

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Oxfordshire Hospital School

C/O St Nicholas Primary, Raymund Road, Old Marston, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX3 0PJ

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Inspection dates: 13 and 14 June 2023

## **Outcome**

Oxfordshire Hospital School continues to be an outstanding school.

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

Pupils achieve extremely well during their time at Oxfordshire Hospital School. Adults have very high expectations for pupils' achievement. They sensitively and positively support pupils to engage with learning when pupils are well enough to do so. Pupils value the one-to-one teaching they receive. Pupils behave extremely well. They feel listened to and know that they quickly get the right help they need to learn.

Teaching staff expertly build warm, professional and trusting relationships with pupils. They get to know pupils very well. This helps staff to tailor each pupil's curriculum to meet their medical and educational needs exceptionally well.

Pupils show positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy their lessons and feel happy and very safe. Pupils who are inpatients say that doing schoolwork gives them a sense of normality in an environment that is anything but normal for them. Pupils in the outreach provision value the carefully stepped approach taken to re-engage them in learning.

The positive, well-staffed environment limits any potential for bullying. Teaching staff act quickly to support pupils should any be unkind to each other outside of the school environment.

Parents and carers praise the teaching staff for their compassionate, nurturing approach. One parent said the school was the answer to her prayers.

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

Oxfordshire Hospital School succeeds in its aim to support pupils who are medically unable to attend their enrolled school to continue their learning. Leaders' attention to detail helps the school to meet their high ambitions for pupils' academic achievement and emotional and social well-being. Many pupils have been out of education for a long time before joining the school. One example of the school's achievement is the very high

proportion of pupils who successfully reintegrate back into a school when they are well enough to do so.

Teaching staff are experts at assessing pupils' starting points. Staff liaise with pupils' enrolled school, their healthcare professionals and with the pupils themselves. They use the information from these conversations to plan a highly bespoke curriculum that meets each pupil's needs extremely well. Most pupils initially focus on learning English, mathematics and science, including to GCSE level for older pupils. Reading has an especially strong focus for pupils of all ages. Those who need to, learn phonics using the programme followed by their enrolled school. Pupils relish taking books back to their ward or home to read with their families.

Teaching staff are highly trained in hospital education. This includes knowing how to adapt learning to meet medical needs and the needs of any pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers have strong specialist knowledge of the subjects they teach. All this enables all teaching staff to be highly responsive to pupils. For example, staff recognise that pupils' memory and ability to learn new things are often affected by their health and medication. They adeptly respond to pupils' changing needs, adapting the curriculum and recapping on prior teaching to help pupils learn extremely well. Teaching staff have high expectations. They make sure that pupils are able to keep up with learning during their stay in hospital or while part of the outreach programme. Impressively, many pupils who are behind when they join the school catch up by the end of their stay. This includes those pupils who have been out of education for a significant period of time before they join the school.

The curriculum broadens to include subjects such as art, food technology and humanities if pupils are well enough. Lessons are planned not only to build learning in a particular subject, but are also built around the school's values. This provides a useful backbone to the curriculum, helping learning to make sense for pupils whose attendance might be necessarily sporadic. Importantly, this approach helps pupils to feel that they are contributing to the community of the school, even though they might not learn with other pupils very often due to their medical needs.

The school's focus on pupils' wider development is exceptional. Personal, social and health education is highly bespoke. Gaps in knowledge about healthy relationships are skilfully uncovered and filled in an age-appropriate way. Planning for pupils return to school or home, and for later life and work, is carefully considered. Adults know that for many pupils, especially those who have significant medical, social, emotional or mental health needs, thinking about the future is particularly difficult. Pupils told us how much they appreciate this aspect of the curriculum because it 'caters for me specifically' and helps them to think positively about their next stages.

Leaders and governors recognise the dedication of staff. They make sure their well-being is strongly prioritised. Staff are extremely, and rightly, proud to work at the school.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff are well trained in safeguarding and child protection. They constantly check on pupils' well-being and safety. Communication with other agencies, in particular the NHS, is very strong. This means that pupils quickly get any additional help they need to keep safe.

Staff make sure that pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet and when in their local community. Staff carefully tailor help to meet pupils' needs.

Leaders check thoroughly that staff are suitable to work with children. Leaders also check the safety of the different places in the community used as part of the outreach provision.

## 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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in July 2017.

## 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.

## 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>	123337
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10242070
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	0
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Andy Rattue
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steve Lowe
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ohs.oxon.sch.uk">www.ohs.oxon.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 and 7 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The Oxfordshire Hospital School caters for pupils who are experiencing medical or mental health conditions. The school has three settings, two of which admit pupils as inpatients and a third which supports pupils as part of the outreach provision.
- Pupils with a range of medical and surgical needs are admitted as inpatients to the John Radcliffe Hospital, Douglas House and Helen House Hospice (Oxford). Pupils are also admitted as inpatients to The Highfield Adolescent Unit, which is a psychiatric unit for young people with mental health needs.
- The outreach provision supports pupils in the community with medical or mental health needs. Pupils are taught at home, in the community or in their enrolled schools.
- The school population is very fluid. Pupils are admitted to hospital or identified as requiring outreach support because of a medical or mental health need. Pupils remain on the roll of their enrolled school during their time attending the hospital school. When they are discharged from hospital, or no longer require outreach support for a

medical or mental health need, they are no longer part of the hospital school. The school teaches around 600 pupils over the course of a year, and typically 50 pupils at any one time.

- The registration on GIAS does not take account of the difference in how NHS categorises age ranges, so in practice the school typically teaches children and young people aged from 4 to 17.
- The range of SEND in the school continually change. All pupils have a medical or mental health need and many may have education, health and care plans. Pupils' needs typically include autistic spectrum condition, social and emotional mental health needs and profound and multiple learning disabilities.
- The current headteacher took up his post in 2018.
- Since the last inspection, the interim executive board disbanded and a full governing body has been in place since 2019.
- The school uses no providers 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 met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other leaders, including leaders of learning and the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), who is also the special educational needs coordinator.
- The lead inspector discussed the strategic oversight of the school with a small group of governors and with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors also spoke with and received written representation from some staff who work for the NHS.
- Inspectors visited John Radcliffe Hospital and the Highfield Adolescent Unit. They also met with leaders to discuss the outreach provision.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and personal, social and health education. For each subject, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited samples of lessons, spoke with teachers, looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke with pupils.
- Inspectors also explored the quality of education through sampling curriculum planning and pupils' work, and by exploring numerous case studies.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including policy documents, governor minutes, external reports on the school, behaviour and safety records.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors met with the DSL, leaders and staff. They scrutinised the single central record of recruitment checks and other safeguarding information, including a range of risk assessments.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed from staff and parents via Ofsted's confidential staff and Parent View surveys, as well as speaking to some parents on the telephone and considering letters sent to the inspector via the school during the

inspection. Inspectors considered pupils' views through their submissions to the confidential pupil survey, and spoke with some pupils during lessons.

### **Inspection team**

Catherine Old, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Louise Ling

Ofsted Inspector

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