

Whittington Hospital Class

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134274
Local Authority	Islington
Inspection number	381658
Inspection dates	18–19 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Bill Stoneham

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Rosemarie Hilditch
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Five lessons, each involving a different teacher, were observed and time was spent in classrooms and elsewhere observing work. Meetings were held with both current and past students, a member of the management committee, the headteacher and other staff. The inspector looked at various policy documents, including those relating to safeguarding, and questionnaires from 12 parents and carers, six staff and 12 students.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the service's work, looking in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively the service is boosting attainment overall, including key skills for different groups of students.
- How well the curriculum meets the varied needs of different groups of students.
- How effectively the service has built on the strengths identified in the last inspection.

Information about the school

Whittington Hospital Class caters for students who are unable to attend school because of their medical needs. The service has three aspects. Some students are educated on site during their stays in hospital. These periods are usually of a short duration. Other students, who often have longer-term illness but do not require hospitalisation, are educated at home. A third service is offered to students who have illnesses that prevent them attending mainstream school. Usually students are of secondary age but, if required, this aspect of the service is able to provide for primary aged pupils. Education for this group is based at a facility called 'The Lodge', which is situated about 500 metres from the main hospital site. At the time of the inspection three secondary aged students were in attendance. These students tend to be associated with the service for longer periods of time and are usually referred by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Approximately a third of the students have a statement of special educational needs which is higher than usual. Almost all the statements relate to the illnesses suffered by the students. Nearly half the students come from minority ethnic families. The service holds the Healthy Schools Award and has been jointly awarded Capital Growth status for 2012. This is an award funded by the Mayor of London's office in recognition of the success the students have enjoyed with the garden project known as 'Edible Elthorne'.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Whittington Hospital Class provides an outstanding level of education. This is a direct result of the inspirational leadership of the headteacher and the sheer dedication of the whole staff, who are committed to changing and improving the fortunes of young people, many of whom have faced severe difficulties and traumas in their lives. It is a most caring and sensitive service that offers its students the highest possible levels of education, care, guidance and support. As a result, almost all students achieve extremely well and make outstanding progress in their learning and personal development.

Students attending the service have wide-ranging prior levels of attainment, with many working at levels that are higher than the national average for their age. Those who receive home tuition, or who attend The Lodge, may have suffered disruption to their education because of their complex physical and mental health conditions. The service offers these students an extremely safe, secure and supportive environment in which they can improve their educational attainment, realise their potential and develop stronger self-esteem. Those students entered for GCSEs frequently gain results that are above average, which is quite some achievement given their individual contexts. Many of the students who are hospitalised for short periods of time and receive their education in the hospital class are at least average attainers. They frequently make rapid progress in their work because of the quality of the intensive one-to-one tuition that is often provided.

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. Excellent partnerships involving education, care and health professionals ensure high quality outcomes for students. Extensive work is done to promote healthy and safe lifestyles and safeguarding arrangements are outstanding. Students say they feel very safe and behaviour throughout the service is excellent. Other outstanding features include the engagement of parents and carers, the quality of the curriculum, especially the care taken to meet individual needs, and the work to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination. Every student's progress is closely tracked and monitored.

The outstanding progress made by the students is a direct result of high quality teaching. Teachers in the hospital school and the home tuition service are very adept at meeting individual needs. At The Lodge the emphasis on developing literacy, numeracy and personal skills supports younger students well in reintegrating into mainstream education and Year 11 students are prepared well for progression to college courses, or employment. Students are improving their literacy and numeracy

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skills very well and are acquiring work-related skills such as decision making and team-work.

Staff quickly develop strong working relationships with their students and are skilled in ensuring work is appropriately pitched. For longer staying students, baseline assessments are undertaken and all work is monitored well and progress carefully tracked. This information is used very well to inform lesson planning and ensure that work is pitched suitably and is challenging. However, at present, record keeping is not centralised on one system that is readily accessible to all staff. At present, staff time is not always used efficiently because teachers have to use three or four different spreadsheets to access and record data about students' progress. The school is looking at a centralised system that would be more effective and efficient in recording students' progress and achievements.

Excellent progress has been made since the last inspection. The management committee is outstanding. It knows the service well and thoroughly monitors its work. Many members of the management committee are medical, care or education professionals themselves and are able to provide coordinated expertise to enhance the students' successes. A track record of sustained improvement amply illustrates the ambition and drive of the excellent headteacher and her talented team. Rigorous self-evaluation enables strengths and areas for development to be identified and appropriate plans made for continued development. As a result of all these factors there is an outstanding capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop a more efficient and effective student tracking system that is centralised and easily accessible to all members of staff.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Students achieve highly because the quality of their learning in lessons is often outstanding. For example, in a first-aid lesson at The Lodge, all made rapid progress because of the range of learning activities. The strong emphasis on key vocabulary enabled students to explain the meaning of key words. They were able to show off their newly acquired skills in sign language by finger spelling the words. Students explained answers and offered opinions about how to tackle certain medical situations. All the students contributed and made outstanding strides in their work. They say they enjoy their work and this was clear from lessons seen during the inspection. Evidence, such as work samples, indicates impressive progress over time with many students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, working at levels well in excess of what could be expected given their starting points. A parent of a short-stay hospital student commented that her child was struggling with the concept of area in mathematics, but after four days of tuition in the hospital ward, this concept had now been mastered.

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Students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They are highly considerate and supportive of each other and this helps their learning and their social and emotional development. Attendance is above average, with some Lodge students showing remarkable improvements. Much emphasis is placed on leading safe and healthy lives, with a strong focus on eating healthily. Students take full advantage of the fresh fruit available in all classrooms. The Lodge students have developed their own food growing mini-enterprise called ‘Edible Elthorne’. This project has involved students making decisions about how to improve their environment and working both in and with the local community to secure environmental improvements.

The small number of long-staying students take their responsibilities seriously and are keen to contribute to the school and local community in tangible ways. Students’ excellent commitment to their school and to the wider community and a desire to live healthy lives has resulted in awards such as Healthy Schools and Capital Growth Status being conferred on the service.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Students’ learning is outstanding because they are consistently well taught by staff with detailed subject knowledge. They are motivated and engaged by interesting lessons that offer scope for independent work. The working relationships between staff and students are excellent. Activities are very well planned to meet students’ individual needs. The curriculum has been significantly improved and is outstanding.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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For example, the introduction at The Lodge of the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE) course has significantly enhanced the students’ future economic well-being by developing team-working skills, boosting self-awareness and providing an outlet to apply various skills, including work-related skills. Other developments include extensive partnership work with various providers including Arsenal Football Club, and an ‘in-house’ programme called ‘The London Project’ where students learn about London and develop skills such as reading an underground map, planning travel routes around London and knowing the right ticket to buy.

For a small service, the range of subjects offered is impressive and curriculum innovation has raised students’ attainments. Further breadth is provided through activities such as physical education, art therapy, educational visits and visiting speakers. These activities are significant in boosting confidence, as well as making a significant contribution to students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The service provides an outstanding, caring and supportive environment. There are excellent trusting relationships with parents and carers. The individual needs of all students have high priority. Families and carers are fully involved in their child’s education and care. Effective partnerships with a multitude of agencies greatly enhance the students’ learning and their social well-being. As one parent commented: ‘The staff are outstanding, caring and helpful. I don’t know how I would have coped without this service. It is simply wonderful.’

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The outstanding and visionary leadership of the headteacher, combined with the dedicated support of staff, has resulted in a clear focus on successfully driving improvement. Leaders and managers at all levels, including the excellent management committee, are fully committed and involved in securing improvements. The service maintains excellent working relationships with many agencies. These partnerships help to secure excellent and individualised programmes for education, health and social care and successfully promote students’ personal well-being. Safeguarding procedures are outstanding. The detailed risk assessments are thorough and all appropriate policies are in place and are monitored. There is a very strong determination to ensure that the students enjoy an excellent education in a safe setting; leaders and managers have been

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most effective in achieving this.

Academic outcomes are outstanding because the management of teaching and learning is strongly focused on raising attainment. The service is aware that systems for recording students’ progress and ensuring staff have easy access to these records have not been efficient. It is in the process of developing a better system that will ensure staff do not have to spend so much time accessing a range of different recording systems. It is a credit to teachers’ dedication that they have managed to ensure that the recording of students’ progress is of high quality despite the present systems.

An emphasis on respect, rights, boosting confidence and encouraging responsibility underpins much of the service’s work. This makes an excellent contribution to the promotion of equality and tackling discrimination. Outstanding and innovative efforts have been made to promote community cohesion. For example, students at The Lodge are learning sign language and in their first-aid course they must learn how to save a life. In the hospital ward, students’ artwork is being submitted to form part of a giant portrait that has been commissioned as part of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 2012. Students also raise money for various charities. Both past and present students contributed to a recently published book celebrating the service’s 60th anniversary and hospital students helped to decorate the hospital nursery. Students develop their international understanding by learning about their own heritage and the customs and beliefs of other cultures. This helps to ensure that their knowledge and understanding of the wider world is developed very well.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

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At over 80% of parents and carers replied to the inspection questionnaire, with a high number adding positive comments. The overwhelming message to emerge is that parents and carers value the service highly. They consider it is making a significant contribution to enhancing life chances by helping the young people to overcome their problems, anxieties and often complex medical conditions. No negative comments were received. The unanimous positive views expressed by parents and carers reflect the inspector's judgements that the quality of this service and the education it provides are outstanding. As one parent succinctly commented: 'I simply applaud the hospital class and all of their team.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whittington Hospital Class to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 11 statements about the school.

The inspector received 12 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 14 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	10	83	1	8	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	10	83	2	17	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	9	75	2	17	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	75	2	17	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	75	2	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	9	75	2	9	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	9	75	2	17	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	75	2	17	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	75	3	25	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	83	1	8	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	10	83	1	8	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



21 October 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Whittington Hospital Class, London N19 5NF

Thank you for making me so welcome during my recent visit. I have fond memories of meeting and talking with you and seeing your work. I am impressed with what you are all achieving. You told me about the high quality education you receive and I am pleased to say that my visit confirmed your opinions; you receive an outstanding education. You are making excellent strides in your education and personal development. The staff help you but your positive attitudes and excellent behaviour are also important. There are so many things that are superb and this is underpinned by you having an excellent and highly committed staff who help you to learn so very well.

Many other things impressed me. For example the fact that some of you are learning sign language and, as part of your first-aid course, you are learning life-saving techniques. You are developing your skills in literacy and numeracy well and mini-enterprises like 'Edible Elthorne' help you in your work. So much is happening but your staff do not have one effective way of recording all you do. I have asked that they establish a central system for recording and tracking the progress that you all make.

Thank you again for making me so welcome. I enjoyed meeting you and would like to wish you every success with 'Edible Elthorne' and all your other endeavours.

Yours sincerely
Bill Stoneham
Lead inspector

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