

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Pilgrim Pathways School

Block 19, Ida Darwin, Fulbourn, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB21 5EE

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Inspection dates: 12 and 13 July 2022

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

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

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for at Pilgrim Pathways School. Staff members get to know pupils from the moment they are admitted to the hospitals. Pupils and school staff build positive, trusting relationships. Pupils feel safe. They are treated with kindness, dignity and respect and reflect this in how they behave towards staff, other pupils and visitors. Bullying and acts of unkindness are very rare. They are dealt with effectively on the few occasions they occur.

Pupils are often seriously ill when they join the school. They study an individual curriculum that considers their educational and medical needs well. School staff work closely with medical staff to ensure that the education provided supports pupils' recovery. Staff are highly ambitious for pupils. They challenge pupils to fulfil their potential. Pupils who are at the school for longer periods are supported to achieve meaningful qualifications. Pupils receive helpful guidance about their future ideas and plans. They continue with, or return to, education successfully.

Pupils who need help in developing positive behaviours and attitudes to learning receive this support from caring staff. There is a friendly, positive atmosphere where almost all pupils work diligently and with enthusiasm to achieve their best.

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

Staff are adept at finding out what pupils already know and can do when they join any one of the school's centres. Leaders use this information to construct an individual curriculum for each pupil that builds on their previous learning. Occasionally, teachers do not identify precisely the knowledge that they want pupils to learn in subjects other than English and mathematics. Planned activities sometimes do not focus on what teachers

intend for pupils to learn. This means that pupils miss out on some opportunities for learning across the full curriculum.

Teachers have secure knowledge of the subjects that they teach. They check carefully on pupils' learning. Teachers question and talk with pupils particularly well to do this. They spot pupils' mistakes and explain things clearly. This helps pupils learn and remember new knowledge.

Leaders place a high priority on the teaching of reading. Younger pupils read books that let them practise the sounds that they know and have been taught. This helps them read with accuracy and understanding. Any pupils who struggle with reading are expertly taught by knowledgeable staff. This helps these pupils catch up. Pupils at all centres have regular opportunities to read. Leaders find books and authors to gain pupils' interest. Leaders have firm plans in place to provide even more opportunities for pupils to read a variety of high-quality books.

Almost all pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff know individual pupils' needs particularly well. Staff know how pupils' medical needs impact on learning. Staff know how to best support pupils with a range of SEND. They are particularly knowledgeable about supporting pupils' social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.

Pupils display positive attitudes to learning. Some pupils have missed long periods of education or have struggled in their previous schools. They are supported well to re-engage with education and learning over their time at the school.

School staff work closely with other professionals in the hospitals to construct individual programmes which support each pupil's personal development. There is a strong focus on developing relationships and helping pupils look after their mental health. This builds pupils' resilience, independence and social and emotional development. This is a notable strength.

Despite changes in leadership, staff vacancies and the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, staff feel well supported by school leaders. The local authority has provided support to ensure stability during challenging and changing times. The management committee is increasing its involvement in overseeing and supporting school leaders following a period where this has not been the case. The management committee has put in place plans to widen the range of expertise of its members to do this more effectively.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that the curriculum in foundation subjects and actions to develop leadership and management further may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is at the centre of staff's work with pupils. Staff are well trained. They are highly alert to the signs of risk and vulnerabilities of pupils.

Concerns are acted upon appropriately and quickly. School staff share information with other professionals to ensure a joined up, holistic approach to keeping pupils safe.

Leaders ensure that pupils have a curriculum that teaches them to keep safe.

Pupils learn safe and responsible use of the internet and social media. Leaders work jointly with health professionals to teach pupils to recognise risk and stay safe.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- For some pupils who have had long periods not engaging with education, teachers and leaders have not precisely identified what they want pupils to learn in foundation subjects. Teachers sometimes plan activities that do not focus on what they intend pupils to learn. These weaknesses impact on pupils' progress. Leaders should ensure that curriculum plans for all pupils identify precisely the knowledge that pupils should learn and that teachers plan suitable activities that help focus on this knowledge.
- The management committee has only recently started to engage again with staff following easing of COVID-19 restrictions. They have been limited in the support and challenge they have provided to school leaders and staff during a period of change. The management committee should ensure that its members have the range of experience and expertise required to support and challenge school leaders highly effectively.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in September 2011.

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

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	134765
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211010
<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	29
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nadine Gooding-Hebert
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.pilgrim.cambs.sch.uk">www.pilgrim.cambs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Pilgrim Pathways School was previously called Pilgrim PRU (pupil referral unit).
- The school provides education for pupils with complex social, emotional and mental health needs at three sites (Croft, Darwin and Phoenix) based at Ida Darwin Hospital. Pupils with physical health needs are taught at Addenbrooke's Hospital. All pupils are hospital inpatients.
- The school has undergone significant leadership and staffing changes since the previous section 8 inspection. There have been two changes in headteacher. The current headteacher took up the post in April 2022 and was previously the deputy headteacher. There are two new heads of centre at The Croft and Addenbrookes. Some teachers are new to the school. At the time of this inspection, the school had seven staff vacancies. Leaders had successfully recruited to five of these posts for September 2022.
- The management committee has undergone significant changes in membership.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the teachers in charge at each centre, staff members and three members of the management committee. The lead inspector also spoke with two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, personal, social, health and economic education and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke with leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To check the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed a range of policies, procedures and records, including the single central record of pre-employment checks. The lead inspector met with the headteacher to discuss her work as the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and with the deputy DSL. Examples of the actions taken to keep pupils safe were reviewed. Inspectors spoke with pupils and checked staff members' understanding of how to keep pupils safe from harm.
- Inspectors considered the responses and free-text comments to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, the responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire. Inspectors also spoke with parents, pupils, and staff. Inspectors reviewed questionnaires and feedback provided to school leaders by parents and pupils.

## Inspection team

Paul Wilson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ashley Best-White

Ofsted Inspector

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