

Gloucestershire Hospital Education Service

County Offices, St George's Road, Cheltenham, GL50 3EW

Inspection dates 8–9 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The service has continued to develop since the last inspection. It is now making outstanding provision for ill and potentially very vulnerable pupils.
- Pupils of all ages and abilities, despite the difficulties they face, make sustained progress while they are away from their home schools. Several parents and carers said their children did far better than when they were at school. When pupils take exams, their results are far better than those usually produced in similar services.
- All staff have the highest expectations and outstanding teaching helps pupils to learn to the very best of their ability, whether that is in hospital, through the outreach service or as part of the provision for young mothers.
- The new classroom base that allows some of the pupils with social, emotional or psychiatric problems to be taught together, and so benefit from a group setting, has been highly effective. The service is rightly trying to extend these benefits more widely in the county.
- Behaviour is outstanding because teachers often show tremendous skill in engaging with pupils so they become active learners rather than being passive and withdrawn. All agree that pupils are very safe.
- Leadership has been extended since the last inspection and the team shows drive, vision and ambition for the pupils. Leaders are supported well by the local authority.
- Leaders enable teachers to make an outstanding contribution to the lives of their pupils. Teachers give pupils extremely good support emotionally as well as in learning.
- Outstanding partnerships with parents and carers, health staff and home schools, all of whom are well represented on the management committee, enables the whole service to be focused on the needs of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons, taught by 11 teachers or higher-level teaching assistants. These were taught in the hospital schoolroom, the service headquarters’ teaching room or in individual pupils’ homes with the permission of their parents or carers.
- Inspectors heard pupils reading and looked at samples of work they have produced.
- They held meetings with the head of service, members of the senior team, and representatives of the health service, the management committee and the local authority.
- They held discussions with pupils, parents and carers, and read emails regarding the service sent in from schools and external agencies.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed in six responses to the online Parent View and responses to the service’s own questionnaires. The views of staff expressed in conversations and in the staff questionnaire were taken into account.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including data on pupils’ progress, teachers’ planning and assessment, lesson planning and monitoring, school improvement plans and key policies, including those for safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Alan Jones

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The service covers the whole of the county, providing education for three distinct groups of pupils: those admitted to the Royal Gloucester Hospital, those diagnosed with a range of social, emotional or psychiatric difficulties taught through the outreach service, and pregnant teenagers and young mothers.
- Admission is by referral from a medical consultant or, in the latter case only, from the Education Welfare Service.
- All pupils are supported at school action plus or by a statement of special educational needs.
- While the proportion of pupils who attract the pupil premium is broadly average, all pupils are dual-registered and the premium goes to the home school, with the service attracting no additional funding. It receives its funding centrally from the local authority.
- While the service provides education between the ages of four and 16, there were no children in the Early Years Foundation Stage present at the time of the inspection. Documentation covering this group was examined.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Seek further ways of developing learning opportunities that enable pupils with social, emotional or psychiatric problems to be taught in a positive group setting away from their own homes.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- The service covers a wide ability range, from pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties to those well on the way to gaining top grades at GCSE. The one thing they have in common is that all are disabled or have special educational needs. It teaches pupils across all key stages in a variety of settings, and enables them to make rapid progress from their starting points while supporting reintegration at the earliest opportunity.
- Pupils learn exceptionally well, often engaging in learning that had previously been impossible because of wider social or medical issues, which sees them make outstanding progress.
- The achievement of different groups is tracked in detail, particularly the performance of pupils with different types of medical need, by type of special educational need and by gender. This information shows that all groups are equally able to succeed and make excellent progress.
- Reading is widely promoted in all subjects, not just English. Teaching includes, for younger pupils, the use of strategies for working out difficult words, and attainment is high. Pupils' strong reading also supports their wider learning across the whole range of subjects.
- Although there are currently no children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, there was clear evidence from resources and from earlier children's work that provision and achievement for this age group are just as strong.
- The service uses data from schools on the prior attainment of pupils but also does its own testing when pupils start in case illness or absence from school has led to learning slipping back. This means that individual starting points for teaching and learning are known and used to ensure that high-quality teaching supports outstanding progress from individual starting points.
- Detailed tracking means that when they return to school pupils take with them a very clear statement of their strong progress and achievement. Tracking of pupils who have left at the end of Year 11 shows that virtually all continue in further education, training or employment, another clear indication of the service's great success.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teachers liaise very effectively with medical staff so, while provision may be dictated by medical needs, there is also high challenge in learning. Provision is outstanding in all settings. Liaison is a strong feature of the work across the whole service; for example, the young mothers are well supported through any postnatal depression. The employment of a primary mental health worker in the service's team reflects the care given to meeting the range of pupils' needs. Teachers also take care to support the wider social and emotional needs of pupils as well as expecting the best possible academic progress.
- Teaching across all ages and subjects, including English and mathematics, is of the highest quality and well supported by detailed information on prior attainment. Teaching, which is often carried out on a one-to-one basis, is finely tuned to individual needs and focused on getting the highest possible outcomes.
- Teachers have extremely high expectations which lead to outstanding outcomes. Last summer, the 12 pupils predicted by their schools to gain five GCSEs including English and mathematics at grades A* to C were all successful, often with grades higher than those predicted, and of the 28 pupils in the year group, all but one gained at least one exam success, which, for some, represents outstanding achievement following their seriously disrupted earlier education and wider medical difficulties.
- All teaching demonstrates outstanding features that include effective questioning, detailed planning and recording of progress, and a very strong rapport with pupils. Consequently, pupils who are potentially very vulnerable are able to demonstrate success.
- The very effective use of resources and information technology, even when lessons are taught at

home and resources have to be carried to and fro by the teacher, supports high levels of participation by pupils. This leads to high engagement and enjoyment of learning.

- Marking and assessment are explicit and supportive. Time for correction or improvement enables pupils to reflect on the quality of their work and gives them the opportunity to make it even better. Lesson planning is detailed and the tracking of progress is so sophisticated that even the rate of success in meeting individual lesson targets is uploaded into the pupils' progress database to give the clearest possible picture of success in learning.
- A notable development has been the creation of a classroom base at the service's offices which provides a supportive learning environment for pupils with social, emotional or psychiatric needs. It is staffed by a higher-level teaching assistant and specialist teachers who work together very effectively to support learning in a more social setting than home tuition. Although in its early days, it has already raised the attainment of pupils who attend. At the moment, this provision is only available for pupils from half the county, although plans for a second such facility to cover the remaining area are under active consideration by the local authority.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Staff, parents and carers, pupils and other professionals who gave a view were of the opinion that pupils are extremely safe and the care they receive is of the highest order. Professionals from the health and education services work together extremely effectively to ensure this is the case. The children of teenage mothers are also a focus of care that includes ensuring that their physical and mental needs are monitored.
- Arrangements to support the wider safety of those who are being taught in hospital reflect the positive liaison between hospital staff and the service. This is equally true for a pupil admitted on a single occasion as for those whose illnesses mean repeated admissions. Staff fully appreciate the importance of adapting their teaching while meeting medical requirements to best support recovery.
- The promotion of outstanding behaviour has a very different focus from that generally found. Here, the primary need in many cases is to engage pupils who have often been quiet and withdrawn. All staff are highly adept at doing this and so pupils become active learners and their self-confidence and ability to take on academic challenges are often transformed.
- Pupils are aware of bullying and this is covered during lessons so that issues such as cyber-bullying or that based on prejudice are understood, as are the dangers inherent in the misuse of social networking sites.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The highly effective and widely respected headteacher has further refined what was found to be a high-quality service at the last inspection. The management team has been extended and leaders show commitment, drive and ambition for excellence, supporting teachers and helping them deliver outstanding teaching. This underpins the aim of the service to provide outstanding education even though all pupils have wider medical or social issues.
- The service is well supported by the local authority, which is responsible for its funding arrangements. The local authority appreciates the high quality of the service, which ensures equality of opportunity for all.
- Systems to monitor the quality of teaching are effective and form part of the thorough appraisal process. Staff are aware of their accountability and understand how this is linked to salary progression. Teachers on the higher pay scale willingly accept additional responsibilities and being held to account in the process of service improvement.
- Professional development is a key priority and teachers work with primary, secondary and special 'Partner Schools'. This allows them to share in-service training, join with colleagues to

make sure they are assessing the quality of pupils' work accurately, and spend time each year working with colleagues in a mainstream school. This overcomes the difficulties of working in small settings and allows teachers to remain up to date in their professional practice.

- The curriculum creates highly positive learning opportunities fine-tuned to individual needs. This supports not only learning but also spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This was wonderfully illustrated in the transformation of the headquarters' classroom in preparation for the celebration of the Hindu festival of Divali taking place just after the inspection.
 - Links with parents and carers are outstanding and their views show an extremely high level of support for the service and its provision. The same is true of links with the pupils' home schools, other professional agencies and with the range of medical professionals with whom the service works so closely.
 - Safeguarding is of prime importance with many potentially vulnerable pupils. Arrangements remain exemplary and staff are very well aware of their responsibility for ensuring the safety of pupils.
 - The funding made available for the service is monitored carefully by the headteacher, who ensures there is clear focus on utilising resources to get the best possible outcomes for pupils.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance of the service lies with the local authority, whose nominated staff carry out their responsibilities effectively, including those for the performance management of the headteacher. The service's management committee is also effective in bringing together senior representatives of health and education, including consultants and headteachers, together with parents and carers, into a forum that takes seriously its chance to support the effective organisation of the service.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	131367
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	402463

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	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	58
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Head	Mary Holland
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2010
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