

# Rhodes Wood Hospital School

Shepherds Way, Brookmans Park, Hatfield, Hertfordshire AL9 6NN

## Inspection dates

24–26 April 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Sixth form provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have established an effective school over a short period of time.
- The school meets pupils' needs well, and makes a significant contribution to their well-being and academic progress.
- Good-quality teaching motivates pupils. Pupils make good progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Some teaching does not consistently stretch and challenge the most able pupils.
- Study support sessions are not used to best effect.
- Pupils feel safe in the school. Systems to keep pupils safe and secure are robust. Bullying is rare.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. Relationships between pupils and teachers are strong.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well.
- Pupils' attendance remains below the national average.
- The choice of subjects is broad and balanced and great efforts are made to provide continuity to pupils in key stage 4 and the sixth form.
- The sixth form equips students with the necessary skills to move on to the next stage of their education or the world of work.
- The role of the school management committee in holding the school's leaders fully to account and in monitoring their work requires further development.
- Systems to assess pupils' progress are in place but need further refinement to have maximum impact on raising standards further.
- Middle leaders play a key role in school improvement. They require ongoing support as their roles develop.

### 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?

- Strengthen leadership by:
  - clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the school management committee
  - sharpening systems to monitor and log safety checks which relate to the school provision
  - providing ongoing support and challenge to the school's middle leaders
  - reviewing the way in which assessments of pupils' progress are recorded so that trends can be identified more quickly and support can be provided in a more timely manner if required.
- Improve teaching by:
  - making sure that the most able pupils are consistently stretched and challenged
  - sharing the good practice that exists in the school more regularly
  - providing more structure and purpose to the study support sessions.
- Ensure that pupils attend the hospital school provision more regularly, particularly students in the sixth form.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Effective leadership has resulted in a successful school which serves the needs of pupils well. This is despite changes at senior leadership level which took place in the spring term. The previous headteacher, who is now the head of education, regularly visits the school and has a positive and collaborative working relationship with the acting headteacher.
- The school has accurately evaluated its own effectiveness and has produced a comprehensive action plan. This action plan rightly identifies areas for improvement and clearly lays out the next steps needed in order to improve the provision further.
- Senior leaders recognise that in order for the school to move forward at a rapid rate, class teachers are required to take on a whole-school responsibility. This includes roles such as special educational needs coordinator, monitoring attendance, head of sixth form and reintegration into the home school when pupils' time at the hospital school is complete.
- Many of the middle leaders are new to their roles. Their role in contributing to whole-school improvement requires ongoing monitoring and support.
- Leaders have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met. Evidence was provided to the inspector to demonstrate how the standards are both met and consistently implemented.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and what it achieves for their children. One parent wrote in response to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 'Fantastic school. My daughter is making good progress.' This comment is typical of the views of parents whose children attend the school.
- The school reports to parents on pupils' progress regularly. These reports are detailed and informative and leave parents fully informed about how well their child is progressing and what they should do to improve. Parents regularly attend the school in person to discuss their children's progress and any barriers to learning.
- Teaching is managed well. Leaders seek out teachers of specialist subjects, including from supply agencies, in order to ensure that pupils who join the school are able to continue studying their subjects until they return to their 'home' school.
- Teachers are regularly observed by the acting headteacher or the head of education. These observations identify strengths and areas for improvement. Observations carried out jointly by the inspector and senior staff confirm that the school's leaders have an accurate judgement of the quality of teaching over time. These judgements are supported through scrutiny of pupils' books.
- The quality of teaching is discussed at staff meetings and on training days. There is greater potential to share the existing good practice further than at present.
- The choice of subjects offered to pupils is appropriate. The school has chosen to follow the national curriculum in key stage 3 and is determined to ensure continuity of study for pupils who join the school in key stage 4. Close liaison between the 'home' school and Rhodes Wood ensures that work is always forthcoming and is at the appropriate level.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of

the school. Pupils are taught about fundamental British values through personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, as well as in individual subjects. They have a good understanding of what constitutes modern British society, including of people who have protected characteristics under the Equalities Act (2010).

## **Governance**

- The school management committee carries out the role of governance. This committee is chaired by the proprietor and also includes the acting headteacher, the headteacher of Crossley Manor School, the head of education and some of the hospital's senior team.
- Meetings take place regularly and are minuted with points for further action.
- The exact purpose of the committee requires further clarification so that its role in monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the work of the school is clear, and so that it can thoroughly hold school staff to account and be clear about their roles and responsibilities. For example, the site manager is directly accountable to the hospital director and not the school. Checks of the fire alarm system for the hospital and the school had been carried out as required, but only recorded in the hospital paperwork. The inspector's scrutiny of the school's logs revealed weaknesses in systems to record these checks.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a suitable safeguarding policy published on its website.
- Staff training is fully up to date and all staff have read and received the required documentation in order to ensure that pupils are kept safe in the school. Due to the nature of the pupils' medical conditions, staff are always alert to changes in behaviour and attitudes, and liaise exceptionally well with the hospital staff.
- Staff are aware of their need to implement the government's 'Prevent' duty, particularly in this setting, as many of the pupils are vulnerable. The school's leaders have accurately assessed the risks associated with the setting and the local area, and thoroughly implement risk assessment policies.
- The school addressed any minor administrative errors during the inspection to ensure that the school's single central record of recruitment checks of staff meets statutory requirements.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and convey great enthusiasm for their subjects. They typically meet the challenges faced when pupils join the school at short notice in order to plan for pupils' learning effectively.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive. Pupils told the inspector that they enjoy their lessons because of the small class sizes, which means that they are given more attention.
- Teachers are skilful at meeting the needs of pupils who are taught in mixed-age classes

and who may well have covered different topics in their 'home' school.

- Teachers usually plan lessons which take account of pupils' prior learning. Information provided by the 'home' school, as well as from testing when a pupil arrives, allows teachers to provide work which builds on previously acquired knowledge.
- Teachers incorporate targets from statements of special educational needs or education, health and care (EHC) plans when planning for learning. This ensures that the needs of the pupils are met.
- Due to the complex nature of the grouping of pupils, and their varied coverage of topics, teachers set up activities which allow pupils to get on with their learning at a pace which is appropriate for the individual. Teachers use an appropriate degree of questioning in order to check that pupils understand what they are learning.
- Although teachers know what each pupil is expected to achieve and have challenging targets for them, the pupils themselves are rightly not always made aware of the progress they are making towards these. This is because the majority of pupils have high levels of anxiety and any information provided on their progress may well have a negative impact on their medical condition.
- Teachers gather information on how much progress pupils are making towards achieving their targets. The information provided to senior leaders is regular, but the way in which it is currently compiled makes it difficult to form an overview of each pupil's progress across every subject and to identify overall trends in performance.
- Reading, writing and communication skills are taught well. Pupils are provided with lots of opportunities to read aloud in lessons when this is appropriate.
- Homework tends to take the form of additional reading around the subject in question. This is an appropriate approach taking account of pupils' medical circumstances.
- The work provided by some teachers does not consistently stretch and challenge pupils so that they make the best progress they can.
- The structure of the school's study support sessions, in which pupils are supervised, requires further consideration. Some pupils are left too much to their own devices, rather than gaining the necessary support and guidance from the members of staff on duty.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils in the school are exceptionally well cared for due to close liaison between the school and hospital staff. This collaborative approach means that each pupil's needs are understood and that their welfare is promoted very well.
- Pupils are effectively nurtured and helped by their key teachers. These members of staff provide good-quality guidance and effective mentoring and coaching. Pupils have confidence in their key teachers and value the contribution they make towards their personal development.
- The school uses a range of strategies to put pupils at ease with the school environment. In particular, William, the school Labrador, is often used at the start of group sessions as

a calming influence. The inspector observed the use of the school dog to relieve any undue stress which then led to pupils talking openly about their fears when they are reintegrated into their 'home' school.

- Pupils are taught through a well-planned PSHE education programme about how to keep themselves safe. This work is supplemented through the use of one-to-one discussions with key teachers. Careers education and guidance are of good quality and are provided in an impartial manner.
- The school's leaders ensure the welfare of pupils through carefully evaluated risk assessments, both for the day-to-day running of the school and for any trips and excursions. All of the required checks for the Fire Safety Order (2005) have been carried out. Pupils say they feel safe at school.
- Pupils say that bullying of any kind does not happen in this school. Despite this, they demonstrate an excellent understanding of the different forms bullying might take. They also say that they feel they could report any unpleasant behaviour to a member of staff and that it would be dealt with effectively.
- Pupils are encouraged to express their opinions and develop their leadership skills. The inspector observed the first-ever school council meeting during this inspection. Following the success of the patient council, the school council allows pupils to contribute their views about the quality of the education they receive and to contribute towards school improvement.
- The inspector's scrutiny of the school's praise folder shows that many pupils are highly appreciative of their teachers' efforts, and comment positively on how their self-esteem and confidence have improved.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have largely positive attitudes towards their learning. Incidents of serious misbehaviour are unusual.
- Pupils are escorted as they move from the hospital ward to the school and at break and lunchtimes. A behaviour system is in place to record and address behaviours which cause concern.
- Pupils take pride in how they present their written work.
- Pupils do not wear a school uniform but are nevertheless smart in their appearance. The school is free from litter and graffiti.
- No pupils have been excluded from school. If they are unwell or are reluctant to learn in the school classrooms, teachers typically move up to the ward so that they are able to continue with their learning.
- Many pupils who attend Rhodes Wood Hospital School had a history of very poor attendance at their 'home' school or did not attend school at all. Although pupils' overall attendance at the school remains below average, it represents an improvement compared to how regularly many of them attended their 'home' schools. Nevertheless, the school recognises that more regular attendance must remain a priority and this features in the school improvement planning processes.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils make good progress during their time at the school compared to pupils who have similar starting points nationally. This is because they typically experience good-quality teaching and because they have positive attitudes towards their learning.
- Pupils are encouraged to work conscientiously in a calm and supportive environment. They make good progress because teachers do all they can to alleviate any stress and anxiety. This ensures that pupils are able to work in a relaxed way to consolidate their knowledge and move forward with their learning.
- Pupils who have an EHC plan make good progress because teachers take account of the contents of the plan when planning for learning, and are skilled at adapting the tasks, which enables the pupils to access the work.
- Work in pupils' books across a range of subjects and covering all key stages indicates a good rate of progression, gains in the development of key skills and positive responses to teachers' guidance and support.
- Pupils receive good-quality pastoral support. They develop well socially and emotionally, which supports their learning and progress.
- Pupils are prepared well for the next stages of their educational career. They are typically reintegrated back to their 'home' school or move on to college, apprenticeships or sixth forms.
- Some of the most able pupils are not consistently stretched and challenged by the teaching they experience.

## Sixth form provision

**Good**

- Students in the sixth form make good progress during their time at the school. This is due to effective teaching by specialists, and this motivates students to achieve well.
- Students develop skills and knowledge which equip them well for progression to the next steps of their education.
- The sixth form is well led and the quality of the provision is routinely evaluated through observations of teaching, discussions with students and analysis of data and students' destinations.
- The curriculum is planned well to ensure that students are able to continue studying subjects and qualifications that were being followed at their 'home' school. Progress is checked at regular intervals and effective communication takes place between the 'home' school and Rhodes Wood teachers.
- The academic and personal, social and emotional development of students are well considered. The sixth-form students act as excellent role models to other pupils in the school. They have positive attitudes in lessons and are enthusiastic learners. They take the lead when their health enables them to do so. For example, the newly formed school council is now chaired by a member of the sixth form who takes minutes of the meetings and ensures that actions are appropriately followed up.
- Careers information and guidance are of good quality. They are tailored to meet the

needs of individual students. Students are knowledgeable about different routes they might wish to follow when they leave the school.

- Students' attendance, at around 80%, is currently too low.



## School details

Unique reference number	144726
DfE registration number	919/6008
Inspection number	10046991

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	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	32
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	2
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Kath Murphy
Chair	Kath Murphy
Acting Headteacher	Eileen Field
Annual fees (day pupils)	£31,200 to £34,125
Telephone number	01707 291 500
Website	<a href="http://www.elysiumhealthcare.co.uk">www.elysiumhealthcare.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:rhodeswood@elysiumhealthcare.co.uk">rhodeswood@elysiumhealthcare.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Rhodes Wood Hospital School is an independent special school which opened in September 2017. It is part of Elysium Healthcare. This was the school's first standard inspection.
- The school caters mostly for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities relating to their medical conditions regarding eating disorders. The school

provides education for the patients admitted to Rhodes Wood Hospital, which is on the same site.

- More recently, the school has started to admit pupils who have autism spectrum disorder. The types of SEN being catered for are: cognitive and learning; specific learning difficulties; moderate learning difficulties; behavioural emotional and social development; behavioural emotional and social difficulty; communication and interaction needs; speech, language and communication needs; autistic spectrum disorder; and sensory and/or physical needs.
- Some pupils have an EHC plan. Places are funded by the pupils' local authority.
- The school is registered to admit up to 39 pupils aged seven to 19. The number on roll can change on a daily basis as new pupils are admitted to or discharged from the hospital. The vast majority of pupils are in key stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form.
- Plans are currently being prepared for an additional building in the school grounds to enhance the provision.
- The previous headteacher of the school became head of education within Elysium Healthcare, and an acting headteacher was appointed at the end of February 2018.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection took place with one day's notice. The inspection looked solely at the educational provision. The inspector observed a range of lessons, all of which were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, the head of education and middle leaders, including the designated lead for safeguarding and the head of sixth form. A telephone discussion took place with the proprietor.
- Discussions were held with two groups of pupils, and a school council meeting was observed.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation, including policies, information on pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance data, and information relating to health and safety.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work in lessons and also conducted a detailed scrutiny of pupils' books across all year groups and a wide range of subjects.
- The school's single central record of recruitment checks of the suitability of staff was scrutinised.
- The inspector considered the responses of four parents who provided free-text comments when responding to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 18 responses to the staff survey. The inspector also met with two parents, and conducted a telephone call with one parent.

## Inspection team

John Daniell, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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