

The Children's Hospital School

Leicester Royal Infirmary, Infirmary Square, Leicester, LE1 5WW

Inspection dates 20–21 February 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This is a good school because it meets the very diverse needs of its pupils well on all sites and in the outreach service. It prepares them well for a return to their schools or a move on to an alternative placement.
- During their time in the school, pupils make at least good progress in their learning and they often make excellent progress in their personal development. This allows them to rapidly re-engage with learning. Even in the shortest of stays, the school is able to show some evidence that pupils make at least good progress.
- Although teaching is good overall, on three sites, some of it is outstanding. Leaders have a very clear view of the quality of teaching and know where improvements are needed to raise achievement.
- The headteacher has plans in place to improve the school, which include developing partnerships further with agencies responsible for other aspects of pupils' welfare.
- The governing body provides a high level of challenge to leaders and knows the school well. Governors are aware of where the school needs to improve and contribute to school improvement plans. They are regular visitors to all three sites.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are exemplary across the school. Pupils say that the provision does not feel like a school but more like a family. In many cases, they say that the trust that this builds has helped them come to terms with their conditions.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teaching is at least good, not enough is outstanding. The school is currently using its outstanding examples of teaching to move good teachers on so that they are able to teach outstanding lessons.
- Data collection related to pupils' progress, although detailed, is not yet refined enough to consistently show academic progress for the shortest of stays. Also, teachers are not fully confident in using it to help plan their lessons.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed nine lessons and several other learning sessions, including some which were joint observations with members of the school's leadership team. Observations included a range of subjects across all key stages, covering all abilities and in all departments. Pupils were also observed around the school at break and lunch times.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and a group of pupils. A majority of the school's staff completed the Ofsted questionnaire.
- Although an insufficient number of parents responded to the on-line questionnaire, 'Parent View', inspectors took account of parents' responses to the school's own surveys.
- Various documents, including the school's self-evaluation summary, the school improvement plan, data, and minutes from meetings of the governing body were scrutinised during the inspection.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions related to Ofsted's careers guidance survey. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of careers guidance services.

Inspection team

David Muir, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Keith Selby Thomas

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school provides education for students who are too ill to attend their school. It is based on three sites across the City of Leicester. Most of the education is part time and all pupils are dual-registered with their home school.
- One site of the school is based in the Leicester Royal Infirmary Hospital in the centre of the city. This provides education for pupils aged between three and 16 who are patients on the children's wards. Another site is the day school provision in Willow Bank School, for pupils who need longer term provision. The building has recently undergone extensive refurbishment and is a fully functioning secondary school, with spaces for a range of subjects, including art and drama, a fully equipped science lab, several subject classrooms, food and sports facilities. The third site educates students who are experiencing high levels of emotional challenge and who are resident or attend Oakham House. This is an in-patient psychiatric assessment and treatment centre for 11 to 18 year olds. The school also provides an outreach service, which includes a home-tuition service for pupils who are unable to attend the other provisions due to ill health, are recovering from surgery or may have other barriers to attending school.
- The cohort of pupils is very changeable due to the nature of the school. The aim of the school is to prepare pupils for a return to their home school or college as soon as they are able, or to provide appropriate education for the longer term, if a return to mainstream secondary provision is not possible. As a result of this, pupils can stay in the school for a matter of days in many cases, although in Willow Bank, they can stay for up to several years if this is appropriate. Currently, the average stay in Oakham House is around three weeks.
- Pupils who are educated on the Leicester Royal Infirmary site and in Oakham House will sometimes move on to Willow Bank as a step in getting them more prepared for a return to their home school.
- The school is a Foundation school and part of a Special School Educational Trust, together with Nether Hall and West Gate Schools, formed on 1 September 2012.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding because they are known to be eligible for free school meals is variable but generally higher than the national average.

The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils who make outstanding progress during their time in the school by:
 - ensuring teachers use data more effectively to help them plan their lessons to support pupils in their learning
 - continuing to develop systems which are sensitive enough to measure pupils' progress effectively, even for the shortest of stays in the school
 - using the outstanding examples of teaching in the school to support other teachers to improve their understanding of what is needed to move from good to outstanding.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Data show a consistent picture, in all four aspects of the school, of at least good progress. Although the different departments focus on different priorities in terms of pupils' development, they are all able to demonstrate clear improvements. The school's own checks also show that there is no significant difference between the progress made by different groups of pupils. The school works closely with pupils' usual school, as appropriate, to make sure they continue with what they have been learning and do not miss out on the work that their classmates are doing in school. However, the quality of information being received varies according to the school pupils normally attend.
- Pupils enter Oakham House in crisis and are provided with outstanding support to enable them to be prepared to move on to another provision. The school sets clear targets for pupils so that even the smallest steps of academic progress can be recorded and measured. The close links with the clinical provision in Oakham House allow staff to quickly know and understand the needs of the pupils very well. The routes for pupils leaving this provision show that they have become re-engaged in their learning when they leave, including being able to return to their schools, go on to Willow Bank or move on to college.
- In the Leicester Royal Infirmary, the lengths of stay vary enormously depending on medical needs, but staff are quick to assess pupils in the aspects of their learning which have been prioritised. When teachers have found out what pupils are able to do, they are then provided with appropriate work and one-to-one sessions with specialist staff which move their learning on well so that they make good progress. The prioritised areas vary enormously and include pupils with a wide range of special educational needs and those in all key stages including the Early Years Foundation Stage. Due to the nature of the school, expertise can be called upon from other departments to meet the needs of the pupils to a high level.
- In Willow Bank, a wider range of subjects is offered by specialist teachers for longer periods. There are systems in place to check the progress made by pupils. In addition, there is a wide range of qualifications that the school works towards, depending on an individual pupil's needs and what is being studied in their home school. Although year groups are small, pupils achieve increasing numbers of qualifications year on year as well as there being an increasing trend of average points score each year. Additionally, the low number of pupils who do not go on to education, employment or training when they leave the school shows that they are successfully re-engaged.
- Pupils make good progress in their communication skills and in reading, writing and numeracy during their time in the school, in all departments. Individually tailored support helps pupils to increase their confidence as communicators. Reading is given high priority throughout the school. Pupils enjoy reading and are able to make good use of the sounds that words and letters make (phonics) to read words that they do not know.
- The school spends its pupil premium funding on teaching assistants who closely monitor the progress made by this group of pupils and provide bespoke programmes and support as required by individuals. The school closely checks the effectiveness of this support, and data show that there is no difference in the progress made by pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the other pupils in the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The teaching across all three sites and in the outreach service is at least good and some of it is outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants understand that they have a short time to find out pupils' levels and needs and they respond well to this. This means that they are able to show progress from the very start of their contact with the pupils. They are also very sensitive to pupils' medical needs and plan teaching sessions accordingly.
- Pupils' work shows that good teaching leads to good learning in individual sessions in all three departments and this translates to at least good progress over longer periods of time where appropriate. Children who attend the Leicester Royal Infirmary, who are in the Early Years Foundation Stage, also make good progress as teaching in that stage is good. Staff are fully aware of the requirements for this age group and have adapted assessments to show small steps in children's development.
- During lessons, staff check how much learning is going on and they use this information to plan the next steps for the pupils. Although the school has strengthened and is refining its data systems', teachers do not all use this information fully in their planning. However, the school is currently training staff so that they can use data more effectively to help them plan their lessons.
- In the best teaching, the level of individualised work is high and outstanding work was seen in the one-to-one working between staff and pupils. This ensures that all expected learning is matched extremely well to pupils' needs and abilities. Pupils are continually challenged and where support is needed, it is provided very well; where independence is required, pupils are encouraged to work on their own.
- Although some pupils in Willow Bank and Oakham House are initially unable to join in class groups due to their needs, they soon become actively engaged in their learning because teachers make the lessons relevant, accessible and enjoyable. High levels of trust are rapidly established between staff and pupils, which means that pupils feel comfortable about returning to social situations in a very short time.
- Teaching assistants play an extremely valuable and active part in supporting learning by working with individual pupils or groups and assessing pupils' work to help the teachers with their planning. Teaching assistants are expected to assess and plan their teaching sessions, so that they also contribute significantly to the good and outstanding progress pupils make.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- During their time in the school, pupils quickly come to trust the support they are given and the staff who are giving it. This allows them to re-integrate in to formal teaching situations quicker than might be expected otherwise. They enjoy coming to school and many can clearly explain how the school has helped them to overcome anxieties and other issues, and has enabled them to start building feelings of self-confidence and worth.
- Although some pupils have significant health issues which can impact on their day-to-day behaviours, they rapidly learn how to manage these due to the multi-agency approach which surrounds them in the school. The school measures emotional well-being on a 10-point scale, which is monitored on a lesson-by-lesson basis. The checking of this by leaders shows that pupils make significant progress in this aspect of their development. The progress made according to this scale closely matches pupils' readiness to move on to the next stage of their lives.
- The school has developed a range of links with other schools and organisations which has

allowed it to start to introduce more ways of supporting pupils' well-being. An example of this is the mind, body and spirit project in partnership with the local university and a local museum. However, it is early days to yet see the impact of this work on the well-being of pupils.

- Staff responses to the questionnaire show that they overwhelmingly enjoy working in the school. On all three sites, they go about their work in an extremely positive way, modelling positive and upbeat behaviour. This requires them to have strong support from colleagues and an impressive dedication to the pupils, due to the challenges that they face. Their mood is picked up by pupils who appreciate the respect that they are shown and this helps them to view the school as a family rather than a school. This means that pupils who have been in the school for a while develop a strong loyalty and a clear enjoyment of being in school.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident in all aspects of the school's work and is a significant reason why pupils make marked progress in their personal development. During their time in the school, pupils increasingly understand the difference between right and wrong, what types of behaviour are acceptable, and learn to manage their behaviour in different situations. They also have their self-esteem and confidence built up by the caring aspect of the school's work, so that they are often able to return to more challenging social situations.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying in school and that they have never seen any racism or other prejudice-based bullying such as homophobia in the school. This agrees with the school's records over a sustained period of time.

The leadership and management are good

- Despite the difficulties in managing a school such as this, the school is led with impressive enthusiasm and energy by the senior leaders. The three departments and the outreach service have very different functions and are geographically very separate. Nevertheless, there is enough movement of staff between departments to make sure that this is a joined-up school and that staff skills are used well across the four aspects to ensure good impact.
- Leaders are basing plans for improvement on what has been proven to work through research. The many links forged with other hospital schools, universities and other schools through the trust all have a very clear place in planned improvements to the school. Leaders know the school very well and areas for improvement are rapidly identified and successfully acted upon.
- The school is developing further its systems for checking pupils' progress, including that of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium. There are already improvements evident which show that they are more closely checking the progress made by pupils who are in the school for the shortest of times. New target setting systems for pupils are in their very early days, but already pupils appreciate them as they can clearly see any small steps of progress that they make. However, the school is planning to refine the data systems even further so that the staff in the Leicester Royal Infirmary are able to record the small steps of progress by children who are in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The good and outstanding teaching evident in the school is a reflection of the close checks on the quality of teaching by leaders. They are aware of where teaching needs to improve and already have systems in place to share the best teaching across the staff. Joint observations with leaders during the inspection showed that they have a correct view of the quality of teaching. The school's records show how improvements are targeted for individual teachers so that their pupils can learn more in their lessons.
- The work of all teachers, including the headteacher, is checked closely through systems for

managing their performance. These have been revised so that they closely link to the National Teachers' Standards. There are also systems in place for teaching assistants, to check the impact of their work on raising standards. Targets set for all staff, which are used to improve their performance and to decide whether they should receive a pay rise, are increasingly linked to pupils' progress, although these systems are in their infancy.

- The school's strong range of subjects and topics meets the needs of all pupils in the school, and is regularly reviewed to ensure that it continues to do so. It is increasing in its effectiveness as links are made with other providers if the need arises for courses which can be delivered elsewhere. Because of this, pupils are extremely well prepared when they move on to the next stage of their lives and many have made impressive progress compared with the levels they were working at when they entered the school. They are well prepared for transition and all pupils are supported well through this period of turbulence for them and their families. This is reflected in the low number of students who do not go on to further education, employment or training when they leave the school.
- The school values the support it receives from the local authority education improvement adviser. He knows the school well and provides appropriate support. He regularly looks at the school's analysis of its performance to ensure that it is accurate. The school is also involved in several professional networks across the city so that it can link with other schools to seek out strong practice from which to learn.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body holds leaders to account well through robust and insightful questioning in full governing body and committee meetings as well as through regular visits to the school's three departments. It knows the school very well and clearly understands what the school needs to do to continue to improve. The governing body takes clear pride in its association with the school. It is provided with valuable information, including data, about the performance of the school. Governors are regular visitors to the school and are well known by staff and pupils. The governing body reviews policies regularly and also plays an active part in developing and evaluating the effectiveness of the school improvement plan. This has been a significant factor in ensuring that the school continues to improve and to seek new ways of working, based on research and partnerships across different disciplines involved with mental and physical health. Governors know very well about the performance of staff and pupils. They oversee the work of staff, including the headteacher, and are closely involved in making decisions about salary progression and promotion. Procedures for salary progression are being revised so that they are increasingly based on criteria to ensure that only those who are performing to the highest of expectations can progress. Governors ensure that requirements for safeguarding are fully met.

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	120363
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	403433

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	2–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Suzanne Storer
Headteacher	George Sfougaras
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2008
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