

Inspection of Elysium Healthcare Potters Bar Clinic School

Barnet Road, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire, Potters Bar EN6 2SE

Inspection dates: 13 to 15 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Outstanding
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Leadership and management	Good
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Sixth-form provision	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

When they arrive, pupils are at a point of extreme crisis in their lives. They have experienced previous educational disruption. The school is a respite from pupils' distress. The carefully managed transition process helps them settle. A typical parental comment thanked the school for, 'giving my child something to live for.'

Pupils' well-being is at the heart of the school's mission. They are kept safe. Due to significant risks from social media, pupils learn in depth about online safety. They appreciate the strong relationships with staff. Pupils develop trust and behave well.

There are high expectations for learning. This is the same when lessons are in the hospital wards. Pupils gain qualifications, such as GCSEs. This helps them move successfully onto their next stage.

Pupils benefit from an excellent personal development programme and high-quality enrichment opportunities. They learn widely about possible careers. This helps pupils consider and plan their futures. From the moment they arrive in school, pupils improve their resilience. If they struggle to attend, carefully-planned activities help them engage. For example, a business development project is a bridge into more structured learning. As a result, pupils turn corners. They are better prepared for life in the outside world.

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

The school has planned a curriculum that meets the needs of pupils, and students in the sixth form. The curriculum identifies what should be taught, such as key vocabulary. The school assesses what pupils already know when they join the school. Teachers use this information to help them adapt the curriculum so that it builds closely on prior knowledge. This helps to rectify gaps in pupils' knowledge. This includes gaps in reading. If pupils find reading hard, they get the help they require. This means pupils achieve well.

Staff mostly teach the curriculum well. They typically have appropriate subject knowledge, for example to teach sixth form students. Teachers explain learning clearly. They check that pupils understand and remember what they learn. Where needed, content is revisited so that pupils do not have misconceptions. Pupils build up what they know. They produce work they are proud of. While this is the case, there are some occasions where teachers set learning activities that do not help pupils understand new content. This is because staff have not had the quality of training they need to do this consistently well. As a result, there are instances where pupils do not secure as detailed an understanding of knowledge as they might.

The school gives appropriate support for pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils collaborate closely with leaders to plan the help they need with their well-being. This is regularly and closely reviewed, to ensure pupils social and emotional needs are met. However, there are occasions where staff do not use

the specific strategies the school has identified for pupils with SEND. This means pupils do not consistently have the support they need to access the curriculum fully. This can lead to pupils not engaging with their learning as well as they might.

The school has high expectations for behaviour. Clear routines and rewards help pupils respond well. Staff address any issues consistently and supportively. Incidents of behaviour and safeguarding are uncommon. Where they occur, staff deal with them well. For example, well-considered restorative conversations help pupils reflect on their conduct. This supports pupils to show respect for peers and adults.

The school has robust processes for addressing any concerns with attendance. It works closely with the hospital if pupils cannot attend lessons. As a result, pupils' attendance improves over time.

The way the school promotes pupils' personal development is exemplary. The school plans personal, social and health education (PSHE) meticulously because of pupils' vulnerabilities. For instance, staff teach sixth formers important sex education in a way they can access. Leaders go above and beyond in helping pupils have the experiences they need and deserve. Work experience happens in the hospital. Pupils go on virtual trips, such as to parliament, to learn about democracy. They develop leadership skills through ward community meetings. This coherent and bespoke offer helps young people who are at crisis point find new purpose in their lives.

The proprietor body has the knowledge needed to support and challenge the school. For example, it has increased the educational expertise on the management committee. This means the proprietor body has an accurate view of the quality of provision. It is able to act quickly and effectively to improve the school where required.

The proprietor body and leaders carefully check on staff well-being. They ensure staff get regular support, such as supervision. This helps staff to be resilient in the face of often upsetting aspects of work in the school.

The proprietor body ensures the provision meets all the independent school standards. There is an appropriate and up-to-date safeguarding policy. The correct vetting checks are made on new and current staff. The website provides the information that parents and local authorities require. Rigorous health and safety processes mean that the school site is safe. The school uses risk assessment very effectively to safeguard and support pupils. The proprietor ensures they fulfil statutory responsibilities, such as complying with equalities legislation.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- There are occasions where staff do not use the specific strategies pupils with SEND need to access the curriculum. This means there are instances where pupils with SEND do not engage with their learning as well as they might. The school should ensure that staff understand how to use effective strategies to support pupils' SEND.
- In some instances, staff have not had the quality of training they need in how to teach the curriculum effectively. This means there are occasions where the activities they set pupils to complete do not enable them to secure their understanding of important content. The school needs to ensure staff get the pedagogical training they need so that they understand how to provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop a detailed knowledge of the curriculum

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.

School details

Unique reference number	145962
DfE registration number	919/6009
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10299242
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	8
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	2
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Elysium Healthcare Limited
Chair	Kathryn Murphy
Headteacher	David Wilson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£36,075
Telephone number	01707858585
Website	www.elysiumhealthcare.co.uk/education/schools/potters-bar-clinic-school/
Email address	Dwilson@elysiumeducation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 to 24 June 2021

Information about this school

- Pupils who attend this school are patients at Potters Bar Clinic.
- Potters Bar Clinic provides Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) tier 4 low secure services through the National Health Service for pupils with personality disorders and complex social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The proprietor for this school is also the proprietor for three other specialist schools: Rhodes Wood Hospital School, Brighton and Hove Clinic School and Cotswold Spa Hospital School. There is a head of education, who undertakes quality assurance work across all four schools.
- The school provides full-time education to pupils with SEND. Some of the pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Some of the pupils are in the sixth form. If students are on roll when they reach 18, they are classed as adults and leave the school at that point.
- Admission to the school is via admission to the clinic. Pupils' places are funded by their local authority. The school is registered to take a maximum of 30 pupils from the age of 11 to 19 years.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- Inspection history:
 - Ofsted conducted a pre-registration inspection of the school in June 2018.
 - The school received its first full standard inspection in March 2019. The inspection judged that the school's overall effectiveness was inadequate. There were 10 unmet independent school standards.
 - In May 2019, the DfE issued a statutory warning notice. The proprietor was required to provide an action plan to highlight how unmet standards were going to be addressed. In July 2019, an action plan was evaluated by Ofsted as acceptable.
 - Ofsted conducted a progress monitoring inspection in October 2019, commissioned by the DfE. Five of the independent school standards remained unmet.
 - In February 2020, following the progress monitoring inspection in October 2019, an action plan was evaluated by Ofsted as not acceptable.
 - The school received a standard inspection in June 2021. The school was judged to be good. All the independent school standards were met.

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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, staff, and pupils. A healthcare assistant from the hospital was present when inspectors met with pupils. As part of evaluating governance, the lead inspector spoke by phone with the proprietor. Inspectors also met with hospital leaders and staff, including the hospital director, to understand the multi-disciplinary teamworking.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, humanities and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with the headteacher, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, met with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and learning in some other subjects.
- As part of evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors met with leaders, governors, staff and pupils. Inspectors scrutinised the school's single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. They considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- As part of checking compliance with the independent school standards, and evaluating other areas of provision, inspectors scrutinised a range of policies and documents. They checked the safety and appropriateness of the school site.
- During inspections, Ofsted seeks views through the online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and questionnaires for staff and pupils. In this inspection, there were too few responses to consider. Inspectors considered the free-text responses they received from parents. Inspectors also spoke to parents by phone.

Inspection team

Charlie Fordham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jessie Linsley

His Majesty's Inspector

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