

# Inspection of Phoenix School of Therapeutic Education

83 East Bank Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S2 3PX

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Inspection dates: 11–13 February 2020

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**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

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

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

Pupils say that they feel safe and secure at this school. This is because 'teachers are going to be here for you'. Pupils receive high-quality care and nurture from dedicated staff. As a result, pupils thrive.

Pupils like school because 'teachers put your needs first'. Bullying is rare. Pupils say that adults deal quickly with this if it does occur. Pupils behave well. They respect people's differences.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Many pupils have previously had negative experiences of school and have been too ill to attend. They rise to the challenges that their teachers set for them and produce high-quality work.

A range of specialist therapeutic programmes are instrumental in supporting pupils' well-being and mental health. These therapies help pupils to develop their confidence so that they can return to school.

Parents and carers who completed Ofsted's Parent View survey praised the school. One parent said, 'I can't thank the staff enough for what they do.'

Leaders know what to do to improve the school further and they are putting their plans into action.

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

Leaders have thoughtfully designed the curriculum. It is based on the school's vision to re-engage pupils with mental health needs in education, training or employment. Pupils are taught in one of three pathways. Pupils on the first pathway continue with their community school programme. The second pathway offers a more bespoke approach to the curriculum. It links to qualifications and interests. The third pathway includes therapy and education to support and inspire pupils who are very ill to engage and attend school. Teaching takes place on wards when pupils are too ill to come to school.

Staff have a thorough grasp of the complex and diverse needs of pupils. The curriculum is carefully personalised to each pupil. This helps pupils to gain the qualifications that they need for their next steps in life.

Leaders have made changes and improvements to the curriculum. They have provided teachers with guidance to develop their subject plans. As a result, subjects such as English, mathematics and science are well planned and organised. Pupils achieve well in English in each key stage. The teacher has a very strong subject knowledge. This ensures that work is planned to build on what pupils know and what they need to know next. In mathematics, the teacher's high level of subject knowledge ensures that all pupils have work that is planned accurately. A bespoke

programme for each pupil closes the gaps that they have in mathematical understanding.

Each pupil with a special educational need and/or disability (SEND) has an individual education plan. These plans include targets to ensure that pupils make progress across the curriculum. The targets are sometimes not precise enough to describe clearly the desired outcome. Information from education, health and care (EHC) plans is not being used well enough to inform the targets that are set for pupils.

Leaders are improving the reading curriculum. Teachers assess pupils' reading abilities and know where the pupils have gaps. Although they encourage pupils to read by providing high-quality texts, pupils do not always enjoy reading. The next step is to foster pupils' fluency, confidence and love of reading.

The relationships that staff develop with pupils are a strength of the school. Staff have detailed knowledge of the pupils' needs. Teamwork between school and the wider team of professionals ensures that all staff receive up-to-date information to keep pupils safe and on track.

The curriculum teaches pupils exceptionally well about their rights and responsibilities. They understand, respect and are tolerant of different cultures, religions and sexualities. Pupils gain accreditation in lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights.

There is an extensive range of opportunities to help pupils with their development as young people. For example, English and mathematics courses and a wide variety of vocational courses prepare pupils for the world of work. Pupils take courses in stress management and mental health awareness. Pupils marked World Mental Health Day by inviting family and carers to a bake sale. They raised awareness of suicide prevention by making speeches. This builds their confidence and resilience exceptionally well. Pupils learned about sustainability when they visited a Christmas tree farm. In anti-bullying week, they visited a theatre to see a one-woman show on cyber bullying. The author visited the school to run drama workshops and talk to the pupils about why she wrote the play.

Regular reports on pupils' attendance and progress keep parents and carers informed. The school's website contains the required information, including the school's safeguarding, health and safety and behaviour policies.

The school is well led and managed. The new headteacher shares her passion with the staff to re-engage pupils in education. She has made improvements in a short space of time. The head of education provides support to make the school even better. Pupils' attendance is improving because of better communication between school and hospital colleagues. Staff morale is high, and teachers say that they feel well supported by leaders.

The head of education and the proprietor have ensured that the independent school standards have been met. Leaders ensure that parents have information relating to

school policies via the website or on request. The school meets schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have developed a very strong culture of safeguarding in the school. They take their responsibilities for the protection of pupils very seriously. Pupils' welfare, well-being and safety are of the highest priority and are at the core of the work of the school. All staff know the individual safeguarding needs of the pupils. Staff have been well trained to identify any potential risks to the pupils. They are vigilant in their care and supervision.

Staff work very closely with other professionals to make sure that pupils get the support they need. They make daily checks to ensure that pupils are getting the help they need. When necessary, school staff make timely changes to pupils' plans.

The school is an attractive and welcoming environment. Leaders ensure that the building is well maintained and the independent school standards relating to the premises are met. Checks on fire, gas and medical equipment ensure that it is a safe place. Pupils know how to evacuate the school in an emergency because they take part in regular fire drills.

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

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

- Teachers do not use the targets contained in pupils' EHC plans well enough. This means that sometimes pupils do not make as much progress as they could. Leaders should ensure that staff make more precise use of the targets contained in pupils' EHC plans.
- Leaders recognise that pupils do not enjoy reading as much as they could. This means that sometimes, pupils are reluctant to read. Leaders have taken steps to address this and should continue to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading.

## **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>	142912
<b>DfE registration number</b>	373/6006
<b>Local authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	10126476
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 17
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	32
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Cygnets Health Care
<b>Chair</b>	Ed Hall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Katy Edmondson
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£28,000 (pro rata)
<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 279 3328
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cygnethealth.co.uk/locations/cygnets-hospital-sheffield/phoenix.school">www.cygnethealth.co.uk/locations/cygnets-hospital-sheffield/phoenix.school</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:edwardhall@cygnethealth.co.uk">edwardhall@cygnethealth.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4–6 July 2017

## Information about this school

- Phoenix School is a specialist provider of education for pupils admitted to Cygnet Hospital Sheffield. Pupils are admitted to the hospital due to a significant emotional and mental health crisis. The hospital has three wards, one of which is a psychiatric intensive care unit.
- The school is owned by Cygnet Healthcare Limited, a national provider of specialist mental health services. Pupils may have an EHC plan, but this is not a requirement for admission to the school. Referrals to the school come through the local authority and places are also commissioned directly by local schools.
- A new headteacher took up post in September 2019. The previous headteacher is the head of education to the three schools in the organisation. Approximately half of the school staff are recently appointed.
- A material change inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education on 28 June 2019 to increase the school's capacity to 38.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place in July 2017.

## 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.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the head of education, teachers and some subject leaders.
- An inspector looked at all of the documentation required to check on the independent school standards, including safeguarding information and the school's single central record.
- An inspector met with five members of the local governing body.
- An inspector spoke with four parents and took into account the six responses from Ofsted's survey, Parent View.
- An inspector discussed the school's records on attendance and behaviour, the curriculum and pupils' personal development with leaders.
- An inspector analysed the school's plans for improvement.
- Inspectors talked with pupils and took into account the 13 responses from Ofsted's online survey.
- Inspectors took into account the nine responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

- The subjects considered as part of this inspection were English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects. This entailed meeting with senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers, looking at curriculum plans, visiting lessons, speaking to pupils about their learning, and looking at pupils' work.

### **Inspection team**

Suzette Garland-Grimes, lead inspector      Ofsted Inspector

Tricia Stevens      Ofsted Inspector



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