

Phoenix School of Therapeutic Education

83 East Bank Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S2 3PX

Inspection dates

4–6 July 2017

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has energised staff in embracing the school's vision and his high expectations. As a result, pupils thrive in their personal, social and emotional development. They achieve well in their learning and return to their community schools, places of learning or specialist provision successfully.
- Equality of opportunity for all pupils lies at the heart of the school's work. The small number of post-16 students, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve equally well from their different starting points. Achievement in science is often strong.
- Teachers plan learning carefully, taking account of pupils' interests. There is strong partnership working between teaching and therapy staff. Consequently, everyone is working seamlessly to meet pupils' complex needs and put them on a positive path to their futures.
- Pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science is tracked and reviewed in detail. More work is needed to ensure that assessment in other subjects is equally robust and to identify the proportions of pupils who meet or exceed the school's expectations.
- The broad curriculum is personalised to pupils' needs and to ensure that they are safe and know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils gain a very good understanding of values that are key to taking a part in British society. They develop qualities of respect and trust and they value the differences in others. Pupils' behaviour, confidence and self-esteem improve significantly during their time at Phoenix.
- Many pupils have suffered significant disruption to their education as a result of their social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Attendance rates rise significantly at Phoenix because of the expert way staff support pupils to overcome their barriers to learning.
- The local board of governors have a good understanding of the school's work. They receive information about pupils' attendance and overall rates of progress but not pupils' different rates of progress.
- The headteacher, proprietor and the national board ensure that all of the independent school standards are met. Systems to enable the national board to check the full impact of the school's work on pupils' behaviour, progress and learning have yet to be developed fully.

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?

- Improve further the effectiveness of the governance arrangements of the school by:
 - ensuring reports to the national and local boards include information that enables them to evaluate the full impact of the school's work. This includes information on the progress and achievements of pupils and those who stay for only short periods.

- Improve the proportion of outstanding teaching further by:
 - improving the assessment systems to show more clearly the progress in pupils' behaviour and the proportions of pupils exceeding their learning targets across a wider range of subjects so that pupils can be moved on in their learning even more quickly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Although the school has been in operation for less than a year, the headteacher has created an atmosphere of high expectations, care, tolerance and respect. The core values of the school and the Cygnet group underpin all aspects of the school's work. These values are helpfulness, responsibility, respectfulness, honesty and empathy. Pupils and staff share these values because many were involved in developing them. The values are a fundamental part of the school's approach to ensuring equality of opportunity. They also support pupils' strong personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and ensure an atmosphere of respect, trust and care.
- The school has been developed to provide integrated therapeutic support and education. Close collaboration between therapy and school staff ensure that everyone is working seamlessly to meet pupils' complex needs and put them on a positive path to their futures. Pupils become increasingly confident and assured learners during their time at Phoenix.
- The headteacher appreciates the challenge and support from Cygnet's senior leader for special educational needs. She is supporting the headteacher in securing improvement in all aspects of the school's work. Together, they have an accurate understanding of the impact of the school's work because they monitor the quality of teaching, check pupils' progress in books and observe learning in lessons regularly. Clear and succinct action plans are addressing any areas that need to improve.
- Staff welcome the high expectations and challenge that leaders have brought. Teachers are provided with effective feedback on how to improve their teaching. They value the range of good quality training that successfully builds their teaching skills. Consequently, the quality of teaching is good. Training also helps staff to develop the skills to understand, and then support, pupils' varied and complex social, emotional and mental health needs.
- There are no middle leaders due to the small size of the school. However, staff appreciate the way that they are allowed to lead their subject areas and are increasingly held to account for their specialisms and their pupils' progress through the school's performance management arrangements.
- The school does not receive the government's pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils. However, because of the focus on meeting individual needs, the progress these pupils make is similar to that of other pupils.
- The school receives a very small amount of additional funding for the 40% of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Cygnet's national leader for special educational needs provides detailed information about each pupil's aptitudes and skills, their barriers to learning and preferred learning styles. This information is provided to staff to ensure that pupils' needs are being met in class. The leader carries out observations of learning and reviews of pupils' work to check that actions are making a positive difference or are changed and adapted to meet pupils' needs further. As a result, the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that of other pupils in the school and the limited resource is well spent.

- The curriculum is broadly based and includes English and mathematics. Subjects are chosen specifically to enable pupils to continue with courses they were taking at their community schools and also to coax them back into learning. There is a strong focus on enabling pupils to study the GCSE qualifications they may have been taking before their admission into hospital and to take other accreditations. This is particularly helpful for the many pupils who have missed significant periods of education due to their illness. Pupils gain accreditations that support their transition back to school, college or employment. They speak proudly of the qualifications they achieve.
- Extra-curricular activities enrich the curriculum successfully. These include opportunities to visit art galleries, museums, the countryside and universities. Pupils benefited immensely from a visit to Sheffield university to attend a talk entitled 'a journey to the centre of the atom'. Work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is woven seamlessly across the curriculum. Pupils gain a good understanding of faiths, cultures and traditions different to their own and are well informed about the principles of democracy and the rule of law.
- The excellent, trusting relationships built between staff and pupils contribute to pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes in lessons, as well as to their physical, emotional, mental and personal well-being and safety.
- Pupils are prepared well to move back to their local school or college communities and to life as active citizens in modern Britain. High quality careers advice and guidance alongside the development of life skills support their successful transitions out of hospital, preparing them well for their next steps. Pupils have a good understanding of the values of tolerance and respect for others and for differing views to their own. This is because all staff promote a climate of fairness, embracing diversity and respecting differences. Pupils report that they are treated as individuals and that bullying 'just does not take place'.
- Leaders have developed a detailed system for assessing regularly pupils' achievements in English, mathematics and science alongside their attendance and social, emotional and mental health. Teachers track whether pupils are partially, fully meeting or exceeding their learning targets. Reports that result from the assessments do not yet discriminate between these different criteria, identifying only the proportions making progress. This means that, currently, it is hard for leaders to know from the data the proportion of pupils who are exceeding their individual targets.
- The school's tracking information is used well to provide local authorities who fund education placements at the hospital, as well as parents, with detailed, regular and informative reports. These reports include information about pupils' learning, progress, attendance and progress in their personal development and mental health. Local authorities that have carried out a review of the school's work report positively on the difference that the school has made to the pupils in their care over the last year. Parents are highly positive about the changes in their children's lives and life chances as a result of the work of all staff at Phoenix.

Governance

- The proprietor, headteacher and national board (national governance arrangements) have ensured that all independent standards are met. They and the local board share the headteacher's passion to ensure that pupils get the best deal they can while they attend

Phoenix so that they can re-integrate positively into their own educational communities.

- Local governors report on the massive improvements since the headteacher's arrival and confirm the high expectations that he has for the pupils and the strong focus on learning. Governors now meet termly to review the school's work. They are informed effectively about pupils' attendance rates, pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science, and pupils' social, emotional and mental health. Reports focus on pupils who have sustained placements for six weeks or more. Governors do not gain a formal view of the impact the school has on pupils who only remain for short periods. As yet, leaders do not report on pupils' achievements in all of the subjects that pupils study.
- Recent reports from the head of education (who oversees all of the schools in the Cygnet group) to the national board identify the school's full compliance with the independent school standards. Reports also provide summary information on the strengths of the provision. There is not enough evaluative information on pupils' progress and learning. This limits the board's ability to challenge leaders on the full impact of the school's work on pupils' learning and achievements over time. The new interim head of education has a clear vision and strategy to improve the quality of data and information the board receives. It is too soon to have developed that strategy into reality.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. This is imperative as pupils arrive at the school having experienced significant trauma in their lives. They attend Phoenix as a result of concerns about their safety due to their social, emotional and mental health needs. Very comprehensive induction procedures are in place for all staff. Staff are fully trained in all aspects of safeguarding, welfare and in working with pupils with very complex behaviours, social, emotional and mental health difficulties. They are vigilant in identifying and reporting any concerns. Leaders and staff work closely with care staff, therapy staff, parents and external agencies to ensure that pupils are safe.
- Robust checks are carried out on the suitability of staff, and recruitment files are in good order. The school's safeguarding policy complies fully with the Department for Education's requirements and is available on the school's website.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good overall, some is outstanding but it is not yet consistently strong enough to ensure that all pupils achieve highly across all subject areas.
- The headteacher has improved the timeliness and level of information that the school receives about pupils' needs and skills on entry into the hospital. Alongside the improved information from the pupils' community school or other place of learning, very careful diagnostic assessments take place in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and in pupils' social, emotional, communication and mental health needs.
- Teachers use this information to plan individual activities that address any identified gaps in pupils' learning and then develop their skills and understanding further. Consequently, pupils achieve well from their different starting points, when they are well enough to attend lessons. Sometimes progress is rapid, for example in science. Teachers use their subject knowledge and questioning effectively to probe pupils' understanding and help

them to think about their learning objectives and next steps.

- Pupils' workbooks are usually marked in line with the school's policy. Feedback to pupils, orally and in writing, generally helps pupils to understand how well they are doing and what to do next to achieve their learning targets. While staff use detailed assessments to track pupils' progress in the core subjects, tracking in, and reporting on, progress in other subjects is not as strong. This means that leaders do not have as clear a view of the progress pupils are making in these subjects. Occasionally, pupils spend too long consolidating work they already know and understand and therefore not progressing quickly on to more complicated work or working at greater depth.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well as a team and provide good individual and small group support to pupils. Staff know their pupils well. They work effectively with leaders to identify those pupils who are falling behind to provide them with timely additional support so that they can catch up quickly. Because staff know pupils well, they can anticipate a subject matter or learning activity that will tempt pupils back into the classroom when they are facing challenges as a result of social, emotional or mental health needs.
- Teaching assistants are very well deployed and are flexible according to needs. They contribute successfully to pupils' well-being and progress in their learning. Close partnership working between care staff and teaching staff enables teaching staff to support pupils for short periods in the ward when they are too poorly to access learning in the classroom. Equally, care staff support teachers in class when pupils are struggling to manage their complex feelings.
- Pupils read regularly, and in most lessons. They have developed a school library to increase opportunities to read for pleasure and for information. Pupils enhance their reading, social, and communication skills together with their confidence by being able to support local primary school pupils in their reading recovery lessons.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. The school is co-located in the hospital building. Pupils arrive as a result of risks to their safety due to their medical, social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils are warmly welcomed into this caring school community. Trusting relationships are secured quickly because each pupil is valued as an individual and because staff are skilled in understanding pupils' complex needs and behaviours.
- Building trusting relationships is at the heart of the approach to developing pupils' positive re-engagement in learning and in supporting and enhancing pupils' personal development. Staff address barriers, build pupils' confidence and self-esteem and ensure that pupils engage in learning whenever they are well enough. A calm and purposeful atmosphere is evident in class and as pupils move around the school building. There is a real focus on celebrating and rewarding achievement in any aspect of school life. This also has a positive impact on pupils' engagement in learning. Pupils are proud of their achievements and the accreditations they can take.
- Integrated therapy support contributes to pupils' personal development and, alongside

the work in school, promotes pupils' safety and well-being, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. For example, psychology group sessions help pupils to regain positive attitudes and qualities through activities such as goal setting and motivation, stress management, managing emotions and mindfulness.

- Pupils feel safe and are safe because of the care taken by all staff and the way that pupils are taught about how to keep safe in many different situations. This includes the use of social media and the internet.
- Pupils are respectful of one another and say there is no bullying. Strong work regarding sexual identity and people who have other protected characteristics, as identified in the Equality Act 2010, promotes pupils' understanding of, and valuing, differences in others. Pupils report that they can turn to any staff member if they have a concern. The high staff-to-pupil ratio means there is always someone around to keep an eye on their well-being.
- Many pupils have been out of education for months or years due to their social, emotional or mental health difficulties. Attendance rates improve rapidly from their lowest ebb once they arrive due to the sensitive approach in meeting pupils' needs. Overall attendance rates have improved by over 36% for pupils currently attending the school. There are individual examples of much higher rates. Improving attendance is a continuing priority.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the difference the school makes to their children's safety, care, wellbeing, education and engagement in school life.
- Pupils are very well prepared for their next steps and to re-integrate back into their homes, schools, colleges and communities on discharge. High-quality careers advice and guidance, along with the meticulously planned and then supported transitions back to pupils' mainstream learning, have ensured that 75% of pupils move back successfully. School staff support pupils' re-integration by accompanying pupils on initial community school visits. Pupils who do not return to mainstream provision have been assessed carefully and move onto hospitals and placements that can meet their more complex health and medical needs.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour in class is usually very good. Those who spoke to inspectors said that lessons are rarely, if ever, disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. This is because of the respectful relationships developed between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves. Staff are also adept at identifying potential trigger points and then diffusing them quietly and quickly.
- Pupils are helped to take increasing responsibility in managing their own behaviour and to be responsible members of the school community. Their views are constantly sought through formal and informal mechanisms so that they feel included in the decisions made at all times. Incidents of poor behaviour are low. Pupils accept the high expectations of good behaviour in school and rise to these expectations. There have been no exclusions.
- The school's tracking system records every aspect of pupils' behaviour, attitudes and well-being. This data showcases the strong impact of the school's work on the reduction in social, emotional or mental health incidents.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils join Phoenix at various times during the school year and stay for different lengths of time. This could be from a few days, a few weeks or many months. The school has not been in operation for a full year yet. While many pupils have achieved accreditations during their stay, these do not contribute to national school performance tables. Pupils who have taken GCSE or A level examinations have yet to get their results. Consequently, it is not possible to compare pupils' attainment with that of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils are very ill when they are admitted into the hospital. They apply themselves to learning productively once they settle into school. This is because of the expectation the headteacher has that pupils will attend and the high quality and trusting relationships quickly secured between staff and pupils. The carefully planned, integrated approach between teachers, therapy and care staff enables staff to identify and then meet pupils' needs so that learning can move on at pace.
- For some pupils, their illness remains a barrier to learning because they are sometimes too ill to attend lessons. However, staff make every effort to take the learning to the pupils in their wards, whenever possible, even for a short period so that important learning time is not lost.
- Observations of learning and pupils' books show that pupils make at least steady, often good and sometimes outstanding progress from their starting points. Pupils' books show their good application to their learning and work that is suitably adapted to meet individual starting points. Course work that is bespoke to pupils' interests is checked daily to make sure that pupils are making the required gains to achieve their accreditations and their learning objectives.
- The number of pupils is small across all key stages. This, together with the varying and often short times pupils attend the provision, means that it is difficult to extrapolate progress for different year groups and groups of pupils. Leaders track pupils' progress individually and as a whole school in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The progress of pupils who are in the care of a local authority and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are tracked as specific groups. Data shows that their progress is similar to that of other pupils in the school.
- Pupils' mathematics books show a strong coverage of the national curriculum and good progression of skills over time. In pupils' English books, there is appropriate focus on grammar, spelling and punctuation. Progress in English is slightly more variable than in mathematics, but pupils still make at least steady and often good progress from their starting points.
- Achievement in science is often strong because of the creative ways used to entice pupils' interest and engagement. For example, deepening pupils' knowledge of the periodic tables through the use of a hands-on practical application in a cookery lesson by designing a periodic table correctly, using cup-cakes. Equally, in an information and communication technology lesson, teachers tap into pupils' computer interests to enable the skilful programming of robotic technology.
- The most able pupils take their GCSE or A level qualifications and lower-ability pupils are encouraged to achieve functional skills and other accreditation so they are well prepared to go back to their previous learning and the next steps in their education.

School details

Unique reference number	142912
DfE registration number	373/6006
Inspection number	10033928

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	Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Proprietor	Cygnet Health Care
Chair	Ms Nicky McCloud
Headteacher	Mr Edward Hall
Annual fees (day pupils)	£28,000 (pro rata)
Telephone number	0142793350
Website	www.cygnethealth.co.uk/locations/cygnet-hospital-sheffield/phoenix.school
Email address	edwardhall@cygnethealth.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Phoenix School is a specialist provider of education for pupils admitted to Cygnet Hospital Sheffield, a Tier 4 child and adolescent mental health service hospital (CAMHS). Pupils are admitted due to a significant emotional and mental health crisis. There are two wards, one of which is a psychiatric intensive care unit.
- The school is owned by Cygnet Health Care Limited, a long-established national provider of specialist mental health services. The school was previously owned by Alpha Hospitals and was purchased by Cygnet on 15 February 2016. As a result, Cygnet now provides education as well as mental health services in Phoenix and three other schools.
- This is the school's first standard inspection. Ofsted conducted a pre-registration

inspection of the school on 20 May 2016. It was found that the school was likely to meet all of the independent school standards at that time. The Department for Education approved the school's registration on 8 July 2016.

- Many pupils have been out of formal schooling prior to attending Phoenix. They come from all parts of England due to the very specialist nature of the provision. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- All pupils have social, emotional or mental health difficulties. Around 40% of the pupils currently attending have special educational needs and/or disabilities and just over 10% have an education, health and care plan.
- There are too few students in the sixth form to report separately on post-16 provision as this would potentially enable the identification of individual students.
- The headteacher was appointed 18 months ago and oversaw the school's transition from Alpha to Cygnet. Towards the end of June 2017, he became the interim head of education for all four schools.
- The school has no religious affiliation. It does not use any alternative provision. It does enable some pupils to take part in work experience in a local city farm.
- The school aims to: 'provide equal access to high quality education for all children and young people with mental health needs, keeping education alive in the pupils' lives, maintaining progress and enabling them to achieve their potential whilst in hospital.'

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all classrooms, accompanied by the headteacher. She held discussions with the headteacher and Cygnet's national lead for special educational needs, a group of staff and the designated leader for child protection. She talked to pupils informally as she visited classrooms. The inspector also held a discussion with two representatives of the local board and held a telephone discussion with the proprietor.
- A wide range of school documents were scrutinised. These included leaders' written evaluation of their work and their improvement planning, safeguarding policies and procedures, and fire, first aid, health and safety policies. The inspector reviewed the information the school has on pupils' achievements over time, checked pupils' workbooks and examples of reports to the local and national boards about the work of the school.
- There were too few parental responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, to enable the inspector to see the results. However, text responses from two parents were reviewed. Five responses to Ofsted's staff survey were also considered.

Inspection team

Margaret Farrow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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