

The Ash Villa South Rauceby

Willoughby Road, Greylees, Sleaford, Lincolnshire NG34 8QA

Inspection dates

11–12 July 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The dedicated headteacher has a strong vision and determination for continuous improvement. As a result, self-evaluation is highly accurate and whole-school planning is always centred on improving outcomes for pupils' learning and well-being.
- The senior teacher, governors and highly skilled staff team share the headteacher's determination for each pupil to succeed. They have developed a warm, purposeful learning environment, which motivates pupils to engage in education very quickly after their admission to the in-patient unit.
- Strong, effective partnerships are established with the adjoining in-patient unit. As a result, all staff work seamlessly to promote the well-being of each pupil.
- The pupils make excellent progress from their starting points because learning is tailored to individual pupils' needs, expectations are high and no ceiling is placed on what they can achieve.
- Staff promote strong, effective partnerships with each pupil's base school, enabling coursework to continue wherever possible and preparing pupils for the transition back to school, or to another setting, after their discharge from hospital.
- The pupils are very positive about their learning. They say, 'You forget you are in hospital. It's the best school; the staff really support us.'
- Behaviour is excellent. Students and pupils enjoy learning and are determined to do their best. They work well together and enjoy each other's company during social times.
- Governors are experienced and knowledgeable. They make regular focused visits to the school and hold leaders to account for improvements. They are active in seeking training to develop their skills.
- The school places safeguarding at the heart of its work. Safeguarding arrangements are very thorough. Staff are well aware of procedures to follow and pupils are looked after exceptionally well.
- The pupils experience a wide range of activities embedded in the rich Ash Villa curriculum. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is catered for very well.
- Students aged 16 to 18 make outstanding progress and achieve recognised qualifications. They are exceptionally well prepared for their placement after discharge from the in-patient unit, because school 'go the extra mile' working with other providers, to make sure their transition is as smooth as possible.
- Staff know each pupil well and use the information school holds to plan detailed and individual programmes of work, which are matched precisely to pupils' often-changing needs.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the role of the school in providing training to other educational settings by:
 - utilising staff experience to deliver training on mental health and well-being awareness
 - providing strategies for schools to use, working in partnership with health professionals from the in-patient unit.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher, the senior teacher, governors and the small, but highly skilled, staff team have promoted and ensured continuous improvement at the school. The focus is always on improving outcomes for pupils' learning and well-being. In their quest to achieve their very best, staff and governors leave no stone unturned.
- Leaders make regular checks on the effectiveness of the school's work to ensure that it is of a consistently high quality and continues to improve.
- Together, the leaders have developed a culture in the school which is grounded in their belief that every pupil can succeed. To this end, each pupil's strengths and needs are assessed accurately, so that teachers can implement programmes that meet their individual needs.
- School staff work seamlessly together with health professionals from the in-patient unit to make sure pupils' needs are met. The handover meeting at the beginning of the day enables relevant information to be shared, ensuring that the best programme is put in place for each pupil.
- Regular observations during the day by nursing staff ensure close monitoring, and staff are quick to change actions in response to pupils' well-being. Regularly held multi-disciplinary team meetings and care-plan meetings enable information to be shared and timely plans to be put in place for each pupil.
- Staff are highly reflective and consistently adapt their teaching to meet the needs of individual pupils. The headteacher encourages them to be creative and flexible in their approach. As a result, the pupils experience a wide range of opportunities, which include off-site activities.
- The headteacher makes sure effective checks on performance take place and staff are well trained in all aspects of their roles. A wealth of professional development opportunities is provided within the school and training is tailored for individual members of staff. As a result, teaching is highly effective.
- School staff are highly skilled, especially in their knowledge of mental health and well-being and the potential impact of those on learning. As yet, they are not using these skills to support other educational settings.
- Strong working relationships with other education settings promote the pupils' development and support transition. When pupils are admitted to the hospital, staff make contact with their 'base school' and establish what the pupils' current programmes of work and subjects taught are. Wherever possible, these are continued.
- The school is an examination centre and pupils and students are able to take GCSE and functional skills examinations, in addition to a range of other recognised accreditation.
- The specially devised Ash Villa curriculum adds breadth and depth to learning, and the pupils take part in a wide range of activities which promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare them well for life in modern Britain. For example, recently, pupils have held their own elections, researched and considered the work of inspirational people, and taken part in a range of activities during 'safety

week'.

- Leaders have refined and developed methods of recording and tracking the pupils' achievement. This enables assessment to inform planning accurately and allows the school to track and maximise the pupils' progress over time.
- The school has not received additional funding through the pupil premium or Year 7 catch-up.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school very well. This is because each governor is linked to a specific area of the school's work and governors make regular focused visits to the school to see its work for themselves. Discussion follows at full governing body meetings and, as a result, governors are able to hold leaders to account for improvements in the school.
- Governors share the vision and commitment to facilitate the best possible outcomes for all pupils and students. To this end, they provide support and challenge to leaders, regularly checking on progress and outcomes.
- Governors have checked that they have appropriate skills and experience to provide strategic leadership for the school. They are active in planning training to extend their understanding and respond to new issues. They attend training events, both within the school and externally, to ensure that their knowledge remains up to date.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders maintain clear, detailed records of any concerns raised regarding the safeguarding of the pupils. They work very effectively with colleagues from the in-patient unit, in order to ensure that risks are carefully managed and minimised. As a result, risk assessments are reviewed and evaluated in detail, to support the pupils to take part in a full range of activities whenever possible.
- The pupils are taught and reminded regularly how to keep themselves safe. A group of students told the inspector about staying safe online: 'The computers are restricted to keep us safe and the headteacher monitors our use.'
- The pupils say that they feel safe because staff support them well. Parents also consider that their children are kept safe by the staff team.
- Leaders make sure that all members of staff receive information and training relating to safeguarding. Their comprehensive schedule provides both online and face-to-face training and covers a wide range of topics. Leaders systematically provide regular updates and check on further needs.
- The school's systems relating to the recruitment of staff are very thorough and the single central record is maintained efficiently and checked on regularly by the nominated governor.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- The learning environment is welcoming, inspiring and thoughtfully resourced, motivating the pupils to come into school after their admission to the in-patient unit. Indoor and outdoor spaces are used effectively, so that the pupils can benefit from the whole curriculum.
- The pupils participate in learning well. They take great pride in their school and in the quality and presentation of their work. The pupils are happy to show and to discuss their work and were keen to let the inspector know how supportive staff are.
- Teachers and their assistant know the pupils very well. They are sensitive both to the pupils' learning and their health needs, knowing where to pitch teaching, when to challenge and when to provide further support. The pupils recognise this and say that 'it helps us deal with the stress'.
- Teachers' skilful questioning, together with the carefully paced introduction of new information, enables the pupils to build on their previous learning and gain confidence. Many of the pupils arrive at Ash Villa with gaps in their learning due to missing time in their previous schools because of health problems. They soon respond to their individual programmes of work and the support provided by staff.
- Teachers have a very secure knowledge of the subjects that they teach and use resources to great effect, capturing the pupils' imaginations and developing their confidence and self-belief. For example, the pupils were able to discuss points to consider before going for an interview and, after looking at a range of material, began to write their personal curriculum vitae.
- Teachers plan effectively, with a sharp focus on what each pupil is capable of achieving. They set targets that are challenging, yet realistic, and the pupils work hard to achieve the 'points' which are awarded for the completion of work. They have fun while they learn, for example, during the singing-group session, the pupils, accompanied on guitar by one of the group, enjoyed the songs that they selected and harmonised together.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- School staff work very effectively with health staff from the in-patient unit to promote the pupils' well-being and personal development.
- The pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. They demonstrated during a class discussion a very good understanding of how their education equips them with the attitudes and behaviour needed for a successful college, or job, application and interview. They have realistic aspirations and goals for what they can achieve.
- The pupils know and can explain accurately how to stay healthy and to lead a healthy lifestyle. Those enduring personal health difficulties understand what these mean and what needs to be done about them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- The pupils have very strong, positive relationships with staff, which enable them to conduct themselves well because they feel secure and well understood. The inspector joined a group of staff and pupils, together with Petra, the in-patient unit's therapy dog, on their morning walk. The group engaged in quiet conversation and the pupils showed clearly their enjoyment as they walked in the morning sunshine together.
- The pupils are very polite and welcoming. They were happy to communicate with the inspector and proud to share their work. Without exception, their attitudes to learning are excellent.
- For some pupils who have experienced difficulties in their previous schools, their behaviour and attitudes improve substantially after entry to Ash Villa.
- The pupils' attendance also improves substantially for the vast majority of the pupils who had a record of poor attendance at their previous schools.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- The pupils make outstanding progress over time and from their individual starting points on admission as in-patients. They come into school with a wide range of educational and health needs, but all groups make excellent progress because of the highly adapted and skilfully planned curriculum.
- The vast majority of the pupils who are able to make the transition back to their 'base school' continue in education or training, many successfully completing their accreditation and examinations.
- On the very few occasions when pupils are discharged without a college place, or training to go to, staff work very hard through the transition period to help them secure a placement. For those pupils transferred to another unit due to their health needs, the school works closely with the unit staff to enable a smooth transfer to take place.
- A high proportion of the pupils make more progress than would be expected from their starting points, including in English and mathematics. This is because, once they have settled into school, they feel safe and secure, gain self-confidence and so benefit hugely from the precise and individualised teaching.
- The pupils perform well and achieve, or exceed, the targets that they are set.
- The pupils benefit from the individual feedback that they are given by staff and are keen to take the next steps in their learning. For example, the pupils set themselves high standards and will draft and re-draft their work, until they are completely satisfied with the outcome.
- School staff work very closely with the in-patient unit professionals to ensure that the pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. The pupils have high, but realistic, aspirations and attain relevant qualifications which enable them to move on to their chosen options within their career.

plan.

- The pupils enjoy reading and told the inspector that they especially enjoy the reading group, having just finished their most recent book, 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time'.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- The quality of provision for students aged 16 to 18 is outstanding because the students are provided with accredited courses which challenge them and a curriculum which is highly individualised and suited to their needs.
- Leaders consider each student's strengths and needs before identifying the objectives for their learning programmes.
- Staff work closely with the professionals from the in-patient unit to take into account the impact of a student's health difficulties on their ability to make educational progress. This is a very well-managed process, enabling students to gain their confidence and engage in learning quickly after their admission.
- Students make excellent progress and receive appropriate accredited qualifications, dependent on their interests and abilities. For example, most students work on individual scrapbooks during the time that they spend at Ash Villa and some have gained recognised accreditation through their research and interest in particular art activities.
- Some students take GCSEs and work towards A levels, and many make excellent progress in life skills and in developing their independence skills.
- All students produce work of high quality, which is very well presented. They are keen to share their achievements, have high aspirations and do not settle for second best.
- Students conduct themselves very well because they are provided with an interesting curriculum which promotes very strong progress. The consistent approach by, and high expectations of, staff result in a calm and orderly atmosphere. Students feel safe and say staff provide them with very good support.
- Students are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education. Students and parents are provided with good careers advice and guidance and supported to make appropriate choices. Staff support students through the transition period upon discharge from the in-patient unit and, therefore, from the school.
- Many students improve their attendance greatly, when compared to their previous education settings.

School details

Unique reference number	120747
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10031117

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	12 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of students in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	6
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Lawlor
Headteacher	Leigh Bentley
Telephone number	01529 488066
Website	www.ashvilla.lincs.sch.uk
Email address	info@ashvilla.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 September 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Ash Villa is a Lincolnshire County Council Special Hospital School for pupils and students who are in-patients on the Ash Villa Hospital Unit. The in-patient unit provides support for young people aged 12 to 18 who are experiencing acute or complex mental health difficulties.
- Most pupils remain on the register of their mainstream schools.
- The length of time that the pupils stay at the school varies considerably, ranging from a few days to a number of terms.

- Some pupils have spent long periods of time out of education prior to their admission to hospital.
- Since the last inspection, the school has extended its age range and now provides education for pupils and students aged 12 up to their 18th birthday.
- School provision includes three spacious classrooms, a well-equipped fitness gym, kitchen area for food technology, and a garden area developed by the pupils. The school field is shared with the hospital and provides further space for physical education and outdoor activities.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector accompanied the pupils on their morning walk and talked with students individually. She met with a group of pupils and spoke with a representative of the student council.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including that relating to safeguarding, the pupils' outcomes, the school's self-evaluation and the development plan. The inspector reviewed school policies, the pupils' incident and behaviour records, and records of the checks made on the quality of teaching and learning.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning in lessons and scrutinised work and the pupils' records.
- Meetings were held with the school staff, governors and a number of professionals from the in-patient unit. The inspector held telephone conversations with two representatives from the local authority, a senior leader from a partner school and two parents.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Parent View, the pupils' inspection questionnaire, and eight responses to the staff survey, along with the school's evaluations from its recent surveys.

Inspection team

Lynda Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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