

Inspection of Woodbourne Hospital School

Woodbourne Hospital, 21 Woodbourne Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, West Midlands B17 8BY

Inspection dates: 15 to 17 March 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

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

What is it like to attend this school?

This hospital-based school provides a safe, nurturing place for pupils. They are able to continue with learning while getting the specialist clinical attention they need.

Staff provide a mix of therapy sessions and academic lessons. This helps pupils to re-engage with education. It also prepares them for their next steps when they leave hospital. Education happens on the ward, but the school day is clearly marked by a timetable of lessons. Expectations for learning are informed by expert advice and staff take care not to overwhelm pupils. They also make sure pupils can continue with programmes of study that they started at their usual school or college.

Each pupil has a bespoke education plan and plenty of adult support. Adults understand pupils' needs and also try to give them a sense of routine. Pupils' behaviour is managed well. Bullying of any sort has not happened for a long time. Pupils are usually polite and respectful.

Pupils have a say in what happens. Each week, there is a community meeting when adults and pupils come together to share their ideas about what is going well. Pupils value this and say they feel listened to.

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

Pupils often arrive at the school at short notice and stay for short periods of time. Because of this, the curriculum aims to match pupils' home school or college programmes of study whenever possible. It is also informed by advice from different healthcare experts. All of this feeds into detailed curriculum and education plans that set out what pupils should learn and practice during their stay. Staff work hard to make sure these plans work as well as they can. It is not easy. Sometimes pupils are quick to engage. Sometimes it is a slower process. However, staff never give up. Through encouragement and praise, staff support pupils to make positive choices. Little by little, pupils do make progress. Furthermore, staff are alert to each small step. They seize upon positive moments to boost pupils' self-esteem and sense of achievement.

In mathematics, the school has a high level of subject expertise. Curriculum guidance is well organised, as is assessment. Pupils studying towards examinations continue with the right coursework. Pupils who need help to catch up get what they need. Curriculum guidance in other subjects is also well organised and mindful of pupils' specific needs. In art, for example, pupils complete meaningful activities that help them in lots of different ways.

The school's approach to reading has more mixed results. Each day starts with a reading session. One purpose of this is to mark the start of the formal school day with a predictable routine. In this regard, the sessions are successful. However, while many pupils can read, they have got out of the habit of reading. Consequently,

engagement with reading is quite low. Looking to the future, leaders could do more to promote reading as a regular school routine.

The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is well thought through, with up-to-date policies and guidance. Regular lessons cover the planned content and are responsive to any needs and issues that arise. As with other lessons, key indicators of success are the levels of pupil engagement and participation. At times, these aspects are prioritised at the expense of accurate information or feedback to pupils. In a session about multiculturalism, for instance, some of the subject content was out of date and some misconceptions were left uncorrected.

Staff teach relationships and sex education sensitively, with due regard to legal requirements. Staff emphasise the importance of knowing the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships.

Careers guidance is supported by a programme of life-skills lessons and pupils can work towards qualifications. Before the pandemic, pupils took part in work experience off site and met with staff from education and training providers. As restrictions ease, leaders plan to get these activities going again.

Staff ask pupils what they think, both through formal questionnaires and a weekly meeting. Pupils value this and say that they feel listened to. They say that the school is helping them to cope better in different situations.

Staff say that their workload is reasonable. The proprietor is mindful of staff well-being and provides access to support both within and outside of the company.

Leaders have ensured that all the school's required policies are fit for purpose. The behaviour and anti-bullying policies, for example, provide clear guidance to staff and pupils about what is and is not acceptable. Consequently, everyone has a consistent understanding of expectations.

The premises, which are housed within a hospital, meet the current independent school standards. Extra safety and security measures are in place, indoors and outside, to make the school as risk free as possible.

The school does not have a website. However, all the necessary information is available to parents on request. This includes an up-to-date safeguarding policy.

The proprietor has established effective systems and routines for gathering, sharing and acting upon information. These help to ensure that all the independent school standards continue to be met.

The school meets the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Education staff work closely with health care staff to identify and manage risks. They draw up risk assessments for each pupil, which are informed by information from several different professionals. On top of this, staff from different services meet regularly to share and review information and risks.

The school site is very secure. Staff provide high levels of supervision. All incidents are recorded and followed up. Pupils' internet access is monitored, and they do not have access to mobile phones in school.

The correct employment checks on staff are carried out. Staff are well informed about safeguarding matters.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Pupils' engagement with reading in school could be better. Staff encourage pupils to read, and books are available. However, a significant proportion of pupils either will not, or cannot, engage with reading sessions. Leaders should consider different ways to motivate pupils to engage with, and enjoy, reading.
- In PSHE, supporting pupils to take part in activities and interact with others are key objectives. However, sometimes these are prioritised at the expense of accurate or up-to-date information. Leaders should review the selection of subject matter to make sure it is meaningful, accurate and relevant.
- The head of school is new to their leadership post and is benefiting from guidance provided by the executive headteacher and the proprietor. The proprietor should continue to provide opportunities for the head to work with other leaders. The focus of this should be on developing and strengthening evaluative and strategic aspects of school leadership.
- The proprietor should continue to explore ways to strengthen the good working partnership between education and health staff. While pupils' clinical needs always need to be the number one priority, after-school activities that help to support messages from education should continue to be developed whenever possible.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

Unique reference number	142623
DfE registration number	330/6025
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10205101
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	12 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Proprietor	Aspris Children's Services Limited
Chair	Christopher Strong
Headteacher	Christina Darkes
Annual fees (day pupils)	£34,960
Telephone number	01214 346140
Website	Not applicable
Email address	ChristinaDarkes@priorygroup.com
Date of previous inspection	19–21 September 2017

Information about this school

- Woodbourne Hospital School is an independent special school that provides education for inpatients aged 12 to 18 at Woodbourne Hospital. The hospital provides mental health care.
- The school aims to help young people keep up with their home school or college's curriculums and/or re-engage with education.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school's last full inspection was in September 2017, when it was found to be a good school. In January 2022, Aspris Children's Services Limited became the new proprietor of the school.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, and other staff. The lead inspector had online meetings with the chief operations officer and the operations director of Aspris Children's Services Limited. Both inspectors spoke with pupils.
- Inspectors focused on these subjects: mathematics, art, reading and PSHE. In these subjects, inspectors talked to staff about the curriculum, visited lessons, looked at work, and spoke with pupils. Inspectors also looked at information from other subjects.
- Inspectors examined several documents. These included school policies and records relating to safeguarding, the curriculum, complaints, health and safety, pupils' behaviour, leadership and proprietor oversight. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys of staff, and pupils' and parents' views.
- Inspectors checked the single central record of employment checks on staff, looked at pupils' records and talked with staff about safeguarding matters.
- The lead inspector checked that the premises complied with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and levels of supervision throughout the day.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Huw Bishop

Ofsted Inspector

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