

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



6 March 2018

Mrs Janet Doherty
Headteacher
Manchester Hospital School and Home Teaching Service
3rd Floor School
Royal Manchester Children's Hospital
Oxford Road
Manchester
M13 9WL

Dear Mrs Doherty

Short inspection of Manchester Hospital School and Home Teaching Service

Following my visit to the school on 30 January 2018 with Ofsted Inspectors Julie Bather, Iain Sim and Kathryn Parkinson, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be outstanding in May 2013.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of outstanding as a result of this inspection.**

When you arrived as the new headteacher in April 2017, you quickly realised that the systems for collecting assessment information and measuring progress were not thorough enough. Expectations of pupils' progress were far too low and assessment practice was variable across the different settings that make up the school. As a result, you were not able to accurately reflect the progress that pupils were making, nor were you able to state the overall outcomes of pupils with any certainty.

However, your dynamic and driven leadership has made a significant impact on the school in a short period of time. You have cultivated a similar passion and sense of urgency among your leadership team. You have brought the whole staff team, including governors, along with you. You have done this by empowering them to be an active part of the rapid improvements across the school.

Pupils are at the heart of all you and the staff do. Together, you foster an exceptional level of sensitivity and care throughout the whole school community. This is greatly appreciated by parents and carers and pupils alike. Staff, governors, parents and pupils are rightly proud of Manchester Hospital School. Together, you

break down the enormous barriers to learning that pupils face, ensuring that they feel safe, secure and confident to learn and be happy.

The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, are extremely positive about the school. They feel their children are safe, well looked after, happy and taught well. Parents would recommend the school without hesitation. Their comments indicate the extremely high regard they have for it. For example, they described the school as 'amazing', 'exceptional' and 'brilliant'. They also say that they 'can't fault the care and professionalism' and staff 'go out of their way to care, help and educate'.

At the previous inspection, the inspector asked you to ensure that there was a more regular check of the quality of teaching, taking the views of colleagues beyond the school into greater account. This has been fully addressed. You have set up a regular timetable of checks that allow you to gain a full and rounded picture of the quality of teaching. For example, you take into account observations of lessons, looking at the work in pupils' books and the views of pupils, parents and the medical professionals that work alongside staff. You are also able to compare this collection of information with the developing assessment and progress information you have on pupils. All this information contributes to the regular review of staff performance and the setting of their targets. You have been keen to seek the views of experienced educational colleagues in schools across Manchester and the North West. They have been insightful in confirming your views on teaching and learning, offering advice and contributing to the development of your leadership team.

You and your leadership team have responded swiftly to address the gaps in the collection of consistent and meaningful assessment information on pupils. You have been astute in seeing the existing strengths in the information previously collected, and making the most of the skills of experienced staff already within school. You have successfully enhanced assessment further by incorporating the best practice you have found in other schools in the local area. The result is a good-quality system that all staff are increasingly confident to use. As information is gathered it is used by leaders to aid detailed discussions with teachers about pupils' learning needs and next steps. You promptly establish starting points for each pupil and are now starting to track pupils' progress over time. However, I agree with you, it is still early days. The systems and procedures are not yet fully embedded across the whole school. The first collection of progress information has been gathered in some parts of the school but not others and so is incomplete. There is more work to be done to ensure that assessment and an accurate view of a pupil's progress is of the highest quality.

You have focused your attention on the collection of assessment information and tracking of progress in subjects such as English and mathematics. However, I know you are keen to capture the progress and improvements made by pupils in their mental health, their ability to cope with anxieties and their growing sense of well-being. This would enable you to capture some of the excellent, and greatly appreciated, work that your staff do with pupils. For example, parents feel their children have 'regained their confidence', and have 'boosted their self-esteem'. One

parent said, 'At last, my son is being heard; he is finding himself.' Pupils are similarly appreciative. 'School builds our independence to learn, but the teachers are always there in the background to support us if we need it' is a typical comment. I agree with you that measuring pupils' progress in these areas will provide a greater picture of achievement and progress across all the pupils you teach in the school, including those on the main hospital wards and receiving home teaching.

The unique nature of your school means that you are working with an extremely wide range of pupils, with a variety of needs, in a wide array of settings. There is an impressive continuity and consistency across the whole school in the quality of the teaching and learning offered to pupils. Resources are of a consistently high standard and lessons are stimulating, interesting and fun, whether in a classroom or by a bedside. The exceptional relationships that adults have with pupils shine through every interaction and ensure that pupils trust staff completely to care for them and support them in their learning. However, at a strategic level, leaders and governors are most confident when talking about Galaxy House and the Leo Kelly Centre. This is partly because they serve a more consistent group of pupils and assessment information is easier to collect. However, these pupils only make up a proportion of the whole hospital school. The work you are doing to raise the profile and status of settings within the school, such as home teaching and the hospital wards, will be invaluable to ensure that leaders and governors are equipped to give all parts of school equal accountability.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team have ensured that pupils are in a safe and secure environment by promoting the clear message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. One of your first actions as the new headteacher was to ensure that all aspects of safeguarding were thoroughly applied. Consequently, safeguarding records are meticulously kept, are detailed and are reviewed regularly to ensure that they meet statutory requirements. Appropriate training for staff and governors is undertaken frequently and is up to date, including that related to keeping pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism.

You and your whole staff team offer the highest standard of vigilance and support for vulnerable pupils. Everyone has extremely effective relationships with the medical staff and is clear about hospital reporting procedures. Your insistence of 'always closing the loop', even if a pupil is not your direct responsibility, is a clear indication of you and your staff's attentiveness and commitment. You and your leadership team have strong, productive relationships with external agencies and are instrumental in contributing to the safeguarding of the vulnerable pupils in your care.

Pupils say they feel very safe and well cared for in the school. They feel confident that adults will help them if needed.

Inspection findings

- One of the areas I wanted to explore with you was the effectiveness of your relationships with hospital staff, parents and external agencies. These are exceptional; in particular, your work with medical practitioners is exemplary. You and your staff are considered key members of the hospital team and make a significant contribution to improving the health and well-being of pupils. Education is highly valued within the hospital because you and your staff are regarded as knowledgeable, skilled and professional. Above all, it is clear to all that the school staff are compassionate and committed to ensuring the best for every pupil.
- Attendance was another line of enquiry. When you first became headteacher, the monitoring of absence was a particular concern for you. However, you have worked hard to establish a clearly defined set of procedures, which you insist are adhered to diligently. Leaders and governors recognise the great importance of good attendance for keeping pupils safe and giving them the very best opportunity to do well in school. For some pupils attendance is sometimes erratic for medical or emotional reasons. However, you have a suitably sensitive approach to the feelings and anxieties of pupils, while keeping careful checks on their absence. This has resulted in the vast majority of pupils not taking time off school without good cause.
- Finally, we agreed to identify some of the strengths of the school. A noteworthy and striking feature of the school is the enormous ability for staff to be flexible. This is evident in both their attitude and their approach. Teaching staff never know what they may encounter. A pupil who was well one day might be poorly the next; a child that was full of energy might now be lethargic and withdrawn. Staff also easily adapt their teaching to meet a pupil's recovery needs.
- Another strength is how you have successfully invigorated your leadership and staff team. You have opened the hospital school doors to allow your staff to learn from strong practice in other schools locally and regionally. As a result, their experiences have been brought back into school and have influenced improvements in teaching, learning, assessment and the curriculum. There is a strong capacity for Manchester Hospital School to improve further.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- continue to embed the assessment systems that have been put in place across the whole school, so that pupils' progress can be precisely tracked and an accurate view of progress and outcomes can be gained
- establish ways of measuring pupils' progress in areas other than academic subjects, such as mental health and well-being, so that there is a full picture of pupils' achievements while attending the hospital school
- raise the profile of areas of school such as the hospital wards and home teaching, so you are confident and knowledgeable about all teaching environments equally.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Manchester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sue Eastwood
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, inspectors met with you, your deputy headteachers and your lead teachers. An inspector also met the school business manager who maintains safeguarding records. I met with a group of three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also spoke to a representative of the local authority. Inspectors spoke to a number of medical professionals working in the hospital. They also spoke on the telephone to a small number of schools where pupils are still registered. We visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. We took account of the 12 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the views of a few parents as we walked around the school or we spoke to on the telephone. We took account of the 27 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and spoke with staff during the day. We met with small groups of pupils and took account of six responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire. We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. We looked at school documents including: information about pupils' assessment and achievement; attendance records; the school's self-evaluation; the school improvement plan; behaviour and incident logs; and documents relating to safeguarding.