

Hospital and Home Education Pupil Referral Unit

Thorneywood Education Base, Off the Wells Road, Nottingham, NG3 3AL

Inspection dates 22–23 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- Pupils of all ages and backgrounds make outstanding progress in subjects and in their personal development.
- Teaching is outstanding and work is extremely well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers have high expectations and are expert at quickly establishing positive relationships with the pupils.
- Excellent partnership working and day-to-day links with home schools mean that pupils achieve the awards or complete work programmes they would have followed at their home school. They often exceed the targets set for them despite their illness.
- Staff teams work highly effectively together and with health authority colleagues and families.
- Pupils in the adolescent unit say they like coming to the unit, because it helps them to believe in themselves and their future.
- The home education service is hugely valued. It is highly successful in providing pupils with the emotional and academic support they need.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they say that they feel very safe.
- Hilltop has made an excellent start in providing for pupils. They are already making rapid progress in their attendance, behaviour, attitudes to school and key skills.
- The hospital school is highly successful in enabling pupils to learn, whether for a day or for longer periods of time.
- The headteacher and his leadership team are extremely effective and determined to help pupils achieve all that they can. Strong management has continued to secure very high quality teaching.
- The management committee fulfils most of its responsibilities well but does not always play an active role in checking on how well the unit is doing or fully supporting its cause.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 15 lessons, including three that were seen jointly with members of the leadership team. In addition, they made a number of short visits to other lessons, talked with pupils about their work and listened to them read.
- Meetings and discussions were held with parents, pupils, the chair of the management committee, local authority representatives, the unit’s leadership team and ward staff.
- Although there were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to be recorded, inspectors met directly with and received some written testimonies from parents and carers and considered the unit’s own evidence of parents’ views. It took account of 19 questionnaires from staff.
- The inspectors observed the unit’s work on both sites and looked at a number of documents including the unit’s self-evaluation and planning for improvement, and the data the unit keeps on pupils’ current progress and achievement. They also looked at evidence as to how the unit works with partners to secure the well-being of pupils, at records relating to behaviour and attendance and the unit’s safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Susan Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Hermione Horn

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Hospital and Home Education Pupil Referral Unit is based on two sites within the city of Nottingham. The Thorneywood Education Base provides education and support for three different groups (the adolescent unit, Fairmead and Hilltop) and is the base for a home education service that supports pupils with medical and anxiety-related needs. The hospital school is based at the Queen's Medical Centre.
- Pupils on the roll of Thorneywood attend full or part time or are supported by the home education service. They have medical or anxiety-related conditions. Many have not attended school regularly for some time although all are dual registered, remaining on the register of their home school.
- The adolescent unit takes up to 12 pupils aged 14 to 18 years who are in-patients at a nearby health authority Children's and Adolescents' Mental Health Service in-patient unit.
- Fairmead caters for up to 12 pupils at Key Stage 4 with a range of medical and anxiety-related conditions. Many of these may have been supported by the home education service before attending Fairmead, but were not well enough to return to their home school.
- Fairmead currently offers part-time education for these pupils, a few of whom also receive additional tuition from the home education service or their host school. However, the unit is seeking to extend the number of sessions available to pupils in Fairmead so that full-time education is available to them, should they be well enough.
- Hilltop opened in January 2012 and provides education for pupils aged five to 11 years who have emotional and behavioural needs. These pupils attend between two and four days a week, attending their local school on the other school days.
- Pupils supported by the home education service are also on the roll of the unit and receive up to 10 hours of support dependent on their age and need.
- The hospital school supports all pupils who are in-patients aged four to 19 years. Some are in hospital just for one or two days, others have repeated or extended stays because of the nature of their illness, for example because of the need for regular dialysis. The hospital school has several dedicated classrooms within or close to different wards and an outside learning and play area near to its main classroom base.
- The unit has no separate sixth form or early years provision although it does have staff with responsibilities for these areas. At the time of the inspection, six pupils had a statement of special educational needs, eight pupils were of sixth form age and there were no children below the age of six. However, the number and range of needs and ages varies week by week as pupils are admitted or discharged from health authority provision and/or returned to full-time education at their school or college.
- The unit had several vacancies and some staff illness, covered by supply staff at the time of the inspection. The accommodation at the hospital school is rented from the hospital trust and is currently subject to review.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen further the role of the management committee by:
 - extending members' training so that they are more confident and active in holding leaders to account for the unit's outcomes
 - working closely with the unit's leaders, the local authority and the health authority to further the unit's cause and find a solution to the current uncertainties over accommodation and charges at the hospital.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils make outstanding progress in English, mathematics and science. Excellent liaison with pupils' home schools and families ensures that achievement builds on their previous learning.
- Learning in all parts of the unit and both sites is matched so well to pupils' individual needs that they make outstanding progress, often exceeding the targets set by their home school, despite their illness. Whatever their age, pupils achieve exceptionally well and the unit prepares them very well for their next placement or return to school.
- Pupils' attainment is broadly in line with that of others of their age but, particularly in the hospital school, it is very wide ranging. A few reach levels above those expected for their age achieving the higher grades in their GCSEs. Others make excellent progress from their starting points or are quickly helped to accelerate their learning and make up lost ground.
- Pupils have many opportunities to use laptops and computers to support their studies and develop their research skills very well. Literacy and numeracy are supported extremely well across all aspects of the unit's work. Pupils' skills in these areas are supported and extended by teachers even when their stay is very short.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils. This is because the staff are skilled at identifying additional resources to support their learning and weave activities into their lessons that will support specific needs, for example using blocks that will support pupils' manipulatory skills in a mathematics game.
- Occasionally, pupils arrive with a statement of special educational needs or additional learning difficulties, for example a visual impairment or specific language or reading difficulties. The unit works extremely well with home schools and support services to ensure these pupils have the resources and specialist teaching approaches they need and so they make similarly outstanding progress.
- Pupils are very pleased with the progress they make, and their parents agree, although pupils at Fairmead say they wish they had even more time there because then 'the sky would be the limit.' Intensive individual support enables them to learn extremely well and the small groups ease their anxiety particularly well.
- Hilltop pupils are already learning faster in literacy and numeracy, including their ability to work out word meanings in reading because of the teachers' skills and detailed working with their home school.
- Rigorous checking on how pupils are doing and follow-up work, as well as careful matching of tutors' expertise to pupils' needs, mean that pupils supported by the home education service achieve extremely well and many are then able to reintegrate smoothly into their home school.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding in all areas of the unit's work because teachers are expert at quickly forming relationships with pupils and gaining their interest, confidence and trust. This means pupils readily engage with activities and teachers use the information gained from these and

from their home school to quickly establish programmes of work designed to meet their needs.

- Even those pupils with low self-esteem and confidence on entry, or who are disaffected with the world and with school, are quick to settle in and want to come to school. Pupils in the adolescent unit for example, say they cannot wait to come to school because the staff are so supportive and 'make them feel normal'.
- Teachers challenge pupils to do more, whether to have another go at their fractions in the hospital school or to extend a piece of writing or rethink an answer in English in Fairmead. Staff use verbal praise and feedback extremely well and most use marking well to support pupils' understanding of what is good about their work.
- A strength of teaching across the unit is the use of sensitive probing questions and of practical resources, including computer technology, so that pupils are constantly encouraged to think for themselves. Individual pupil's work is planned carefully so that it builds on prior learning and keeps focused on ensuring older pupils gain the highest qualifications possible. Learning is also planned so that younger ones make as much progress as possible in spelling, reading and writing and in number skills.
- Teachers are exceptionally good at tailoring programmes for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and of sixth form age so that they have just the right help and gain the qualifications and the confidence they need to move to college or the next stage in their education and life.
- The unit gathers and analyses information very carefully about how pupils are doing. It is developing this even further, building for example on some excellent systems for checking pupils' progress and planning lessons in the hospital school and extending staff training on how to document small steps of progress.
- Careful records of lessons and regular meetings with all concerned ensure that pupils' well-being and overall progress are carefully tracked and programmes adjusted. This means that even where pupils are on the roll for a very short time, such as in the hospital school or in the home education service, the impact of their illness or need on their achievement is as small as possible.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' well-being and safety are paramount. An ethos of care, concern and nurturing informs everything the unit does. Pupils quickly respond to this, recognising that their teachers 'really care' and have high ambitions for them. Even those who may have found managing their behaviour, anxiety or anger a challenge before entering the unit quickly respond to its rules and poor behaviour almost never happens. The behaviour of all pupils, including those of sixth form age, and their attitudes to each other and staff are exemplary.
 - Although pupils often work individually, they also work together well. Older pupils are hugely supportive to each other. Younger pupils at Hilltop are making rapid progress in their attitudes and behaviour and their ability to work together. They learn very well to wait their turns, share resources and listen more attentively. Motivating rewards support these younger pupils so that they are very clear about the sorts of behaviour their teachers expect and rise to those expectations. Excellent communication and visits to the home school ensure these expectations are consistent so that pupils make small but significant steps in their ability to manage their behaviour in a very short time.
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- Attendance is rapidly improving because the unit works so hard to engage pupils and so well with medical colleagues to ensure that all who are well enough are in school or receiving tuition at home or in their hospital beds. This means that attendance is high when medical needs are taken into account, although sometimes when pupils are in lessons, they have to leave because of medical interventions or meetings during the school day.
- Pupils are very clear that they feel safe within school but relish the openness of relationships and the relative freedom that it gives to some of them. For example, those within the adolescent unit say that, compared with other aspects of their life, being at the unit is like 'having contact with the real world'. Pupils have a very strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy although some, because of their particular illnesses such as anorexia, find it difficult to put this into practice. The unit works very well with medical colleagues to support this.
- Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying and that they are helped by the unit to deal with any social and emotional challenges they might have. They understand the different forms bullying can take. Those in Fairmead say that it is because of their experiences there that they feel able to contemplate moving on to college.
- All parents agree that their children are kept very safe. They are pleased with how well their children are supported and delighted to see them so happily engaged at such a difficult time.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Everyone involved with the unit, including staff, leaders and the management committee share high expectations and have a very clear vision. All sections of the unit are highly successful in meeting pupils' needs because leaders are constantly checking how they are doing and whether available staff time is being used to best effect.
 - Senior leaders know what needs to be done to make the unit even better and use all available help, for example from their school improvement partner and through staff training, to do this. Staff performance is checked very well and leaders have successfully maintained the very high quality teaching found at the last inspection, despite staff illness and vacancies.
 - Since the last inspection, leaders have responded to an increasing complexity of pupils' needs by ensuring that the unit's special educational needs coordinator is trained and that staff themselves have training around specific disabilities such as dyslexia. This has strengthened the unit's capacity to improve and also the ways in which the staff are able to promote equality of opportunity. No pupil is disadvantaged and pupils themselves celebrate the uniqueness and diversity of the world and of each other's talents.
 - Pupils make excellent progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The highly relevant curriculum supports this exceptionally well. Support for pupils' personal, social and emotional development and their health education is exceptional. Staff work extremely well with parents and hospital staff to ensure pupils have an exceptional understanding of their own and others' needs but, as one pupil indicated, also instil in them 'hope for the future - they help us to focus on what we can do.'
 - Partnership and communication with other agencies are excellent and make a substantial contribution to pupils' progress and their ability to continue with their studies. Where the unit does not teach a particular subject, for example because of the current time constraints,
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mainstream schools often send their teachers to the unit to support a specific subject and qualification.

- The unit does not receive pupil premium funding. It is financed partly by funds recovered from home schools and partly by the local authority. This funding is subject to review, as are the range, arrangements and cost of the accommodation within the hospital school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The unit receives appropriate support from the local authority and has access to all local authority support services to help improve its effectiveness. The management committee is ambitious for every pupil and members regularly visit to observe the unit's work and inform their judgements. Members of the management committee are well informed about the unit's work and ask challenging questions. However, they have not all received training and are still overly reliant on the headteacher or the local authority for information about how the unit is doing and what its results mean. The committee does check well that the management of performance is improving teaching: members know how the best teachers are rewarded and how any underperformance is tackled. The management committee contributes very well to the work of the unit. Members, for example, give talks to pupils on a topic they have skills in or actively contribute to the unit's investigations as to how well pupils are doing once they leave. They ensure that all the required safeguarding procedures are in place and pupils' safety and well-being are given a very high priority.
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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	133164
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	403822

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	4–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	74
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	8
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Russell May
Headteacher	David Staveley
Date of previous school inspection	11 May 2010
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