

Inspection of a good school: Hospital Education Service

Whitmore Park Annexe, Rylston Avenue, Coventry CV6 2HD

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 July 2024

Outcome

Hospital Education Service continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a diamond of a school hidden in plain sight. The three strands of its work are carefully woven together; it helps pupils who are often at their most vulnerable. It has been carefully built on the 'SPIRE' values of success, perseverance, integrity, respect and empathy, which are lived by staff and pupils alike.

The school holds high aspirations for the pupils when they cannot do this for themselves. Staff help pupils towards a rapid return to a mainstream school or another setting when possible. This is true across all aspects of the school's work. All pupils are supported to make their best next step, with staff often going above and beyond to make this happen. Pupils who complete their time at the Whitmore Park Annexe achieve high-quality qualifications, often exceeding their own expectations.

Pupils have very strong and positive relationships with staff, who they know want the best for them. They feel safe. Pupils know that they can turn to staff for support for whatever they need to talk about, and they do so. Pupils enjoy the excellent range of opportunities that help them engage with the wider world. They are encouraged to take up ambassador roles, and enjoy them greatly. For example, they actively organise school events and support each other's well-being.

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

Pupils receive a high-quality education. The school's ambition and impact are clear in each area of its work. There is always careful consideration of pupils' background, current situation and additional needs. The pathways at the Whitmore Park Annexe, the bespoke home tuition and delivery on the hospital site all demonstrate this. The 'Whitmore Way' is lived out by staff as they deliver, support and assess their pupils very effectively. Teachers shape the curriculum in responsive ways to address pupils' gaps in their understanding from the disruption that they have experienced to their education.

There is a great calmness and assurance in how staff work with pupils. Pupils are known and understood. This allows staff to anticipate where they are going to need help. Learning is carefully planned and implemented to help overcome barriers and support pupils with their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The provision for pupils with SEND is a significant strength. Pupils' needs are identified clearly; they have their learning supported superbly and they therefore succeed well.

Reading is central to the work done to support pupils. They develop a love of reading and this is actively shared among the school community. Pupils at the earliest stages of reading, regardless of their age or medical situation, are helped to either keep up or catch up effectively. Pupils are encouraged to talk and share their ideas in the lessons. However, pupils are not active in this. Leaders are aware of the need to develop pupils' oracy. The school knows the importance of clear verbal expression for pupils' next step and are working to develop this.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They are helped to understand themselves and their own feelings. Over time, pupils attend more and benefit from increased engagement with their pathway and their peers. Leaders closely monitor pupils' attendance and how they engage best in learning. Staff rebuild pupils' confidence through a range of supportive programmes. Skilful practitioners help pupils very effectively. Two examples of this are in the support offered for mental health and the development of pupils' social skills. Pupils make significant gains from both their learning and being part of the school community.

There is careful integration of wider experiences into the curriculum. Pupils are helped to recover from their fractured experiences through personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) lessons and inspiring trips. These allow pupils to grow in their own aspirations and realise what is possible for them. The work to support pupils' understanding of future careers paths and their transition to those next steps is exceptional.

Leaders at all levels are considerate, strategic and wholeheartedly ambitious for those in their care. They have created a culture which is enormously positive and inclusive. Staff share a strong sense of being a team and know their workload is well considered. Close, constructive working relationships exist with health colleagues. This ensures that details about any needs and safeguarding information are well shared to support the great numbers of pupils encountered. Parents talk highly of the support and education that their children receive. Many expressed how the school has been a 'lifesaver', helping their children to achieve well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils do not always express their thinking verbally in lessons. As a result, some barriers remain to pupils feeling equipped to do so. The school should work with staff to develop pupils' skills and confidence in expressing themselves to better prepare them for their next steps.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 good in February 2019.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	134970
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	10322812
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	James Gillum
Head of service	Sharon Cutler
Website	www.coventry.gov.uk/hospitaleducationservice
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Hospital Education Service has two locations. One is situated on three paediatric wards at University Hospital of Coventry and Warwickshire. Most pupils are short-term admissions. The other is the Whitmore Park Annexe, where most pupils stay for longer and are in key stage 4. Many had poor attendance in their previous schools.
- The school also supports pupils through home tuition, in person and online.
- The school helps pupils who have SEND, including social, emotional and mental health needs, and education, health and care plans.
- At the time of the inspection, 47 pupils were dual registered with the provision.
- The school uses one alternative provider, which is unregistered.
- During the previous and current academic year, the school has worked with many pupils through the hospital service it runs.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 11 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the head of service, the two assistant headteachers, governors from the management committee, the local authority representative, other senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics 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.
- The inspectors visited the education provision run by the school at the University Hospital of Coventry and Warwickshire.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors looked at records and spoke to staff in relation to attendance, behaviour, PSHE, careers and bullying.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including leaders' plans to improve the school and their self-evaluation of the school's work.
- The inspectors took account of responses to the staff survey and the Ofsted Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Richard Wakefield, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Barry Yeadsley

His Majesty's Inspector

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