Hopefields, they are confident about their future. Lessons are exceptionally calm and focussed. Every classroom is high energy with teachers and support staff working pro-actively to pre-empt issues and support learners. For example, one young person was absent from school, so the TA completed the work in the student's book to prevent gaps in knowledge and the barrier of being left behind. That student was subsequently able to engage in the learning. All staff are aware of the behaviour policy and the Nurtured Heart approach to managing behaviour means every interaction is purposeful.

Attendance is a positive picture against the national context. Schools with a similar context to Hopefields are around 60% overall, however Hopefields is currently at 75% overall and improved on last year's 71%. Leaders are not complacent when it comes to attendance. They continue to meet with parents and address barriers. Many students at Hopefields have not accessed education for some time, yet they are excelling in the supportive culture of Hopefields.

Each morning starts with a gathering for staff and students where key messages are shared. The day ends on a similar note. The Headteacher was clear that the school does not hold assemblies because of the negative connotations it has for learners. As such, the school have engineered new ways of sharing messages with young people.

Next Steps:

- Continue to strengthen the work of the attendance team and capitalise on gains made in attendance.
- Consider the sequencing of the personal development curriculum so that young people continue to benefit from a wide range of enriching and developing experiences.



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Element 7 - Parents, Carers and Guardians

Relationships with parents are strong at Hopefields. This is not by accident! The school takes a proactive approach to transition which includes parents and young people making repeat visits to the school. From this point, the school makes a deliberate effort to involve parents through positive phone calls and home visits.

The Parent Support Officer is an asset to the school. She works exceptionally hard to engage parents and find, in her words, "what unites us". This approach means that parents feel listened to and valued, the visitor book signed by parents is filled with glowing feedback. This year, the assistant Headteacher and the parent welfare officer have established a parent forum which seeks to develop parent's knowledge of the curriculum, safeguarding and the wider SEND system. The aim of this is to support parents in advocating for their young people but equally, to develop a closer working relationship with the school. This is a skilful undertaking. The agenda for each meeting includes topics which upskill the parents as well as the young people, for example "CV writing for yourself and your young person." The school is proactive in engagement. For example, phone calls are made to parents to encourage them to attend and transport is offered by the school to ensure maximum participation.

Many young people at Hopefields have had poor experiences in education and as a result, their parents are often anxious about them returning to school. Hopefields is very cognisant of this and as such work hard to ensure the parent's voice is listened to and valued. The Parent Support Officer articulated this clearly when she said, "it is not just our voice, we care about their values as well".

The school operates very active social media accounts which showcases the work of students at Hopefields. This allows parents to engage with the school through likes and comments.

Next Steps:

- Embed the work of the Parent Forum so that reciprocal feedback continues to support the school in evaluating its work.
- Further improve attendance by involving parents, carers and guardians in supportive discussions about attendance.



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Element 8 - Links with Local, Wider and Global Community

Hopefields is not a typical school, it is not custom built but instead occupies a modest industrial unit. The school is in the centre of a brand-new industrial estate that was created to accommodate the new Tees Advanced Manufacturing Park (Tees AMP). Whilst on first glance, this is an unusual place to find a school, Hopefields has made this location a unique advantage. There is no 'local' community on the industrial estate, so the school has reached out even wider to grow a network of agencies, groups and interested parties to work with.

The leadership team have forged a wide range of relationships with wider community organisations and other schools to provide their learners with opportunities to enrich the curriculum. For example, the lack of onsite PE spaces has led to innovative partnerships with Grangefield Sports Dome and Tees Barrage.

The school has become increasingly outward looking and is committed to further developing this. In the last academic year, Hopefields welcomed over 500 visitors to their schools and have undertaken a wide range of visits to other schools to learn from and share best practice. The Headteacher is committed to developing this and sharing the magic of Hopefields with others.

Students have a wide range of enrichment opportunities on site. Every second of the school day is used to maximise student experiences. For example, on the day of the assessment students were eager to complete their regular walking group despite the wind and rain. Staff made every possible adjustment to make the walk happen, demonstrating once again their commitment to putting young people first. Students are mindful of their community and the needs of those in Middlesbrough. On a recent visit to the town centre, students researched the life skill of budgeting by comparing costs of everyday hygiene items. They then proceeded to buy and donate hygiene items to a local homeless charity.

Aspirational partnerships help students to develop their links to colleges and post-16 providers. All students undertake visits to local colleges and utilise their facilities to help them to make decisions about their future life. Hopefields is laser focussed on raising aspirations, not just of their young people, but of families and the community too. Leaders talk passionately about the role they play in improving Middlesbrough and battling poverty. They are unwavering in their commitment to maximising opportunity for everyone.

Trips which deepen the curriculum are part of the package of Hopefields. Recently, a National Lottery Bid supported young people in creating a living museum based on the 1960s. Students then took this out to the community hubs in Middlesbrough and engaged with residents. The feedback was glowing from those who visited.

Next Steps:

- Further develop community links that deepen and enrich the curriculum offer at Hopefields.
- Utilise every available platform to share the magic of Hopefields.
- Continue the Headteacher's mission to "disrupt the system within the confines of the system" by speaking up proudly about the difference Hopefields is making to the life chances of its students.