

# Royal Free Hospital Children's School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	100094
<b>Local authority</b>	Camden
<b>Inspection number</b>	376344
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Charles Hackett

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community Special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	23
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sally Gimson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jude Chalk
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 September 2008
<b>School address</b>	Floor 6–6 West B Ward Pond Street London NW3 2QG
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Charles Hackett

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited five lessons and observed five teachers. Meetings were held with staff, three members of the governing body, a parent and a representative of the local authority. Discussions were held with students about their work and their views of the school.

The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at students' work and information on their progress; safeguarding policies and other documents were evaluated. Questionnaires completed by six parents/carers, six staff and five students were scrutinised.

## Information about the school

The school is a smaller than average special school. Its main focus is on students who are long-stay inpatients and those who have to return to hospital regularly for medical attention. Since September 2011, many of the long-stay students are inpatients from a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Intensive Eating Disorders Unit at the hospital. The school also supports day students whose levels of anxiety or illness mean that they are unable to attend a mainstream school. More secondary than primary students are admitted and the number on roll each day varies.

In addition, the school supports students who attend day surgery and all inpatients aged 16 and under staying overnight in the hospital; usually for one or two days. Over the last year, over 1,500 such students were supported. The school has a dedicated classroom and has portable facilities to enable teaching to take place at the bedside of inpatients. Students are admitted from Camden and a number of other local boroughs. A few students have disabilities and special educational needs. Likewise, a few students are admitted who are in the care of the local authority. Since the previous inspection, a new deputy headteacher post has been created.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school which provides a secure specialist learning environment for its students. Parents and carers are very pleased with the education the school offers to their children.
- The school works very effectively with medical staff and other agencies, such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. These close working relationships enable the school to provide a high level of consistency in the care it offers, which in turn maximises the learning opportunities for each student.
- Thorough, regular assessments of students' achievements enable them to make good, and in some cases outstanding, progress. Data on students' progress are comprehensive but their use to compare and regularly check the progress of different groups of students is limited.
- Teachers are skilled at challenging students in their learning. Lessons are consistently well planned and take note of the different ability levels of students. Students supported at their bedsides are provided with a good range of learning activities.
- The behaviour and safety of students are excellent and this contributes to the effective learning environment within the school. The carefully planned routines employed by the school eliminate risks and demonstrate that the safety of students is seen as a key priority.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. In particular, students gain a very good understanding of cultural aspects through their involvement in projects with a group of professional actors.
- The headteacher effectively leads a small team of staff united in their determination to provide the best they can for each student. This has secured a number of key improvements to the school since the previous inspection. Positive anecdotal evidence on long-stay students' performance after they leave the school exists but this is not formalised sufficiently to use as part of the school's own self-evaluation of the impact of its work.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- During the current academic year, strengthen the systems used for monitoring and comparing the progress of different groups of students, such as those in the care of the local authority or those with disabilities or special educational needs.
- Formalise the gathering of information on long-stay students' performance after leaving the school to enable the school to use this as part of its own self-evaluation of its effectiveness.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Both long- and short-stay students make good progress in their learning, including reading. Students respond well to the challenges set them. Attainment, including in reading at the end of Key Stage 1, varies significantly due to the very wide range of students' needs. Typically, in lessons, students respond well to the challenges set. In a mathematics lesson, for example, a student developed the skills to measure the circumference and volume of different objects, such as a small ball and cone. Similarly, in an English lesson, a group of three Year 11 students worked well together to compare the characteristics of different characters within the Shakespearean story of *Romeo and Juliet*.

If, on admission, students are identified as experiencing learning difficulties or having significant gaps in their knowledge and skills, individual personalised programmes are put in place. The observation of a student following one such programme showed he was making excellent progress in understanding the concept of times tables and their use. Students with disabilities and those with special educational needs make good progress. For example, the learning record of a student, who, on admission, was a non-reader, shows the very good progress made in the understanding of letter and letter sounds and the ability to read simple consonant vowel consonant words.

Parents/carers of long-stay students are very pleased with the progress their children make, while those of short-stay students appreciate the learning opportunities offered. Inspection evidence endorse these views. Even the most anxious students have good opportunities to achieve success in examinations because the school is registered as an examination centre. Progress of each long-stay student is monitored very carefully and adjustments made to their programmes as required. The wealth of available data shows that there is no significant variation between different groups of students and that all achieve well.

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## Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is consistently good. Parents and carers agree with this. Effective assessment processes enable teachers to know the ability levels of individual students well. They prepare their lessons based on these and, where relevant, the examination courses they are taking. Typically, lessons have clear learning objectives for all students in the class. This means there are often different sets of learning activities taking place in the same lesson. For example, in a science lesson, some Key Stage 4 students were working out the validity of information and opinions, while Key Stage 3 students tackled an investigation with a teaching assistant and one student followed an individual developmental programme. All achieved well because the activities were well planned and effectively taught. Teaching assistants are fully cognisant of the learning expectations for each student and this means their support is well targeted.

The staff work closely with therapeutic staff and use their skills well to know when to avoid putting students under too much pressure. Teachers show good flexibility in changing their plans if difficulties occur because of the medical needs of students. A very good emphasis is placed on supporting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through many of the topics chosen within the curriculum and the weekly group meetings. Challenging targets are set for each student in all the subjects and for older students these are often linked to the grades they aim to achieve in their GCSEs. In the English, mathematics and science lessons observed, each teacher used their excellent subject knowledge very effectively to challenge students and respond to their questioning. This helped create very effective learning environments, where the focus was firmly on students learning and making progress. The curriculum is well matched to the needs of students. Marking is often very helpful and points out to students what is required to move further forward. Learning logs are used well by each student to give them the chance to review what they have achieved and what their next steps are.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

The excellent behaviour of students ensures that the focus in all lessons is on learning. Students show high levels of cooperation and this often means that they can work together independently. This was seen in the English lesson observed where three students worked together closely in identifying different aspects of a scene in *Romeo and Juliet*. Students cooperated extremely well with each other, sharing ideas and showing care and appropriate consideration for each other's difficulties.

Students themselves feel that behaviour is very good and all stressed that they felt very safe and had not witnessed any incidents of bullying during their time in school. Records maintained by the school confirm that behaviour over time has been outstanding, and also that bullying or incidents of racist behaviour are extremely rare and have not occurred in recent years. Safety is given a very high priority. This is

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very effective and means that even those students with the most extreme anxiety problems feel able to join other students within the teaching base. Parents and carers are very appreciative of this, one describing this as a 'real safety net for her' (daughter). Staff through their very strong links with the medical team and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service ensure that excellent attention is given to the emotional well-being of all students. Students make their own contributions to safety through events such as a recent project on the dangers of Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA). With professional support, they contributed to a programme filmed by the BBC, which featured students interviewing the actress and politician, Glenda Jackson, about the need for high-quality cleaning in hospitals.

## **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management have had a very positive impact on improving the quality of provision within the school. Governors report how successful the new deputy headteacher appointment has proved because it has given an increased focus on the quality of teaching and learning. Observations of lessons have been frequent and rigorous feedback given on different aspects of teachers' work. Where weaker aspects have been identified, effective training programmes have been put in place and, over time, this has led to consistently good-quality teaching throughout the school and to consistently good achievement.

The curriculum addresses the very varied individual needs of students well. Higher-attaining students are pushed to achieve as well as possible, while those students with disabilities and/or special educational needs or with gaps in their education are provided with personalised individual programmes. The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective. The weekly community meetings provide the students with access to discussion sessions about a wide range of social aspects that help promote their moral and social development very well. For example, during the inspection, all students joined a discussion about the dangers of teenage drinking. The emphasis placed on providing students with good cultural opportunities is very effective. A parent stressed that, for her, the highlight of the previous year was being able to see her daughter's involvement with other students in writing the script for a play, which was performed by a group of professional actors in a local theatre.

The governing body monitors the work of the school very carefully. Governors work well with medical and therapeutic departments to integrate the school into the hospital community. A key focus appropriately has been put on safeguarding. This has included establishing effective procedures that involve hospital staff if a student is missing from the school. The excellent knowledge staff have on each student is used very well to ensure equality of opportunity and eliminate any possibility of any form of discrimination.

The school has maintained its effectiveness since the previous inspection and, in many ways, has continued to improve the quality of provision. It has a good capacity

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to maintain this. Self-evaluation has been thorough and led to improvements made, such as those to teaching and learning. It has also successfully modified its provision to meet the changing needs of its long-stay students. When students are well enough to return to their mainstream schools, effective feedback is given on their achievements while at the school. Anecdotal evidence is also collected from schools on how well students settled back into their schools or colleges. This evidence, though, is not formally collated to enable the school to make use of it in its own evaluation of the school's effectiveness. This limits the opportunity the school has to make use of this information to support improvement planning. Similarly, data are not fully utilised to regularly compare the progress of different groups, for example those looked after by the local authority, and identify opportunities for raising achievement further.



## 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



16 January 2012

Dear Students

**Inspection of Royal Free Hospital Children's School, Camden, London NW3 2QG**

Thank you for your kindness when I inspected your school recently. I really enjoyed chatting with so many of you and looking at your work. You told me how being at the school was helping you learn and achieve. I can see from the lessons I saw and the work in your books that you are doing well. You will, therefore, not be surprised to know that I have judged the school to be good.

I consider both your achievements and the quality of teaching to be good. The success so many of you have in passing examinations shows how well you achieve. I judge that your behaviour and safety, and your spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, to all be outstanding. I can see that for many of you this is giving you the confidence to attend the classroom and work hard. Because you are being successful, I can see many of you try even more difficult work and push yourself to achieve as much as possible.

In many ways, the school has improved since its last inspection. Much of this is due to the good leadership and management of the headteacher and her senior colleagues. It is clear that all the staff work well together and are keen to enable you all to achieve as much as possible. To be even better, I have suggested two areas of improvement to the school.

- Develop a more effective system of monitoring the progress of the different groups of students who attend the school.
- Formalise the gathering of information on the impact of you being at the school to help with the school's evaluation of its effectiveness.

Once again, thank you for making my job so easy when I came to visit. I do hope that you continue to work hard in your studies and that you are successful when it comes to taking examinations.

Yours sincerely

Charles Hackett  
Lead inspector

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