

Manchester Hospital Schools and Home Teaching Service

3rd Floor, Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, Manchester, M13 9WL

Inspection dates 1–2 May 2013

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.

- Central to the success of the school is that leaders, managers, governors and staff never forget that it is their job to educate students to the highest possible standard. They work exceptionally well in strong partnerships with medical and mental health professionals.
- The school keeps improving in every respect. Leaders, managers and governors have clearly demonstrated the ability to keep making improvements.
- Students make outstanding progress from very varied starting points. Many, without the support of the school would not access formal education. Nearly all students attending the school for longer periods in Key Stage 4 gain good GCSE passes.
- Teaching is never less than consistently good and much of it is outstanding. At the heart of this strong teaching is the teachers' sensitivity to be able to separate the educational needs of each student from their health issues and to adapt their teaching quickly and effectively in the face of changing needs. As a result, students' achievement is outstanding.
- The students are a delight. Many face huge personal issues but fight hard to overcome them and maintain a sense of optimism. Behaviour is nearly always excellent.
- Nearly all students show outstanding attitudes to learning. They are attentive and work hard. These factors contribute strongly to the excellent progress they make.
- There are few students of sixth-form age and most are catching up on Year 11 courses that they have missed out on because of ill health. These students are achieving just as well as all others. The extra year is helping them to leave school with good qualifications.
- The headteacher is inspirational. She has established a particularly effective leadership team. There has been a relentlessly successful drive to improve teaching either by improving, or removing, weaker teachers. There is a highly effective programme of professional development for all staff.
- The excellent governing body includes an exceptionally good range of members with considerable expertise across the range of settings in which the school operates.
- Procedures to check up on and improve the school's performance are thorough. Inspectors agree that teaching is outstanding but that it is wise for leaders to establish a more regular moderation of the quality of teaching, ideally taking views of professionals beyond the school into greater account so that minor weaknesses in teaching are not missed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons. Two of these were joint observations with members of the school’s senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and a quality assurance consultant employed by the school. Frequent meetings were also held with the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors talked to many students, members of staff and also to medical and support staff in the hospitals.
- Inspectors took note of responses to a parental questionnaire circulated by the school last term. There were seven responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online survey.
- Inspectors took note of the views of staff as expressed in a voluntary questionnaire circulated among them.
- Inspectors observed the school at work, looked at progress data, performance management information and documentation relating to the safeguarding and protection of students.

Inspection team

Alastair Younger, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Frank Carruthers	Additional Inspector
Pauline Pitman	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school operates on three main sites and has responsibility for the local authority's home teaching service. Numbers of students fluctuate widely on a daily basis. Last year, nearly 2000 different students were supported at different times. The school is nominally funded for the equivalent of 150 full-time students.
- There are similar numbers of boys and girls. Proportions of students with special educational needs and with statements of special educational needs are about the same as in mainstream schools nationally. The same is the case with students known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding. The pupil premium funding is additional government funding provided for children in local authority care, those from armed service families, and those known to be eligible for free school meals. The ethnic makeup of the school reflects that of the community. Most students remain on the rolls of their mainstream schools while being educated in the hospital school.
- The constituent parts of the school are
 - Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, where teaching takes place in classrooms and on the hospital ward; students here are frequently referred from other hospitals, sometimes local but also nationally and occasionally internationally. Typically, students are suffering from burns, cancer, kidney failure and head injuries.
 - Galaxy House, a psychiatric unit on the site of the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital; this is for students who have significant mental health issues including psychosis, eating disorders and self-harming tendencies. Some of these students are detained under the Mental Health Act.
 - Wythenshawe Hospital, usually short-stay placements but also recurrent admissions, for example for students with cystic fibrosis. Students are taught either at the bedside or in the classroom.
 - Leo Kelly Centre, a teaching centre for up to 60 students with medical and mental health conditions which prevent them from attending their mainstream schools. The centre also makes provision for pregnant school girls and teenage mothers.
 - The home teaching service, for students unable to attend mainstream school or the Leo Kelly Centre.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by establishing a more regular moderation of the quality of teaching, ideally taking views of professionals beyond the school into greater account, so that minor weaknesses in teaching are not missed.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- All groups of students, in ways that are very specific to each of them, achieve exceptionally well, making rapid progress from their very varied starting points. Students often join the school with levels of attainment that are below average because many of them have had an education that has been significantly interrupted by frequent bouts of illness and time out of school. Some students have life-limiting conditions which contribute to a slowing of learning. Other students may be studying A-Levels in school but needing hospitalisation as a result of accidents.
- Students in the hospitals make rapid progress because they are taught particularly well. Staff are very skilled at finding out quickly what the students would be learning in their mainstream schools if they were not in hospital. Staff work closely with medics to decide on what type of teaching and location would best suit students' needs. Sometimes this is at the bedside, sometimes in the hospital classrooms. In either case, it is highly effective.
- In the Leo Kelly Centre, teachers plan very carefully to meet the needs of longer-stay students. Progress here is particularly rapid. Teachers fully understand students' ups and downs, and their sometimes fragile mental states. This provision is exceptionally good. While remaining caring and compassionate, staff never allow students' mental and medical conditions to be used as a reason for them not to concentrate, work hard and behave well. Many students attending the Leo Kelly Centre benefit from concerted high-quality teaching and leave having gained good passes in GCSE examinations. Last year a few students were entered a year early for GCSE mathematics but the school decided to discontinue this approach this year because it saw no significant benefit to students in doing so.
- Students in Home Teaching and in Galaxy House have frequently shown that they are unable to cope with any but the most sheltered, learning environment and a lot of adult support. For many of these students, the most important indicator of their progress is their success in returning to classrooms, usually in the Leo Kelly Centre. The school has a very good record of success in increasing these students' access to full-time education.
- The curriculum is firmly focussed on raising students' standards in numeracy, literacy, science and information and communication technology (ICT). When time limits students' access to the curriculum, for example due to their medical needs, there is an increased emphasis on developing skills in English and mathematics. As a result, students' achievement in both is particularly good.
- The school keeps a very careful check on the progress of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium. These students tend to gain lower qualifications than those of other students, although their starting points are lower. Their achievement is equal to that of all others, demonstrating the school's effectiveness in promoting equal opportunities for all of its students.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is consistently good in all settings and for all groups of students. Much of the teaching is outstanding. All teaching is characterised by excellent planning, based on whatever is known about the prior attainment of students.
- Quickly finding work that precisely meets the needs and abilities of students defines the expertise of teachers in this school. Sometimes, on the wards, very little is known about recently admitted students but teachers are adept at doing quick assessments for themselves. Most importantly, teachers rapidly adapt work within lessons the moment they realise that it may be too hard or too easy for certain individuals.
- Teachers share a very wide range of subject knowledge and exceptionally effective leadership and management of teaching and learning ensures that it is used to particularly good effect across the whole school. All teachers teach in all of the settings whenever their expertise is needed. This strongly promotes equality of opportunity for all students.

- Teachers make learning very relevant and highly enjoyable. In subjects such as mathematics and science, there is a particularly good focus on investigation. In all subjects, there are frequent references to real-life situations, especially as they relate to students' personal lives.
- Excellent use is made of highly skilled teaching assistants. They have the confidence and ability to contribute when they deem it suitable but also have the skill of understanding when to step back to allow students to work with greater independence and to take more responsibility for their own learning.
- Teachers promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. Most importantly, some very insecure students are helped to feel much better about themselves and to realise what they have to offer to the community. Students show great sensitivity towards each other and respect the fact that each of them goes through moments of difficulty and doubt. The strong promotion of personal skills throughout the school is a major factor in setting students up for success in later life.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The students are charming. They work hard, concentrate well in lessons and their behaviour is almost always exemplary. Nearly all have issues that they could use as a reason for not doing any of the above, but excuses are very rare. Many students, although shy and a bit anxious, are happy to talk sensibly and politely to visitors and to share their experiences.
- Most students happily co-operate with each other to solve problems and to support each other when things are not going right. This mutual support is an area where excellent progress is seen in those individuals who have sometimes spent several years becoming increasingly isolated and uncommunicative.
- Attendance is hugely variable. Most students attend whenever they can. The school has a good record of increasing certain individuals' access to full-time education and thus improving their attendance.
- Students are given very effective help to keep themselves safe without increasing their levels of anxiety about perceived threats. Older students at Leo Kelly, for instance, are encouraged to walk down the road to the shop at break and lunchtimes, but only with their parents' permission and only ever in a group. To be able to do this for some is a minor triumph. In partnership with medics on the wards, students are given very good advice about managing their, often complicated, health regimes.
- There is no evidence of bullying or harassment in any form on any of the sites. Staff and students confirm this and parents agree. School records show that behaviour is every bit as good, day in and day out as was observed during the inspection.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Excellent teamwork under the inspirational leadership of the exceptional headteacher underpins the effectiveness of this highly successful school.
- Leaders, managers and governors work with a wonderful singularity of vision to make students' lives better. Great pride is taken in involving all parties, including students, parents, all staff and the myriad of associated healthcare workers and other professionals in decisions that relentlessly move the school forward.
- Most important is the underlying tenet, strongly promoted by leaders, managers and governors that this is first and foremost a school and the people employed in it are there to educate its students. By understanding this, teachers focus strongly on teaching students particularly well while not getting in the way of other professionals by encroaching on their areas of expertise.
- Any staff needing extra support are given it through a wide range of high-quality training and development opportunities and a supportive system of appraisal and performance management. Any performance that does not meet the very high expectations of leaders and managers is dealt with quickly and effectively. Leaders and managers have developed an exceptionally good

track record of appointing new, inspirational teachers. Staff say they are very proud to work in this school.

- All aspects of the school's work are robustly monitored and evaluated. As a result, the school is in the position of being able to fine tune already highly effective systems rather than having to make major radical changes. This brings security to staff, which in turn helps to reduce anxiety among students who find radical change difficult to cope with. Inspectors agree with senior staff that teaching is outstanding overall but found some records of observations by senior staff to be slightly overgenerous. There remains scope to ensure that there is even more regular moderation of the quality of teaching, such as by taking views of professionals beyond the school into greater account, so that even more teaching is outstanding.
- There is a strong focus on promoting the basic skills of numeracy and literacy. An increasing range of enrichment activities is being introduced, including opportunities for some students to demonstrate their growing independence and maturity by staying away from home on residential trips.
- The local authority recognises the excellent quality of this school. When asked to do so it offers effective support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has been integral to the process of maintaining a constant drive for improvement since the last inspection. It holds a very well-balanced view of the school's effectiveness because its members are drawn from across the whole range of stakeholders the school works with. There is good representation, for instance, of parents, medical workers and mental health practitioners. Governors bring a very good balance of support and challenge without getting too involved in the day-to-day running of the school. Governors have a good understanding of where teaching is strongest. Staff are rewarded by progression through pay scales only after extensive checking as to whether their performance warrants it. Governors look at how pupil premium funds are allocated, the effectiveness of their use and what they need to contribute out of the school's budget to supplement them. Governors make sure that all safeguarding requirements are 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	105602
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	400788

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	150
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Pickering
Headteacher	Sandra Hibbert
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2009
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