

# Inspection of Chelmsford Hospital School

Stump Lane, Springfield Green, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 7SJ

---

Inspection dates: 12 to 14 March 2024

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

---

The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Sixth-form provision

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

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

Within a short space of time, pupils start to see themselves in a new light. This is because staff go the extra mile to make sure that pupils experience success. This starts with helping pupils to take small but important steps to re-engage with education. Pupils can continue with their studies, or they can start afresh with new and interesting projects. Excellent training ensures that staff are well equipped to design thoughtful lessons. This means that every moment a pupil spends in the classroom or with school staff on the ward is valuable and rewarding. Many pupils go on to obtain qualifications such as GCSEs.

School routines and high expectations convey important messages to pupils about self-worth and resilience. This is beneficial for pupils' education and their recovery at the hospital. Pupils find that these expectations make for calm and productive lessons. Interactions between staff and pupils foster politeness and mutual respect.

Pupils learn that being in hospital is not a barrier to thinking about and engaging with the wider world. This is because the school brings the wider world to them. This takes the form of visitors, trips and a curriculum organised around key events such as World Music Day. Staff ensure that all these opportunities are safe and purposeful.

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

The curriculum is organised into weekly themes. It also sets out key knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn. Initially, staff encourage pupils to engage with simple and appropriate low-stress activities such as quizzes. These activities provide an important space for pupils to build a rapport with staff. Staff use these activities, alongside information from pupils' home schools to understand what pupils know and can do. This helps staff to plan for what pupils will learn next.

Staff use their subject expertise, a range of resources and techniques to help pupils learn new knowledge. Staff explain new concepts with clarity and precision. Staff are adept at building the curriculum around pupils' recovery. The school supports staff to do this well, for example by teaching staff about how medicines affect pupils' ability to concentrate and learn. As a result, the school helps pupils to overcome any kind of barrier to learning.

The school enables pupils to continue their studies towards qualifications such as GCSEs. The school rightly believes that all young people, regardless of their educational choices, benefit from engaging with a wide range of literature. Pupils develop a love of reading and staff go out of their way to provide reading material matched to their interests. Staff encourage pupils who are not in education or training to take up their offer of support. All pupils sign up to this offer. Pupils benefit from this support, which includes liaison with external professionals. It means that when they leave the school, they have a plan. Often this involves attending a local college.

The school regularly checks pupils' engagement, attendance and educational progress. Pupils take part in this collaborative process. This means that pupils regularly receive praise and quickly recognise their own achievements. This promotes pupils' self-esteem. The school shares information about pupils' progress with parents and carers and other professionals who work closely with the pupils.

The school uses important rules and routines that promote positive conduct and readiness to learn. Pupils rise to the challenge. It makes them feel valued. Pupils' engagement builds rapidly. Staff foster a sense of community which also contributes to pupils' positive attitudes.

The school carefully adapts the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum to meet pupils' needs. Staff teach pupils about their own and others' cultures through subjects such as English. Careers education is highly personalised. Staff make sure that every pupil has their own plan for future study and work. This helps pupils to build the confidence to think about the future. The school maintains communication with pupils' home schools and makes new connections with prospective education providers for pupils who are not in education or training.

The proprietor and the school are committed to high-quality education for pupils. The proprietor has implemented an extensive system of checks to ensure that the school is compliant with the independent school standards. School leaders' checks also ensure that pupils' safety and well-being are prioritised. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, including provision of an accessibility plan. The school has access to a range of networks of support within the organisation. This enables sharing of subject and leadership expertise. The school works closely with medical professionals. They consider themselves one team, united by a shared vision for pupils' positive recovery.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142537
<b>DfE registration number</b>	881/6065
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10299231
<b>Type of school</b>	Other Independent School
<b>School category</b>	Independent School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	6
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Aspris Children's Services Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	John Anderson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Clare Drury
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£39,645
<b>Telephone number</b>	01245 244 711
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.aspris.com">www.aspris.com</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:chelmsfordhospitalschool@aspriscs.co.uk">chelmsfordhospitalschool@aspriscs.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	14 to 16 January 2020

## Information about this school

- The school, which caters for 11 pupils, is based at the Priory Hospital in Chelmsford. Pupils access the educational provision through being admitted to the hospital as inpatients, often under the Mental Health Act 1983.
- The school caters for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Some pupils have an educational, health and care plan. All pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- There is no separate sixth form. Pupils of all ages are taught together. All pupils have individual learning programmes.
- The school opened on 1 January 2015. On 3 February 2016, the school was registered with the Department for Education.
- Inspection history: Ofsted conducted a pre-registration inspection on 19 January 2016, and the school was inspected by Ofsted in March 2017 and January 2020. At the most recent previous inspection, the school met all the independent school standards and was judged to be outstanding.
- In August 2021, Aspris HoldCo Limited acquired Aspris Children's Services Limited. Prior to this, Aspris Children's Services Limited (previously named Priory Education Services Limited) had separated from the Priory group of companies.
- The executive headteacher was appointed at the start of 2024.
- The current headteacher was appointed at Easter 2017.

## 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.
- 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.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, the executive headteacher, the hospital director and the ward doctor. The lead inspector also spoke via telephone to the organisation's head of quality and the chair of the proprietor.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science and PSHE. In each area, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited

a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke with pupils and staff about other areas of learning, such as art.

- Inspectors spoke by telephone to a parent and a representative of the local authority.
- To check the school's compliance with the independent school standards, the lead inspector reviewed a range of school documentation.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of how the school liaises with hospital safeguarding leads; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and staff both formally and informally to understand their views of the school. Inspectors also considered the school's records of parent feedback.

### **Inspection team**

Hannah Stoten, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tessa Holledge

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2024