

The Huntercombe Hospital School

Cotswold Spa

Station Road, Broadway, Worcestershire WR12 7DE

Inspection dates	12–14 April 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Strong and purposeful links between the hospital and school focus decisively on pupils' recovery, continuing education and future well-being.
- The school's head of education is leading and managing its development well. She has established a supportive and purposeful culture for learning where pupils can succeed.
- Pupils make good progress during their time in the school. They make up lost ground resulting from absences prior to admission and keep up to date with their course work.
- Teaching and learning are good. Staff maintain regular contact with pupils' home schools and provide effective tuition, enabling them to return to mainstream education on discharge.
- The most-able pupils are well supported in achieving their challenging targets. Pupils who have gaps in their learning are helped to catch up so that they make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They have a mature respect, consideration and tolerance for others. Attendance at the school is high.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are outstanding. They value highly the school's calm and business-like routines, and make excellent gains in their emotional health, self-confidence and self-esteem from their starting points.
- Parents are very supportive of the school's work, particularly the high quality of the social, emotional and learning support their children receive.
- The sixth form provision is good. Learners benefit from individual support and guidance in pursuing their examination courses. As a result, they make good progress and achieve well.
- Arrangements for the performance management of teachers are effective, and include the regular monitoring and development of teaching and learning.
- The proprietor monitors the work of the school effectively and ensures that all the requirements of the independent school standards are met.
- The school and hospital management team work in tandem to ensure that safeguarding is robust.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- At times, pupils' progress is uneven because they are at different stages in their perception and understanding of what they need to do next.
- When reflecting on their work and responding to teachers' advice, pupils tend to focus on the task completed rather than their gains in learning.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to work closely with hospital staff to support and sustain pupils' successful learning and good progress by ensuring that:
 - teaching staff are fully familiar with pupils' current and preferred styles of learning
 - pupils' next steps in learning are broken down into very small steps, where necessary
 - pupils identify and appreciate what they have achieved in learning as they reflect and respond to their work
 - pupils' confidence and resilience in learning increase as rapidly as possible.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The head of education has a clear and effective vision for the development of the school, based on an accurate evaluation of its strengths and areas to be improved. She shares and promotes this well with teaching staff, and has a strong working relationship with the medical team. All the school's priorities reflect the focus on helping pupils to recover and achieve well.
- The head of education has successfully overseen the expansion of specialist subject teaching and the development of comprehensive systems to track and record pupils' progress. Although there is still much work in progress, the school can rightly point to the effective impact of planned developments and the achievement of its aims.
- All the requirements of the independent school standards are met, and there are effective systems to ensure that policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated. The hospital has a generic website covering its medical provision but this does not contain any information about the school. There is no separate website for the school; parents and prospective parents are provided with all the required information in printed format. This meets requirements.
- The head of education and staff have high expectations of pupils' progress and engagement in learning. Through their good relationships with the medical team and pupils, staff promote successfully a culture of respect and tolerance where diversity and fundamental British values are celebrated and advanced. Staff ensure that pupils are able to discuss, challenge and openly debate differing views and opinions.
- The appointment of experienced subject specialists has strengthened the teaching team and raised the quality of the school's provision. Teaching staff take responsibility for promoting pupils' learning in their subject areas, and work well together to share common approaches to teaching and learning. The most-able pupils are being challenged effectively to both succeed and manage their quest for the highest standards.
- Effective performance management procedures are in place and staff benefit from a good range of training and development opportunities. This includes the involvement of the medical team in raising teachers' awareness and understanding of how pupils learn and respond when unwell.
- Working closely with home schools, staff support pupils' continued study effectively across the curriculum. Staff adapt and modify schemes and teaching plans effectively to build successfully on pupils' prior learning and ensure their good progress. They reflect well on what works and what could be improved, and adjust their future plans accordingly. Pupils have access to all the required areas of learning and personal, social, health and economic education. Staff ensure that pupils continue to receive careers education and advice, and ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education or training.
- Good use of learning resources and specialist knowledge ensures that all pupils re-engage successfully with education, and make good progress towards their academic targets. The excellent provision and outcomes for pupils' personal development and welfare reflect the school's commitment to equality for all.
- The school room is bright, suitably furnished and welcoming. Other rooms, including the board room, are sometimes used for individual or group work but these are often in demand for meetings. The school has rightly identified the development of a suite of dedicated teaching rooms in its improvement plan.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The proprietor works closely with the head of education and the hospital manager to ensure that all of the independent school standards are met. He challenges and supports the teaching team in good measure, and is a familiar face to pupils.
 - The proprietor undertakes regular monitoring of teaching and learning, and receives timely updates about pupils' progress and outcomes. He shares good practice from other schools with staff and ensures that performance management is used effectively to develop their skills and understanding.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's policies and procedures are robust, reflect the latest statutory guidance and dovetail well with those operated by the hospital. School and hospital leaders understand each other's responsibilities and procedures, and ensure that information is securely held and shared. All the required checks on teachers are made and recorded in line with requirements.
- All teachers attend regular training in safeguarding and child protection matters. In addition, they attend additional training in first aid and a range of other topics appropriate to the setting. Risk assessments are thorough and well implemented. Staff maintain regular contact with parents and liaise closely with medical staff throughout the school day.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers are highly effective in promoting a calm and business-like atmosphere where pupils rapidly settle back into learning routines. Their excellent working relationships with pupils are based on a combination of high expectations and positive encouragement; pupils trust their teachers and value the help they receive in completing their course work successfully.
- Most pupils are part-way through examination courses when they join the school. Teachers work closely with pupils' home schools to ensure that they are keeping abreast of their peers. This enables pupils to return to mainstream education, where appropriate, when discharged from hospital. Pupils are reassured by this ongoing communication; they appreciate the feedback they receive from their home school teachers on their work.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and are adept at spotting where pupils may have gaps in their learning or do not fully understand a previously studied topic. They use questioning well to tease out what pupils know and build on this so that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are secure. As a result, pupils develop the capacity to learn from, rather than become overly worried by, their mistakes.
- Learning resources are of good quality and quantity, and staff obtain promptly any specialist resources that a pupil may require for their particular course. Where pupils need to undertake laboratory work in science, arrangements are made with the home school for this aspect of the course programme to be undertaken on pupils' return to mainstream learning.
- The most-able pupils are well challenged. Teachers check that the work pupils have been set is manageable and support them in completing it. This often provides opportunities for teachers to suggest ways in which pupils can deepen their understanding and transfer skills from one subject to another. For example, the need for pupils to be aware of both metric and imperial measures was demonstrated by a teacher's reference to engineering practice in the gas and water industries.
- Pupils who have gaps in their learning are well supported, particularly in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers plan interesting activities, such as designing an information leaflet, to hook pupils' interest and sustain them in their improved application of key skills.
- Pupils typically take pride in the presentation and completion of their work. As their condition improves, pupils are keen to find out more, exchange ideas with others and deepen their understanding. Teachers encourage pupils to help each other and discuss topical issues in the news, increasingly involving those who may be reticent about joining in and sharing their ideas and opinions. These activities provide pupils with valuable opportunities to connect with the world outside the hospital and extend their experience of other cultures and beliefs.
- Pupils often continue their work out of school hours but staff monitor this carefully to ensure that pupils maintain an appropriate balance with time for rest and relaxation. In this way, they encourage pupils to establish ways of working that they can carry through to the next stage of their education.
- Engaging in education is a key element of each pupil's treatment plan and staff work very closely with medical teams to support pupils' learning in the school. In most instances, pupils join in lessons as soon as they arrive, even though their treatment is only just beginning. At times, their perception of what they are learning, together with their capacity to think through problems and to reason, is impaired by their medical condition. Pupils' health often continues to deteriorate after they are admitted because their treatment has not started to have an impact.
- School leaders are developing and implementing a comprehensive system to track and record pupils' progress in learning. The information from this helps to shape the detailed monthly reports provided to parents and home schools. Guidance from medical staff helps teachers to understand how pupils' medical conditions may affect their learning and to respond appropriately. For example, teachers track how often pupils are distracted from their work, engage in discussion with others and pose questions without prompting. Pupils contribute to their assessment records at the end of each lesson but this tends to reflect the tasks they have completed rather than reflecting the gains they have made in their learning.
- Pupils receive very helpful written guidance from their teachers on how they can improve their work. Pupils' written responses indicate that they value and act on these comments. Teachers also provide pupils with ongoing and supportive oral feedback so that they make good progress in their learning. However, in their responses to a survey on leaving the school, some pupils identify that at different points in their treatment cycle they need to learn in different ways. One consequence is that they require more frequent guidance to be certain of their next steps in learning. Leaders recognise that this is an area to develop further in conjunction with pupils and medical staff.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

are outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- School staff work very closely with the medical team to enable pupils to attend lessons on their admission to the hospital. When they join the school, pupils are typically fraught, and physically and emotionally fragile; they lack confidence and resilience. High levels of care ensure that pupils feel safe. As they respond to their medical treatment and the support they receive, pupils make excellent progress in re-engaging with learning and in rebuilding their confidence, self-esteem and capacity to manage their lives.
- Although many experience ups and downs in their journey of recovery, as they near the time when they are fit to return home and join mainstream education or training pupils are rightly proud of the progress they have made. Crucially, pupils say that they have been greatly helped by staff to better cope with the demands of academic study, and to develop ways of managing their expectations and perceptions of themselves. These are providing pupils with potentially life-changing strategies for success in their next stage of education, employment or training and their adult lives.
- The school's personal, social, health and economic education programme provides pupils with an age-appropriate understanding of keeping fit and healthy. Topics include healthy relationships, emotional and mental well-being and substance abuse. The programme also includes raising pupils' understanding of extremism and exploitation. Pupils have a good understanding of e-safety and the potential dangers of social networking sites.
- While pupils are temporarily out of the hubbub of daily life in school and their home communities, staff ensure that they are not divorced from what is going on in the world. This is a strength of the provision. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is systematically promoted well, and pupils are reflective, thoughtful and mature in their understanding of society and their place within it.
- The school liaises closely with home schools to manage pupils' return to mainstream learning. This programme of visits is managed carefully to ensure that pupils can resume smoothly their participation in and enjoyment of learning. Staff from home schools value greatly the quality and regularity of the contact they have from this school during their pupil's in-patient stay and in the run up to re-integration. The strength of this is demonstrated in the way in which key milestones, such as careers guidance and preparation for the world of work, are supported.
- Pupils are very respectful and understanding of one another. They have a high regard for their teachers, in whom they trust. Pupils support and prompt each other, often with quips of humour that lead to a smile or laughter. They know when to leave someone alone or when a quiet word may make a difference. In this they model the excellent example set by staff.
- Pupils take on board each other's ideas about ways in which work may be improved or how they would react in a specific social situation. They do not always agree with each other's views or opinions, but respect the right to hold and express these, and to agree to differ.
- Parents are very pleased that pupils are attending the school as soon as possible following admission because they appreciate the value this has in restoring a sense of routine and rhythm to their lives. Pupils attend the school regularly and arrive promptly for lessons.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Incidents of poor behaviour or bullying are exceedingly rare. Pupils are confident that, should any occur, staff would deal immediately and effectively with these.
- Staff have established a warm and caring culture where pupils feel valued. They appreciate highly the support and guidance they receive in order to recover and keep up with their learning. Pupils who have withdrawn into themselves make excellent progress in building their self-esteem and confidence in talking and interacting with others.
- Pupils typically present their work in a very neat and organised fashion. They are sometimes hard on themselves but, with the support of staff and the medical team, develop a better sense of proportion and balance in managing their personal drive for high achievement.
- Derogatory or aggressive language are unheard of in the school. There have been no exclusions since the school opened.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- When they join the school, pupils typically do not present an accurate picture of their skills, knowledge and understanding. This is because their medical condition is impairing their ability to learn.
- On entry, staff assess what pupils can do and take account of the information they receive from the home schools. From this they put in place an appropriate programme to support pupils' re-engagement and bring them up to the levels where they can demonstrate their true ability.
- There are typically peaks and troughs in pupils' progress as they proceed through their treatment cycle. From their starting points on entry, pupils make good progress during their time at the school. Nearly all make up the ground they have lost due to illness. As a result, they are equipped to return to mainstream education at or near a comparable level with their peers.
- Across the curriculum, pupils consolidate and secure their skills, knowledge and understanding during their time in the school. The school does not enter pupils for public examinations as this is done by the home school, although pupils will usually take the examination at this school if they are still on roll. Therefore, this school does not have any published results of its own.
- Effective specialist support in English and mathematics has helped pupils to secure higher than predicted grades. Also, pupils have typically met their predicted grades in other subjects, despite their absence due to illness. This is the case for both the most-able pupils and those who have gaps in their learning or had fallen behind.

Sixth form provision

is good

- Learners in the sixth form make good progress. Nearly all join this school part-way through their sixth form studies. Typically, their home school provides course work for them to complete and this is returned to the home school for marking.
- Teaching and learning are good. Staff support learners well in fulfilling their course work requirements. They help learners to respond to the areas identified for improvement in their marked work. Good use of discussions and probing questions by teachers help learners to secure and consolidate their understanding in their chosen subjects. Where learners have not achieved a grade C in English or mathematics, they are prepared to retake examinations in these subjects.
- Learners follow the school's bespoke programme of personal, social, health and economic education which supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. They participate in personal fitness sessions and attend classes in developing independent living skills.
- The sixth form provision is led and managed effectively. Staff maintain close contact with learners' home schools. They work with subject specialists to support learners, not only in their academic studies but also to ensure they are well prepared for the next stage of their education or training. While learners are not able to undertake work experience while they are in hospital, staff ensure that careers education continues. This includes brokering specialist advice and helping them to prepare for university entrance.

School details

Unique reference number	142011
Inspection number	10008631
DfE registration number	885/6043

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Hospital school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	13 to 19 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	10
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	6
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	The Huntercombe Group
Head of education – CAMHS	Nick Rose
Head of education at the school	Jayne Ford
Annual fees (day pupils)	£150 per day
Telephone number	01386 853523
Website	Not applicable
Email address	hhcotswoldspaschool@huntercombe.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is accommodated in the Huntercombe Hospital Cotswold Spa and provides day education for up to 12 in-patients with eating disorders. Typically, they are in the hospital for 16 weeks but this can be longer, depending on the speed of their recovery. The school does not admit other pupils.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British. There are typically more girls than boys on roll. None of the present cohort has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- All pupils of compulsory school age and learners in the sixth form attend the school full time as soon as possible following their admission and throughout their treatment cycle. All pupils are dual registered with their home schools. As their treatment progresses, pupils gradually re-integrate into their home school, as appropriate. On discharge from the hospital, they leave the school.
- The school does not use any alternative providers or run any off-site units. While pupils may sit public examinations at the school while they remain under the hospital's care, they do so under the auspices of their home schools. This school, therefore, has no published results.
- The school aims to 'help pupils engage in their education... allow them to complete their work ... and prepare them for a return to their school'.
- This is the first standard inspection of the school by Ofsted since it was registered with the Department for Education in March 2015.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted at one day's notice and took place over three days, including the preparation day.
- The inspector had discussions with the school's head of education, the proprietor's head of education, teachers and pupils. He also met with the clinical director and held a telephone discussion with a senior leader from one of the home schools.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and talked to them about it. He looked at teachers' planning, the school's records of pupils' outcomes and progress, and samples of course work set and marked by teachers at the school.
- The inspector considered two messages received by email and the views of two parents visiting the school. There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to be considered. The inspector also took account of the school's surveys of parents and pupils following discharge from hospital.
- In order to check the school's continued compliance with the independent school standards, the inspector examined policies, schemes of work and other documents. These included verifying the checks recorded on the school's single register of the suitability of adults to work with children.

Inspection team

Michael Best, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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