

Pennine House School

Pennine House, Fairfield Hospital, Bury Old Road, Bury BL9 7TD

Inspection dates

3–5 July 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since formally opening as a school, leaders have ensured that the quality of education they offer to pupils has continued to improve.
- Employees of the company, such as those responsible for assuring the quality of the school's work, support the headteacher effectively. Together, they ensure that the independent school standards are met.
- Pupils make good progress during their time at the school. Staff provide high-quality support that enables pupils to keep up with their studies.
- Many pupils achieve well in GCSE and A-level examinations. Staff help other pupils to advance to a suitable destination having joined the school without a placement.
- Pupils, parents and hospital staff feel that the work of the school is pivotal in helping pupils to grow in confidence and feel better during their time in hospital.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at providing pupils with the direction and skills that they need to learn well.
- Leaders ensure that most pupils benefit from a curriculum that is broad, balanced and caters well for their individual needs.
- Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum meets the needs of a very small group of sixth-form students who join the school without an appropriate placement. Leaders have already trained staff to deliver a new range of courses to these pupils from September.
- Leaders have not developed effective systems that enable them to evaluate precisely pupils' progress. This makes it difficult for them to hold staff to account for pupils' progress and outcomes and to set pupils appropriate targets.
- Leaders have not devised systems that enable pupils to organise their work in each subject effectively.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent, and their attendance improves greatly while at the school.
- Staff keep pupils safe. Pupils develop their understanding of different risks.

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?

- Develop the school's systems for recording and evaluating pupils' progress to ensure that leaders and governors can:
 - set clear and measurable targets for what pupils should achieve based upon their prior attainment, health, aspirations and length of time at the school
 - hold staff to account for the progress made by pupils in different subjects
 - evaluate the impact that teaching has on pupils' outcomes
 - quantify the impressive progress that pupils make during their time at the school.
- Further develop the breadth of the sixth-form curriculum, particularly for those not continuing to study for A levels, by providing students with opportunities to complete courses and relevant work experience that will increase their chances of securing appropriate further education, employment or training.
- Develop systems that are within the constraints of the hospital's health and safety requirements that enable pupils to organise their work in different subjects more effectively.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has high expectations for all members of the school community. She has ensured that all staff go about their work with enthusiasm and a commitment to teach and care for pupils well. Working as a cohesive team, the staff provide pupils with a good quality of education. This plays an important role in aiding pupils' recovery from illness and helping them to make good progress with their individual programmes of study.
- Leaders from the company support the headteacher well. Together, they ensure that the independent school standards are met and that the school has continued to improve since opening.
- Leaders monitor and evaluate the work of the school effectively. As a result, they have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas of relative weakness. Furthermore, leaders devise clear and appropriate plans for improving the school that grow out of their self-evaluation and reflect their ambition to do their best for every pupil.
- Staff benefit from a close working relationship with other schools run by the company. These links enable staff to develop aspects of the school's work in collaboration with colleagues from other schools. For example, subject teachers work with their counterparts to develop the curriculum in their areas. As a result, staff share good practice and learn from the experiences of others who work in similar circumstances.
- Staff greatly enjoy working at the school and are proud of the difference they make to pupils' lives. They derive genuine enjoyment from seeing pupils recovering and making good progress. All staff share an unswerving commitment to helping pupils achieve to the best of their ability.
- Pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They feel that the support, structure and care provided by the school are instrumental in helping them to recover, keep up with their studies and get back on track. They feel that staff understand their needs and are exceptionally skilled at knowing just how much to challenge them.
- Parents are appreciative of the school's work. They value the clear communication provided by the school, which enables them to understand how well their children are doing with their education.
- The headteacher has driven improvements in the way that staff work with colleagues from the hospital and children's services. She has ensured that the school's work supports the efforts of other agencies as part of a team approach to helping pupils. Employees of the hospital speak highly of the school and recognise the important role that it plays in contributing to pupils' recovery.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching closely; they use a range of strategies to help them to understand its effectiveness. For example, they regularly consult pupils to find out their views on teaching to ensure that it is well matched to their needs.
- Leaders have established clear systems for managing the performance of staff. Leaders set members of staff clear targets that link to priority areas for the whole school. Leaders therefore encourage staff to make a positive difference to the quality of education offered by the school. For example, members of staff are responsible for introducing new courses

that meet the ever-changing needs of pupils.

- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad, balanced and personalised to each pupil's needs. Staff liaise with pupils' previous schools very effectively. This ensures that pupils receive the support necessary for them to keep up with their programmes of study while in hospital.
- Leaders work closely with hospital staff to ensure that the therapeutic sessions that pupils receive complement their academic learning.
- Leaders' work to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is very effective. Pupils benefit from regular opportunities to learn about other faiths and cultures. For example, pupils fondly recall a recent talk given by a Buddhist monk. Staff also encourage pupils to raise money for different charities. For example, pupils have raised money for charities such as Papyrus and Cancer Research.
- Leaders have developed systems that enable them to demonstrate the clear progress that pupils make regarding their social development and their readiness to learn. Despite this, leaders' current systems do not enable them to precisely evaluate the amount of progress that pupils make in each subject. This has not prevented pupils from making good progress because leaders have ensured that teaching is well matched to pupils' needs. However, it has led to a negative impact on leaders' ability to set appropriate targets for pupils and the school; hold staff to account for the progress that pupils make; and evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' outcomes.

Governance

- The chair of governors is responsible for overseeing the work of several schools within the company. She has considerable experience of leading independent special schools, which she uses to support the headteacher in her efforts to improve the school.
- Governors have worked closely with the headteacher to orchestrate several improvements across the school, including improvements to pupils' attendance and the quality of teaching.
- Governors have a range of useful experiences and different areas of expertise, which they use to support the school well. They use their knowledge and understanding effectively to hold leaders to account and to support the strong partnership work that exists between school staff and other professionals. For example, a governor who works for the National Health Service has helped the school to develop more effective ways of working with hospital staff.
- Governors work closely with school staff and the company's quality assurance team to gain a sound understanding of the school's work. They use this understanding to help them to identify appropriate strategies for developing the school further.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils' safeguarding needs are met well because staff work closely with colleagues from the hospital and children's services. Leaders have established effective systems for sharing information with hospital staff. Staff are hyper-vigilant to changes in pupils' mood

or behaviour.

- The school has a suitable safeguarding policy that meets requirements and is available to parents on request.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of their responsibilities to keep pupils safe.
- Staff receive regular safeguarding training through the company on topics such as e-safety, child sexual exploitation and extremism.
- Staff have a secure understanding of what to do if they have concerns about a pupils' welfare.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and teaching assistants have an excellent understanding of the subjects that they teach and their pupils' needs. They use this understanding to teach pupils effectively. As a result, pupils make good progress with their individual programmes of study whether they are at the school for a few weeks or over a year.
- Staff work very closely with pupils' previous schools to ensure that pupils follow an appropriate curriculum and that the level of work is appropriate to their needs.
- Staff provide work that is appropriately challenging given pupils' health, prior attainment and aspirations. They know when it is appropriate to extend pupils' understanding and when to help them to consolidate earlier learning.
- Staff work with sensitivity and tact to create safe learning environments. As a result, pupils feel comfortable, concentrate on their work for long periods of time and become immersed in their learning. They say that learning helps them to regulate their feelings and think positively.
- Staff are skilled at reshaping teaching in line with pupils' mood and their ability to recall prior learning. Staff question pupils well to assess their understanding and to encourage them to think deeply and make links between different areas of learning.
- Pupils enjoy excellent relationships with staff. These relationships underpin the success that teachers have with engaging pupils and moving them on in their learning.
- Where necessary, leaders hire tutors to maintain continuity in pupils' learning, such as in modern foreign languages.
- Parents greatly value the quality of teaching that the school provides. Many pupils join the school while completing courses leading to examinations. Parents feel that the work of the school has been vital in enabling their children to keep up with their studies and achieve well in external examinations.
- Pupils benefit from regular weekly reviews with their key teacher. These meetings help pupils to recognise what is going well and what areas need to be prioritised in the future. However, due to weaknesses in leaders' systems for setting pupils appropriate targets, these meetings do not consistently identify priorities that help pupils to focus on areas that would make the biggest difference to their progress.
- Pupils discuss and debate different issues in a balanced, thoughtful and considerate manner. For example, a group of pupils visit the 'philosophy café' and discuss issues such

as whether euthanasia should be allowed and whether there is life beyond earth.

- Due to the constraints of the hospital's new health and safety requirements, pupils are no longer allowed to complete work in exercise books. Leaders have not yet devised alternative systems to help pupils to organise their work in each subject effectively. A small group of pupils are not taking sufficient care with their work now that they are working on loose sheets of paper. Leaders recognise this to be an issue and have placed an order for laptop computers to help pupils to organise their work more efficiently.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils benefit from a range of useful opportunities to learn about careers. These include regular meetings with an independent careers adviser, talks from employers and visits to university open days and careers fairs. These opportunities help pupils to develop their thinking about their next steps.
- Leaders ensure that the promotion of British values weaves through the school's work. For example, pupils chair daily meetings that focus on planning activities for the day ahead. Pupils therefore become active citizens within the hospital and school community.
- Pupils become increasingly involved in the local community as their health improves. For example, much of the admirable charity work undertaken by staff and pupils focuses on activities such as running tombolas and cake sales for members of the local community. Pupils' increased engagement with the local community further improves their health and helps them to prepare for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils make great strides in their readiness to learn. As a result, their communication with adults and their peers improves and they become more optimistic about the future.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They place great trust in staff and indicate that they would feel confident to share any concerns.
- Pupils say that bullying never happens; leaders' records substantiate this claim.
- Pupils develop an increased awareness of how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils complete a qualification in e-safety. They also benefit from advice and guidance on topics such as road safety, drugs, alcohol and relationships.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent in lessons. Staff and pupils both report that there are never any incidents of poor behaviour. They say that this is sometimes in contrast to pupils' behaviour away from the school. Pupils feel that they behave well in the school because of the structure that the school provides and the strong relationships that they enjoy with staff.
- Pupils feel proud to receive rewards for things such as improved attendance, contributions to the community and academic progress. Pupils are identified as being 'stars' in regular

community meetings.

- Pupils' attendance has improved markedly over the last three years. Pupils' attendance generally improves in line with the amount of time that they attend the school. Records demonstrate that many pupils attend regularly following a period of prolonged absence from their previous schools. Staff are consistent in their determination to provide education to all pupils, including those who remain deep in crisis for a long time.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- All pupils arrive at the school in a state of crisis. Many pupils have failed to progress in the months or years prior to joining the school. As a result, pupils often have large gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Given these fragile starting points, pupils make strong progress during their time at the school. In particular, staff are adept at getting pupils ready to learn. In many cases, pupils make accelerated progress that enables them to seamlessly re-join their previous school.
- Pupils become effective independent learners. As such, the skills that they acquire stand them in good stead for future success.
- Pupils achieve well in external examinations during their time at the school. Since opening, the school has been particularly effective at supporting pupils to attain well in GCSE examinations.
- The most able pupils attain well because of the effective challenge and wider support that they receive.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils reintegrate back into their previous school or proceed to a suitable alternative. Leaders' systems for supporting pupils after discharge are highly effective. As a result, most pupils are not disadvantaged by spending time in hospital.
- Pupils feel that the school has made a huge impact in enabling them to transform their lives and get better. Some pupils feel that the work of the school has restored their faith in education.
- All pupils who have left the school during or at the end of the secondary phase have proceeded to a suitable destination. Most have re-joined their previous school. Others advance to an appropriate programme of study at a college, get a job or become an apprentice.
- Pupils' engagement with all subjects improves significantly during their time at the school. This improvement underpins the success that pupils experience. Despite this, leaders are unable to evaluate the amount of progress that pupils make in each subject. Leaders are currently developing systems that will enable them to do this.

Sixth-form provision

Good

- The sixth form is good. The school's general strengths are reflected in the sixth-form provision.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of the sixth form's strengths and developmental

needs.

- The 16 to 19 study programmes meet requirements. Students benefit from a personalised approach to their learning. Leaders go to great lengths to ensure that, where appropriate, students continue to study courses that they studied in their previous school or college. In addition, students enjoy learning in compulsory subjects such as art and history.
- The sixth-form curriculum does not fully meet the needs of a small group of students who join the school with low prior attainment. Leaders work creatively to ensure that these pupils gain access to appropriate work-related learning within the parameters laid out by the hospital's health and safety policy. To compensate for these restrictions, leaders have already ensured that staff have received the training that will enable them to deliver a broader and more appropriate range of qualifications from September.
- Students make good progress on their individualised programmes of learning. This is the result of the good-quality teaching that is well matched to students' needs.
- Pupils in Year 11 get off to a flying start on their sixth-form courses. This is because they start to study for A levels and other qualifications as soon as they finish their GCSE examinations.
- Most students move successfully to the next phase in their education, training or employment. Leaders pay great attention to detail to ensure that students access a destination that is right for them.
- A significant number of students have joined the sixth form having previously spent time away from education, employment or training. Most of these students moved on to a destination that meets their aspirations, aptitudes and interests on leaving the school.
- Students feel that the sixth form helps them to gain an understanding of the risks that are sometimes associated with their age group, such as those related to drugs and alcohol.

School details

Unique reference number	143646
DfE registration number	351/6006
Inspection number	10043787

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 school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	13 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	16
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	10
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Priory Education and Children's Services
Chair	Sharon Pearson
Headteacher	Caren Hayes
Annual fees (day pupils)	£32,250
Telephone number	0161 918 8515
Email address	carenhayes@priorygroup.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is located within Pennine House, which is in the grounds of Fairfield Hospital, Bury.
- The school provides education for pupils who are inpatients receiving treatment in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service units at Pennine House. Pupils have severe and acute health and psychological needs.
- Pupils attend the school from a variety of local authorities. However, most pupils are from

local authorities within Greater Manchester.

- The school is run by Priory Education and Children's Services, which runs a nationwide chain of schools, colleges and children's homes.
- The proprietor has been educating pupils at Pennine House for approximately 10 years. However, the proprietor formally registered the provision as an independent school with the Department for Education in 2016. This is the school's first standard inspection.
- The school aims to raise pupils' self-esteem, increase their confidence and help them to either return to their original school, college or employer, or advance to an appropriate destination that meets their needs.
- The average length of stay at the school varies widely and the number of pupils on roll fluctuates daily. Many pupils spend a few weeks at the school, whereas others stay for over a year. Due to the high turnover of pupils, the age range of pupils varies significantly throughout the year, as does the ratio of male to female pupils.
- A small number of pupils are looked after, and a small number have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector carried out the inspection with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, art, food technology and history.
- The inspector spoke to groups of pupils. He also spoke informally with pupils during the school day, including when they were studying independently.
- The inspector examined the work that pupils have completed while at the school. He also reviewed the school's assessment information.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the chair of governors and the company's representative who is responsible for quality assuring the work of the school.
- The inspector met with members of hospital staff, including the manager and consultant of one of the wards. He also observed a meeting between hospital and school staff.
- Due to the limited number of responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, the inspector was unable to find out the views of parents from this source. The inspector rang several parents to ask for their views on the school. The inspector also spoke with members of staff from a selection of pupils' previous schools.
- The inspector met with a group of staff and considered seven responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Several school documents and policies were examined. These included safeguarding policies, the school development plan, the school's self-evaluation and examples of the plans that teachers produce to help each pupil who joins the school. Records on pupils' behaviour and attendance and the admissions register were also scrutinised. The school does not currently have a website.

Inspection team

Will Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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