



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR HOPE WOOD ACADEMY

Name of School:	Hope Wood Academy
Headteacher/Principal:	Adele Pearson
Hub:	North East Hub
School phase:	Specialist 2-19 Years
MAT (if applicable):	Ascent Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	22/11/2023
Overall Estimate at last QA Review:	Effective
Date of last QA Review:	07/12/2022
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	11/09/2018



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Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising host school leaders and visiting reviewers agree that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

Leadership at all levels Leading

Quality of provision and outcomes Leading

AND

**Quality of provision and
outcomes for disadvantaged
pupils and pupils with additional
needs**

Area of excellence

Attendance for pupils with complex
SEND, post Covid-19.

**Previously accredited valid areas
of excellence**

Overall peer evaluation estimate Leading

*The Quality Assurance Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades.
The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is
developmental not judgmental.*

1. Context and character of the school

Hope Wood Academy (HWA) sits amongst terraces of miners housing, in the former colliery village of Easington, where scenes from the iconic film Billy Elliot were filmed. An all-through school, the academy has grown rapidly to accommodate 223 pupils with 130 staff.

The modern frontage hides a huge range of classrooms and specialist provision, through a warren of corridors. Rebound therapy and sensory rooms, multiple outdoor spaces, multi-use sports pitches, and a forest school area, all support pupils across their wider curriculum.

A separate sixth form opened in neighbouring Peterlee, in September 2020.

Every pupil has an education, health and care plan (EHCP). HWA has higher levels of pupils in receipt of pupil premium than the national figures for specialist schools. Boys make up 70% of the cohort. The number of pupils with English as a second language is less than one tenth of the national average.

Pupils have often had time out of education before joining HWA. Pupils quickly develop great relationships with staff. As one leader explained, "it's the best job in the world, engaging pupils with the wider world again," and this is reflected in excellent attendance figures.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The senior team articulate the work of the academy accurately. Leaders have a professional dialogue with an evidence-based approach, an openness to challenge, and are receptive to new ideas. This means the team is consistently improving the performance of their academy and the outcomes achieved for their pupils.
- Leaders at HWA have developed an extended student support team, including one Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) assistant and one SaLT apprentice, a full-time designated safeguarding lead, a behaviour manager, a family liaison officer and attendance lead, an EHCP coordinator, and an Occupational Therapy (OT) assistant. Pupils and their families are recommended to the team by teaching staff. This 'internal team around the child' can respond to each pupil's needs, often more urgently than wider multi-agency services. Pupils get support quicker, and this ensures they can stay on track with their learning. As one of the team members pointed out, "Staff all work together to achieve the best outcomes for every child!"
- Leaders are clear about the strengths of the academy and where the areas for further refinement are. Leaders have detailed plans in place to achieve this. All in

the HWA community benefit from leaders' clear messaging of intent. The direction of travel is secure.

- There are clear roles and responsibilities within the wider leadership team. Leaders are confident in their area of responsibility and articulate how their individual contributions will impact the wider academy. In this way, the diverse skill set within the team shares the workload and provides 'many shoulders to the wheel' for academy improvement.
- Leaders have chosen a 'pathway' model for their school's curriculum. Pathway one has pupils with the most profound and complex special educational needs and disability (SEND), whereas Pathway four has pupils who are the most cognitively able and most independent. By developing this 'schools within schools' approach, pupils benefit from having a curriculum that matches their distinct SEND needs.
- Leaders have developed 'pupil progress' meetings. These meetings pick apart any concerns, and decide what needs to be done to optimise each pupil's progress using the 'assess, plan, do, review' methodology. Staff explore individual issues and seek support when they need it from the talent available across the trust. In this way, when pupils have a dip in performance, they are encouraged to progress quickly, and spend more time learning.
- Leaders push their commitment to continuous learning and training for whole-school development. A good example of this is the 'Growing Great People Strategy' that 'talent mines' the staff. This has then led to more consistent skilled staff, better retention of quality team members, and a greater universal understanding of the values and ethos of the trust. As one colleague shared, "I've seen it all over the years here. The last few years, the support has been amazing. I'm going to fly."

2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if...

...senior leaders refined the SEF to ensure the key content and evidence reflects all the positive neuro diverse achievements of the cohort.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well...

- All pupils have EHCP Section F targets. These are refined into annual review targets. From these, teachers generate termly individual targets. For example, for the youngest pupils, these include targets around the four areas of need outlined in the SEND Code of Practice 2015. It also has targets that link to areas such as 'characteristics of active learning' with 'sliders' showing how well each pupil is developing in each area. With this evidence, teachers can plan the right curriculum content for each pupil.

- At HWA, the environment is linked to pedagogy. Classrooms and corridors are low-arousal, with carefully chosen pictures and displays. Communication passports developed with the SaLT, inform the staff how to initiate communication in a way that matches each pupil's receptive and expressive abilities. When needed, Teacch methodology is followed, including pod working, and Writing With Symbols timetables and prompts. All of this supports pupils' regulation and communication, to make the most of each school day.
- Pupils at HWA have varied timetables, where every opportunity is taken to practise their learning beyond the school gate. For example, one Year 10 pupil, with an interest in becoming a recycling operative, has work experiences distinctly linked to this, and other opportunities to support his wider communication and regulation, including horse riding, and working to support a local food bank. All the resources of the school can work jointly with pupils' aspirations, to develop pupils' confidence for life in the wider community as an adult with SEND.
- The position of the Sixth Form in Peterlee, allows for travel training and independence opportunities, as well as further work experience. Pupils travel independently or are supported between sites. They plan and develop enterprise activities incorporating functional mathematics and functional English. Pupils leave HWA well prepared for the next stage in their education, employment, and/or training.
- Assessment is used across pathways, recording the incremental progress in pathways one and two, and the larger steps taken in pathways three and four. This progress is assessed based on what each pupil needs to achieve. This is then celebrated and shared with pupils and their families, showcasing pupils' successes.
- HWA is invested in having a strong and active pupil voice. The pupils are confident in articulating this work. Walking through HWA, displays celebrate the achievements of the pupil voice group. Posters link to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the successful relationships developed by peer mentors across pathways three and four. Pupils know that they are valued and that their voice is to be heard.
- The Rebound Therapy Programme gives pupils the opportunity to both energise themselves into activity, and then regulate themselves. HWA has invested in a specific rebound room for this, with the support of the sensory OT. Pupils are supported to develop the skills they need for communication and regulation, which will help them through their lives as adults with SEND.
- All staff are trained in Emotion Coaching. This supports pupils' emotional well-being and self-regulation. Pupils benefit from working with understanding staff, who help them access their learning.
- Behaviour is monitored using a trust-chosen package. This helps teachers analyse any recurring patterns of behaviour and help clue in the reasons for any escalation. A 'solution circle meeting' is attended by professionals to put a unified plan in place. This provides pupils with clear messaging on expectations and gives them useful ways to communicate their wants and needs.

3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if...

...subject leaders could succinctly show further evidence in meetings, of progress and how the curriculum is having an impact on pupils' wider outcomes, beyond their time at HWA.

4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well...

- Pupils are comfortable and happy at HWA. New pupils speak about how they felt 'safer and happier since arriving at Hope Wood this year'. Personalised transition plans negotiated between the school, the pupils themselves and their families support these huge moments. Pupils are keen to share how their new school successfully supports moments of dysregulation and how they are supported to have positive outcomes, especially when they are dealing with difficult or challenging issues. Pupils joining the school have every opportunity for success, where they may have struggled before.
- HWA continues to improve the range of strategies and equipment in classrooms that support pupils to independently self-regulate and manage their emotions. With this evident across the curriculum pathways, pupils are developing these skills to transfer into the wider community and on into life as adults with SEND.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage and into Key Stage 1, pupils are engaged on individualised targets, through continuous provision. Each classroom has a distinct range of activities to meet each pupil's needs. Wherever possible, pupils are aware of their own targets to be celebrated when they achieve them. Pupil progress is clear to see and matches their distinct individual SEND needs.
- Across the school, each pathway has a wide range of abilities, but pupil engagement is high. Sensory stories have concrete story props and sound switches, to provide for pupils' individual SEND needs. Pupils become immersed in stories. Pupils engage with their learning, share their enjoyment, and then move onto the next activity, relating to the story.
- Sensory OT is well embedded throughout the school. Programmes of therapy are put in place by specialist therapists and delivered by classroom staff for individual pupils. These chosen programmes are then integrated into all aspects of pupils' daily activities. Pupils use the skills gained in the programmes to tolerate a wider range of stimuli and self-regulate their feelings and emotions.

4.2 Quality of Provision and Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...

...none identified.

5. Area of Excellence

Attendance for pupils with complex SEND, post Covid-19.

Accredited

5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength? What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?

HWA focuses on using individualised approaches to maximise pupils' time at the academy, wherever possible.

Post Covid, the academy has experienced a growth in the number of pupils experiencing 'emotional based school avoidance', in line with national trends, as evidenced by The Department for Education and The Education Policy Institute.

The approach can be broken down into the following stages:

- Year to year transition - a tiered approach, including in year transition.
- The local authority funded 'Mobile Education Service'.
- Dual placement opportunities.
- Individualised curriculum development, as and when barriers emerge.

To achieve this, a funding model has been developed with the local authority particularly around those mobile education service pupils with attendance at 0%, developing the specialists needed for this.

5.2 What evidence is there of the impact on pupils' outcomes?

The attendance for pupils at HWA is better than national figures published by the Department for Education for specialist schools, matching national mainstream trends.

HWA numbers in relation to persistent absence are better than those achieved by the national cohort, in mainstream and specialist education.

Year to year transition - a tiered approach

The transition process starts with information gathering from parents/carers, academy information regarding specific needs from EHCPs, attendance data, attainment data, safeguarding records and behavioural data. HWA department leads work with families and schools, around the amount of transition input needed.

Tier 1

Initially, if there are no specific barriers to inclusion and engagement, young people are invited to transition events to meet teachers and become familiar with the academy.

Tier 2

This approach will typically involve a variety of team members using an internal multi-disciplinary approach, depending on the specific barrier to inclusion. This approach is successful with the majority of young people within tier 2.

Mobile Education Service

The Mobile Education Service was established in September 2022, following HWA making a proposal to the local authority, to address the needs of a cohort of young people who experience school distress. These pupils exhibit mental health and emotional challenges whose attendance is at 0% for an extended period of time.

A significant number of the Mobile Education Service cohort had been offered independent specialist sector school places but did not engage, leaving them within the home, and accessing no education at all.

By the end of the first academic year of the creation of the Mobile Education Service, these pupils achieved an average engagement of 20.8% with some individuals as high as 30.6%.

Individualised curriculum as and when barriers emerge

When this type of intervention is not appropriate or sufficiently impactful over time, there is a weekly SEND team where individual pupils are referred to and discussed in more detail. Parent and pupil views are pivotal to this process, to establish a way



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forward. This is entirely tailored to the pupil and their interests and aspirations. The types of individualised curriculum support may involve work experience internally and externally, or part-time timetables for a short length of time to allow for re-engagement and trust to be rebuilt.

5.3 What is the name, job title and email address of the staff lead in this area?

Name: Beth Chadwick

Title: Mobile Education Lead

Email: bchadwick@ascenttrust.org

This review will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities.

Schools can access the School Support Directory; the Challenge Partners online tool that enables schools to connect with other schools in your hub and across the national network of schools.

Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice events where schools showcase excellent and/or innovative practice. Sharing Leading Practice events



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allow school leaders with specific improvement needs to visit a school or attend an online webinar hosted by a school, with outstanding provision in that area.

Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website.