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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Anne Walker
Headteacher
Hospital Education Service
University Hospital
Clifford Bridge Road
Coventry
CV2 2DX

Dear Mrs Walker

Short inspection of Hospital Education Service

Following my visit to the school on 13 February 2018 with Derek Barnes, Ofsted Inspector, 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 Hospital Education Service was judged to be good in November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education and care in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence available during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Since the last inspection, Hospital Education Service provision has increased its capacity to support home tuition to 53 pupils, in addition to pupils who are educated while staying in hospital. The local authority is currently working with leaders and the management board to ensure that the needs of pupils can be met.

You are supported well by your deputy and staff. You recognise the need to discuss succession planning both with the management board and the local authority, because leaders' retirement is imminent. Your high expectations of staff mean that they show an exceptionally high level of commitment, care and compassion to all pupils. Staff are enthusiastic in offering the best provision possible to all pupils in the school.

Your self-evaluation of Hospital Education Service is accurate, and you are quick to identify areas for improvement. Leaders have taken rapid and decisive action to

address areas identified during the previous inspection. You recognised that you needed to broaden the curriculum. Actions to offer additional subjects in key stages 3 and 4 have ensured that pupils now have a broad and balanced choice, both for those in hospital and for those in receipt of home tuition. In key stage 4, you have introduced the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness, which encourages pupils to learn a wider range of skills, such as working with others and developing beliefs and values.

Pupils engage in their learning using some assistive technology, such as laptops and computer tablets in mathematics, English and science.

The senior leadership team is relatively small for a school which caters for pupils who have a diverse range of needs and abilities. You have, therefore, implemented plans to increase the skills and knowledge of teachers and teaching assistants. Your own assessment, that teaching is effective overall, is accurate.

You lead and manage the staff well and ensure that they have access to any relevant training courses required to improve their skills. Underperformance is tackled quickly and effectively because staff are keen to enhance their knowledge to enable a better understanding of pupils' needs. Through this training, staff have developed a good level of knowledge about approaches to teach pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders, ensuring that their sensory needs are met.

The positive relationships between adults and pupils form rapidly due to staff's caring nature. Staff warmly welcome pupils on arrival at the hospital and assess their needs sensitively.

The governing body is currently undergoing some changes to make sure that all members can contribute strongly to governance. They provide effective challenge where necessary and support you well. New members of the governing body are keen to develop their skills and have recently introduced new systems to ensure that they have a deeper knowledge of pupils' progress and of performance management. They are assisting leaders by being more supportive and developing the structure of reports and committees so that they now have specific knowledge of different areas of school life.

Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school. One stated, 'My daughter has five different tutors and each one is brilliant with her. She is the calmest and happiest she has ever been.' This is representative of many other comments from parents. Parents reported to inspectors that the staff are caring, kind and take the time to get to know pupils before challenging them to make rapid progress.

Pupils are confident and extremely polite. Their manners and behaviour when in hospital or receiving home tuition are exceptional. They enjoy sharing their positive experiences about their learning. Pupils show compassion and respect towards each other and adults. When in hospital, they look after each other by ensuring that welcomes are warm and engaging. Behaviour observed on the wards, in the

classroom and in the home environment was exemplary. Pupils demonstrate a strong and resilient attitude to learning. They have an amazing ability to focus their attention on their work, despite the disruptions caused by medical treatment.

Liaison with pupils' previous schools is not always effective because, on occasion, schools do not communicate well with the Hospital Education Service. However, leaders do their best to ensure that appropriate records and minutes from meetings are handed over in a timely and sensitive manner. Samples of work completed in hospital, or at home, are carefully retained by the Hospital Education Service because pupils may return for further support.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders and the management board ensure that there is a strong and positive safeguarding culture in the school. Staff and governors have access to high-quality training from school leaders and the local authority. Staff feel confident about raising concerns and make referrals promptly. As a result, pupils feel safe in their surroundings.

The school's recording system for safeguarding concerns is very robust. Careful checks are made on all visitors and staff to ensure their suitability to work with children. All staff understand the need for vigilance. They are quick to take action in the event that concerns are raised by pupils and other adults. The school works very closely with hospital staff to ensure that on-site security is strong. Any referrals made by hospital staff are quickly shared with education leaders. Entry and exit in the hospital education areas are controlled by a secure fob system, to which only education and medical staff have access.

Leaders have developed a robust system to ensure that all safeguarding files are kept in order and secure. Referrals are followed up in a timely manner. Escalation procedures are followed up quickly where concerns and issues are not resolved satisfactorily.

Inspection findings

- Teachers are well supported by confident and knowledgeable teaching assistants. The high level of support for pupils who have additional needs and are educated at home means that all pupils are able to participate in lessons. They feel that their contributions are valued.
- Staff demonstrate a very caring and sensitive attitude to learners. They communicate with pupils gently to give them reassurance and confidence.
- Staff have developed confidence in delivering a broader curriculum to pupils who have additional and complex needs. They have achieved this by creating and using appropriate communication and effective teaching techniques.
- Hospital Education Service is an inviting environment. Pupils' work is on display throughout, to celebrate their achievements. Work completed by pupils in after-

school activities is also celebrated and shared. Pupils show pride in sharing their work.

- Leaders have extended the curriculum previously offered. They encourage pupils to work towards 'life targets', which are longer-term targets for destinations, physical and mental health, and social skills. Pupils take some accredited courses in key stage 4. They have opportunities to study lessons in hospital, which they do not have access to while in school. For example, pupils enjoy lessons in art and computing, subjects they have not been able to enjoy before.
- Staff provide a calm and reassuring approach to teaching and learning. Leaders are quick to identify aspects of learning and personal growth which pupils need to develop. They then quickly provide the necessary and appropriate support. However, leaders have yet to ensure that the small steps in progress which pupils make are formally recognised and more robustly recorded.
- Cross-curricular links ensure that pupils in key stages 2, 3 and 4 are given wider opportunities to learn new skills. However, due to time constraints beyond school leaders' control, the primary-aged pupils in receipt of home tuition have limited opportunities to learn additional subjects.
- There is strong evidence of phonics being taught well in key stage 1. Pupils who have disliked reading in previous settings are now developing a love of reading. One parent informed inspectors that her child 'does not like reading but the tutors have helped him to read'.
- Some staff would value further training in mathematics mastery and phonics teaching.
- Leaders' tracking of the progress of pupils who attend the school for a very short period of time is being reviewed. It is too early to see the impact of changes in this area.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure:

- that they provide further training for a small number of staff to improve their teaching of mathematics mastery and phonics
- that the progress of pupils who attend the school for a short period is tracked more robustly.

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

Yours sincerely

Kim Ellis
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors held meetings with you, other leaders and staff, a member of the management board and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors made short visits to two pupils in receipt of home tuition, and observed four lessons taught at a hospital bedside and two lessons taught in the hospital classroom. They looked at pupils' books and files and spoke informally with pupils. Inspectors spoke with parents at home and on the hospital wards, and considered one response to Parent View. Various school documents were scrutinised, including safeguarding records, the school's self-evaluation and development plan, performance management of staff, assessment information about pupils' progress, and information about attendance, behaviour and safety.