

Inspection of Hope Academy

Ashton Road, Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside WA12 0AQ

Inspection dates:	12 and 13 November 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Marie Adams. The school is part of The Liverpool Joint Catholic and Church of England Academies Trust (the trust also has an operating name: All Saints Multi-Academy Trust), which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Heather Duggan and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Angela Holden.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of Hope Academy. They know the school values of respect, courage, ambition and hope very well. Pupils try hard to follow them in all that they do. Pupils enjoy strong relationships with their teachers and pastoral staff. They feel safe in school and know who to speak to if they feel worried or upset.

Increasingly, pupils are benefiting from the recent improvements that the school has made to the quality of education that it provides. However, pupils learn better in some lessons and in some subjects than in others. This is because the delivery of the curriculum is not consistent across all subjects. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils are respectful of staff and visitors in lessons and around school. The corridors are busy but ordered when pupils move from lesson to lesson. Once lessons begin, a calm atmosphere descends and learning quickly resumes in the classrooms.

Pupils benefit from the school's 'Inspire' programme. This programme helps pupils to understand themselves and to value and respect each other. It teaches pupils ways they can contribute positively to the wider community outside school. Well-thought-out collective worship sessions reinforce the school values.

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

The school, with the support of the trust, has overseen a number of improvements to the curriculum in recent years. This has resulted in positive changes to the overall curriculum offer. The key stage 3 curriculum is broad and ambitious for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the full curriculum alongside their peers. The school has made adjustments to the key stage 4 curriculum to enable pupils to study each subject in greater depth.

The school has also reviewed its subject curriculums with the intention of giving them more breadth and depth. In all subjects, these changes have resulted in curriculums which are well designed and allow pupils to build their subject knowledge in a logical way. As a result of these changes, current pupils know more and remember more of their learning than has been the case previously. However, it is too soon to see the impact of these positive changes on the school's published outcomes.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They use this knowledge to provide clear explanations to pupils about new learning. They ask probing questions and make sure that pupils revisit important learning. However, in some subjects, teachers do not routinely choose the most appropriate activities to help pupils understand key knowledge. On some occasions, teachers do not check carefully that pupils understand what they have learned before introducing new learning. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their learning and struggle to recall important knowledge. This is especially the case for those pupils who have fallen behind in their learning or those who find learning more difficult, including some pupils with SEND.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND accurately. It has provided teachers with training on how to support pupils with SEND in the classroom. However, there is variability in teachers' expectations for what pupils with SEND will achieve in lessons. As a result, the achievement of pupils with SEND is variable.

The school has reviewed how it identifies and supports pupils whose reading knowledge is weak when they join the school. It has effective systems to identify pupils who have gaps in their reading knowledge. These systems enable staff to pinpoint and remedy the specific problems that individual pupils face with reading. In addition, all subject curriculums make reading a priority. This enables pupils to become increasingly confident in their understanding and use of words and phrases which are specific to each subject.

Pupils benefit from the positive relationships that they have with staff and their peers. Typically, they behave well and enjoy learning and socialising together. They understand and follow routines, such as the one-way system on the corridors and stairs. Older pupils said that behaviour has improved recently. This is because teachers and pastoral staff frequently remind pupils about their high expectations concerning behaviour.

The school has appropriate procedures in place for tackling any concerns about pupils' attendance. It seeks to understand the underlying causes of a pupil's absence. Although attendance is above the national average for all pupils, the school has recognised that improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND is a priority. It works constructively with these pupils and their families to improve attendance.

Pupils follow a very well-planned programme of activities that support their wider development. This provides them with the knowledge and skills that they need to become active and informed citizens. Through the 'Inspire' programme as well as subject curriculums, pupils are taught about important issues, such as sexual health and sexual consent. Pupils discuss political, social and moral issues with their peers with confidence. Pupils told inspectors that the careers education and advice that they receive prepares them very well for making decisions about their future lives. Many pupils benefit from extra-curricular opportunities, including a wide range of sports, music and cultural activities.

Recently, the trust has strengthened the school's capacity for improvement by providing additional resources and expertise in key subjects. The school has made positive changes with the support of the majority of staff. Leaders at all levels have been considerate of staff's workload and well-being. The trust and members of the local academy council support the school using their expertise in educational matters.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school does not ensure that all teachers use the most suitable techniques to help pupils understand subject content. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. This hinders how well they progress through the curriculum. The school should ensure that teachers are fully equipped to deliver curriculum content consistently well across all subjects so that pupils know and remember important knowledge.
- Some teachers do not routinely check pupils' understanding well enough. This means that pupils, particularly those with SEND, develop gaps in their knowledge and misconceptions which go unchecked. The school should ensure that in all subjects, teachers identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge so that pupils can build on what they know already.
- There is variability in teachers' expectations for what pupils with SEND will achieve and how well they implement whole school support strategies. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that all teachers utilise the information that they have to meet the specific needs of pupils with SEND in the classroom.

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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	136421
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10294357
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1296
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Angela Holden
CEO of the trust	Heather Duggan
Headteacher	Marie Adams
Website	www.hopeacademy.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 September 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Hope Academy joined The Liverpool Joint Catholic and Church of England Academies Trust in November 2023.
- This is a faith school. It is part of the Diocese of Liverpool. The school's previous section 48 inspection took place in April 2018. The school is expecting its next section 48 inspection by the end of 2026.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- A small number of pupils attend placements at four registered providers of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements

(quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders, staff and members of the local academy council, including the chair of the local academy council.
- An inspector met with the CEO of the trust and trustees.
- An inspector spoke to representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's improvement plans, records of meetings of the local academy council and analysis of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took into account the views of leaders, staff and pupils and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages, physical education and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects and visited some lessons in those subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and the responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Timothy Gartside, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Niamh Howlett	Ofsted Inspector
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