

# Inspection of Huntercombe Hospital School Maidenhead

Huntercombe Hospital, Huntercombe Lane South, Taplow, Maidenhead SL6 0PQ

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Inspection dates: 21–23 January 2020

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**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Students enjoy school; they say, 'I like doing schoolwork – it acts as a break away from the fact that you are in hospital; it is probably the most normal part of being an inpatient.' Staff have high expectations of students and they gently encourage them to try their best in every lesson. Students consider that the belief and constant encouragement from staff really helps their recovery.

Students behave well, and lessons proceed calmly and quietly. Students are usually engrossed in their work. They either work in small groups with teachers or work on the computer completing work set by their home school. Most students are keen to keep up with their studies. They want to be well prepared for when they transition back into mainstream school full time.

Students, including those who are in the secure unit, say that they feel safe and secure in the school. Bullying of any sort is rare and the school deals with any incidents effectively. Leaders ensure that students have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying. It has recently won an award for this work with a nationally recognised charity.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Students receive a well-designed and broad curriculum. It is planned to carefully meet each student's needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers succeed in delivering the school's intention of 'challenging students but at the same time giving them work that is within their capabilities so that each young person experiences success'. Teachers want to work with other subject specialists within the group so that they can share good practice and stay abreast of the latest educational guidance.

Some students complete work set by their home school. Others follow a teacher-led programme which is based on the national curriculum. This ensures that all students, including those in the secure unit, achieve well. Link teachers provide a valuable role in maintaining the connection with the home school while the student is in hospital. This ensures that students are well prepared to continue with their learning when they transition back into mainstream school. Sixth-form students either continue a similar programme of study or they complete useful accreditations, so they are well prepared for their future lives.

Students behave well in lessons. They listen carefully to the teacher and work quietly through their work. Therapists and the youth engagement team work well with teachers to ensure that students develop positive attitudes to their learning and a growing hope for the future. There is a wide range of opportunities to develop students' personal development. For example, social development is supported by the testimonies from past students who return and tell current students of the successful lives they are now living. Many credit the teaching team for the support they provided.

Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards have been met. They recognise that until recently aspects of governance, such as reviewing policies, were not always strong.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Students, including those in the secure unit, say they feel safe. They develop trusting relationships with staff. Students say they feel able to talk to teachers if they have any worries. Staff have completed specialist training to ensure that they understand students' needs. There is regular communication between the hospital staff and teachers. However, the recording of safeguarding matters related to the school is duplicated. School leaders often write out by hand what is also recorded on the hospital's electronic recording system. This is not efficient and adds to the workload of school leaders.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- Until very recently, governance oversight in some areas was not always strong. Aspects were overlooked; for example, policies were not always reviewed regularly. The new board of governors needs to fulfil all of its responsibilities, including the timely review of school policies.
- Staff do not always share good practice with other subject specialists. This means that it is hard for them to keep up with current educational changes. Staff need to form closer links with teachers in the other hospital schools of the group. This is so they can work together to ensure that inpatient students get the best education.
- Safeguarding record-keeping is duplicated between the hospital and the school. This has a negative impact on the workload of the school's senior leaders. The school must align safeguarding reporting with hospital procedures.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142325
<b>DfE registration number</b>	868/6023
<b>Local authority</b>	Windsor and Maidenhead
<b>Inspection number</b>	10076618
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	12 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	41
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	15
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	1
<b>Proprietor</b>	Huntercombe Group
<b>Chair</b>	Alan Malin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Angela Hudgell
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£33,150
<b>Telephone number</b>	01628 607435
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://huntercombe.com/centres/huntercombe-hospital-maidenhead/our-school">https://huntercombe.com/centres/huntercombe-hospital-maidenhead/our-school</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:hhmaidenheadschoo@fshc.co.uk">hhmaidenheadschoo@fshc.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5–7 July 2016

## Information about this school

- Huntercombe Hospital School (Maidenhead) is an independent special school situated within Huntercombe Hospital. The school provides specialist education to students with severe mental health difficulties and illnesses. The hospital provides a Tier 4 child and adolescent mental health service.

- Most students are dual registered. They remain on the roll of their main school while being educated at the hospital school. Some students have missed considerable periods of education. The school uses one alternative provider called the Hope Service, based in Epsom.
- Currently, eight of the sixth-form students are not on the roll of any school or college. They are described as 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET).
- The school caters for four units in the hospital, including two secure units. There are five classrooms: three in the main hospital and two in the secure unit. Students in the main school are broadly grouped according to their key stage. Students in the secure unit are taught in mixed-age groups.
- The school has just established a governing body to replace the previous system of oversight.
- This is the school's second standard inspection. The previous standard inspection was on 5 July 2016, when the school's overall effectiveness was judged to be good.

## **Information about this inspection**

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- During the inspection, we met with leaders, teachers, students, the head of therapies and two members of the youth engagement team. We also met with the proprietor's representative, who is the new chair of governors.
- When considering the quality of education, we focused particularly on English, mathematics, geography and art. We visited lessons, looked at students' work, and talked to leaders, teachers and students about how teaching in these subjects builds on students' knowledge over time.
- We took into account the four responses to the staff survey. We also reviewed one parent's response to Ofsted's online parent survey and accompanying free-text message.
- We observed students' behaviour throughout the inspection. We assessed the school's culture to keep students safe.
- A wide range of documentation was considered, including policies and documentation associated with safeguarding and the school meeting all aspects of the independent school standards. The single central record of checks on the suitability of adults to work with children was also scrutinised.

## **Inspection team**

Liz Bowes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sian Thornton

Her Majesty's Inspector

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