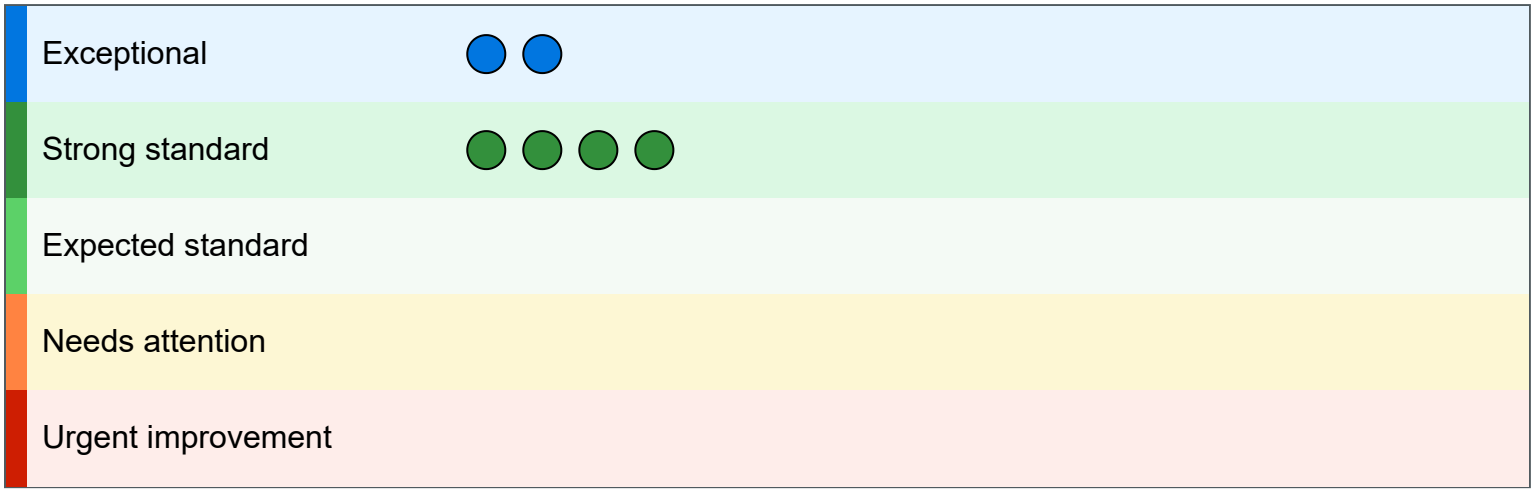
Hopefields Education CiC

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

Unique reference number (URN): 149109

Inspection report: 23 June 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.
- Insufficient evidence: Inspectors were unable to gather sufficient evidence to judge whether safeguarding standards are met.

Exceptional

Attendance and behaviour

Exceptional

Leaders have established a well-understood approach to promote high attendance. This is applied consistently by staff. Pupils and their families receive the same messages about the school's high expectations. Leaders ensure that the admission and transition processes make these high expectations explicitly clear to parents and carers. Leaders work closely with families to address any barriers that prevent pupils from attending school regularly. As a consequence of these combined actions, the vast majority of pupils experience a significant improvement in their attendance rate once they join the school. Most pupils attend regularly. This contributes positively to pupils' achievement and wellbeing over time.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They interact with each other and with staff incredibly well. Leaders' have a relentless focus to ensure a consistent approach to behaviour management. The communication of this has enabled the school to build on the previous highly effective practice at the school. Leaders and staff have successfully established a culture in which pupils are supported to regulate their behaviour and take responsibility for their actions. Pupils are respectful to staff and each other. They do not consider bullying or discrimination to be a concern because pupils are respectful and get on so well together.

Inclusion

Exceptional

Pupils at this school have experienced disruption to their education prior to joining the school. They join with significant gaps in their learning. Leaders have successfully established a consistent approach to identifying and addressing pupils' barriers to learning. They ensure that staff are provided with the right information and guidance in how to support individual pupils. They regularly check that this is having the intended impact.

Leaders ensure that positive and professional relationships are established with pupils and their families from the beginning of their time with the school. They have embedded a highly effective programme of transition to the school. Pupils benefit greatly from this. It helps them to settle into the school successfully. It enables pupils to develop a sense of belonging. Pupils recognise how staff help them and have their best interests at the heart of their actions.

Leaders work closely with a range professionals so that pupils receive the right support that they need. They gather a wide range of information to inform the decisions that they make to support pupils' learning and development needs. Leaders make sure that pupils are provided with meaningful opportunities to contribute towards evaluating the impact of the support that they receive. Actions such as these enable pupils to engage in their education extremely well.

Strong standard

Achievement

Strong standard

Leaders ensure that they have very close oversight of the achievement of pupils. This ensures that the curriculum and the teaching of it meets pupils' needs appropriately. Regular and established opportunities to review pupils' achievement enables leaders and staff to implement timely and bespoke support. Leaders routinely check the impact of this support to ensure that it is positively enhancing pupils' learning and development.

Leaders make sure that pupils acquire the skills that they need in the early stages of reading, writing and mathematics. This sharp focus enables pupils to access the curriculum successfully. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to use and apply these skills across the curriculum. This enables pupils to be successful and enjoy learning. Pupils gain an appropriate range of qualifications and accreditation by the time they leave the school. As a consequence, pupils move onto positive destinations in their education or training. It prepares them well for life beyond the school.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

Leaders have a deep and accurate understanding of the curriculum and how it is taught at the school. They have ensured that pupils consistently benefit from a high-quality curriculum. Leaders have carefully identified and prioritised the important knowledge that pupils must learn as they progress through the school.

Pupils typically join the school with significant gaps in their learning. Leaders ensure that the curriculum addresses these gaps and supports pupils to build their learning successfully over time. Teachers provide regular opportunities to use and apply their learning in English and mathematics across the curriculum. This extends to practical activities at the school's farm site. These authentic and purposeful learning experiences bring learning to life for pupils.

Teachers demonstrate expertise in the curriculum subjects that they teach. They use subject-specific vocabulary and impart knowledge consistently well when teaching. Across lessons, teachers provide a consistent focus on developing pupils' vocabulary. Teachers reinforce important concepts so that pupils use these with confidence in their own work. Teachers regularly check that pupils know and remember these, and previous concepts, in their learning. Teachers skilfully adapt learning to meet pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils consistently benefit from the learning opportunities provided to them.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders, including the proprietor body, know their school and provision extremely well. They ensure that staff understand the school's priorities and their role in contributing towards achieving these. This collegiate approach enables pupils to benefit from a consistently high standard of education. Leaders ensure that they regularly review the impact of the actions they take to develop the school. As part of these established processes, leaders check that the school's provision meets the requirements of the independent school standards (the

standards). Leaders' knowledge of the standards, and how they apply within the school's provision, enables them to make decisions in the best interests of pupils. It ensures that leaders fulfil their statutory duties. The school's capacity for improvement is reflected positively in the embedded and high-quality practice seen in all aspects of its provision.

Leaders have established a highly effective culture of professional learning for staff. They provide opportunities for staff to engage with, and contribute towards, training within the region and abroad. Leaders ensure that staff benefit from the training and support provided to address whole school development.

Leaders' sharp focus on working with parents and carers from the beginning of a pupils' time at the school fosters a culture of partnership and collaboration. Parents who provided feedback to inspectors expressed overwhelmingly positive views about the support the school and its staff provide to them and their children.

Staff value the actions of leaders to support their workload and wellbeing. Leaders ensure that staff have sufficient time within the school day to carry out their teaching and leadership responsibilities to a high standard. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

Leaders and staff provide high-quality pastoral support to pupils. This enables pupils to recognise and articulate their own feelings and learn how to manage these appropriately. As pupils develop their confidence in this, they become increasingly able to regulate their behaviour and participate fully in their education. Pupils acknowledge this responsibility. They speak with pride about the support that they have been given to help them to settle into school life, learn and achieve.

Leaders have implemented a personal, social and health education curriculum. This incorporates relationships, sex and health education. It builds pupils' knowledge over time. Leaders have ensured that this curriculum includes pertinent topics that pupils are likely to encounter outside of school, such as keeping safe when they are online and water safety. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of consent and healthy relationships. They discuss topics such as these with maturity.

Leaders have ensured that pupils benefit from purposeful experiences to support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These opportunities are clearly identified within the curriculum. This helps pupils to build their knowledge and skills progressively over time. Teachers skilfully support pupils to reflect on what they have learned about different faiths, beliefs and cultures and how this applies within their own lives. For example, in a beliefs and values lesson, pupils used the concept of suffering to consider what it can mean to different people and various situations.

Pupils regularly visit the school's farm. Through this, they learn to take responsibility for the care and welfare of animals. Over time, pupils develop a mature understanding of behaviour and leadership, seen within the context of equine care.

Leaders have established partnerships with local businesses and industry. These enable pupils to participate in visits that broaden their knowledge of careers and the world of work. It raises pupils' ambition for life beyond the school.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

This is a school where pupils feel welcomed and valued. Most pupils join the school having experienced disruption to their education. Some have not attended school for some time. Leaders and staff provide many purposeful opportunities for pupils to participate in, and contribute towards, being part of the Hopefields team. On joining the school, pupils quickly become part of its community.

Staff work closely with parents and carers to ensure that pupils' barriers to learning are accurately identified, known and understood. This helps the school to put in place timely and appropriate support. Pupils speak extremely positively about how the school helps them and the transformative impact that it has had on their lives. As one pupil told an inspector, which reflects the sentiment of many: 'Staff at this school know, care for, and understand me. They help me to do well.' The school's highly inclusive culture enables pupils to settle into the life of the school and benefit from all that it has to offer. This supports pupils to achieve an appropriate range of qualifications and accreditation to successfully move on to education and/or training pathways.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. In classrooms, lessons at the school's farm and when moving around the school, pupils consistently demonstrate the high standards expected of them. They are proud to attend the school and of what they have achieved during their time at Hopefields. Leaders ensure that pupils are taught, with clarity, what is expected of them and how this is demonstrated. Staff skilfully develop pupils' understanding of how they think about, and recognise, their feelings and emotions. This enables pupils to manage their behaviour with maturity. Leaders have created an environment in which pupils feel, and are, safe. Relationships between staff and pupils are overwhelmingly positive. Pupils interact extremely well with their peers. Pupils do not consider bullying or discrimination to be an issue at the school. Pupils know that the caring and trusted staff will help them promptly if they share any concerns.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to build on and further sustain the high standards developed across the curriculum and teaching.

About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this standard inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, and checked the school's compliance with the independent schools

standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, directors, members of the school's leadership team, staff, pupils and parents and carers.

Inspectors visited lessons and reviewed a range of work.

Inspectors spoke to representatives from Macmillan Academy and Stockton on Tees local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school caters for pupils with complex social, emotional and mental health needs. Most pupils have an education, health and care plan.

The school does not use any alternative provision.

The school has a main site on the outskirts of Middlesbrough. Pupils also attend a farm at the nearby village of Wolviston. The address for this site is Cross Farm, Wynyard Road, Wolviston TS22 5LL.

The school is registered to admit 40 pupils. At the time of the inspection, there were 43 pupils on roll.

The name of the chair of the proprietor body is Emily Greenhalgh-Stone.

The fees currently charged are £27,145 to £51,448.

The email of the school is admin@hopefields.org.uk.

Headteacher: Emily Greenhalgh-Stone

Independent school standards

Independent school standards are either met or not met for each category.

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1. Quality of education provided — Standards met

All standards have been met.

2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils Standards met

All standards have been met.

3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils Standards met

All standards have been met.

4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors Standards met

All standards have been met.

5. Premises of and accommodation at schools Standards met

All standards have been met.

6. Provision of information Standards met

All standards have been met.

7. Manner in which complaints are handled Standards met

All standards have been met.

8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools Standards met

All standards have been met.

Lead inspector:
Matthew Harrington, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Bernard Clark, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

This data is from 23 June 2026

Total pupils

43

School capacity

40

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

41

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

2

Our grades explained

Exceptional
Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

Insufficient evidence

Inspectors were unable to gather reliable enough evidence to grade an evaluation area. This is rare and normally only happens if there are no pupils on roll at the school.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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