

Hospital Education Service

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134970
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	294233
Inspection date	16 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Steven Parker

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	40
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Anne Walker
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	UHCW Clifford Bridge Road Walsgrave CV2 2DX
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The Hospital Education Service educates pupils who are out of school as a result of accident or illness. It provides education on three paediatric wards in the new University Hospital through its hospital school and, where appropriate, in pupils' homes through its tuition service. Hospital admissions are mostly for very short periods of up to three days. There is, however, a significant minority of pupils (around 10%) who stay longer term or are frequently admitted patients because of their chronic conditions. Over a third of these pupils come from the surrounding authorities of Warwickshire, Leicestershire or Solihull. Those in receipt of home tuition are resident in the City of Coventry and have a physical difficulty (often following hospitalisation), a mental health diagnosis or are experiencing other difficulties that cause them to be absent from school. The great majority of these pupils are aged 11 to 16. The social backgrounds of pupils across both elements of the service reflect the wide diversity of the service's catchment area.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The service offers good quality education for its pupils and their families. For pupils who attend the hospital wards, the educational support they receive enables them to well maintain their learning whilst being absent from school. Those who have longer-term contact with the staff make good progress, and, when they are studying for GCSE examinations, often achieve impressive results. Pupils in receipt of home tuition have frequently had earlier unsettled times in school, and many experience success for the first time in their careers as a result of the focused one-to-one teaching they get. Parents and carers praise the service's positive impact on their children's education and appreciate the sensitive and empathetic support they receive during what is often a stressful time in their lives. The service works in very effective partnership with hospital staff and the many other agencies that are involved. Good collaboration with pupils' schools in regard to curricular requirements and reintegration ensure pupils' continuity of educational experience. Good pastoral care and academic guidance help pupils to cope well with the difficulties they are experiencing and, for those involved longer term, ensure their good personal development and well-being.

The transient nature of the service's pupil population provides a challenge which is well met. A good, broad and relevant curriculum is planned and taught well by a strong staff team, employed on both permanent contracts and through sessional arrangements. This ensures that particular subject expertise can be provided if required for an individual pupil. It also enables a flexible and efficient response to the continually changing numbers in each element of the service. However, the service's approach to recording pupils' progress and achievements and using that information for planning and other purposes is inconsistent, especially for home tuition pupils. Teachers and their assistants work well together in the hospital setting to assess pupils' capabilities and interests and provide personalised learning on the ward or in small groups in the school room. Good quality learning resources, including laptop computers and well chosen software, minimise the limitations imposed by the different settings and engage pupils' interest well. Good quality relationships between all pupils and staff encourage pupils to try hard and do their best.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has provided a strong and effective lead through the difficult periods of change that the service has experienced, most especially during the recent relocation of the hospital school from two differing sites onto its a single site at the new hospital. She has managed difficult staff restructuring sympathetically, with the good, professional support of her senior colleagues, who manage the two elements of the service successfully. The pressure of these challenges has, though, resulted in formal monitoring and evaluation procedures for pupils' and staff performance not being effective and, consequently, not properly informing improvement planning. In spite of this, the service knows itself well and has a realistic picture of its strengths and required areas for improvement. These align with the findings of the inspection, although the service is overly cautious in its own self-evaluation. The steering group, whose role it is to critically monitor the service's work on a regular basis, provides good support and encouragement, but is not so successful at holding the service to account. The service has strong capacity for further improvement and provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop more effective approaches to monitor performance and record evidence across the service, so that there are better ways to analyse the information collected in order to demonstrate pupils' progress and achievement and inform planning to improve the service's work.
- Complete the process of reviewing and restructuring the work of the steering group in order to facilitate its sharper scrutiny of the service.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils in the service have a very wide range of ability, with some, especially those tutored at home, underperforming because of their previous fractured education. Whilst information on their achievement and progress is not as detailed as it could be, there is sufficient evidence available to indicate that short-term pupils, no matter what their difficulties are, sustain their performance and longer-term pupils make good progress. As a result, those who perform standard assessment tasks and others who study for GCSE examinations achieve well. The service's appropriately strong focus on the core skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology ensures that when pupils return to school they can settle back well into their studies. More focused support in other subjects helps pupils to achieve good results in their studies.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development of pupils is good. Pupils appreciate the good relationships that are fostered by the staff and these contribute significantly to their emotional well-being. They develop a good understanding of the importance of living healthy lives, keeping safe and how to manage situations that they find difficult. Despite their difficulties, pupils enjoy their education because of the personalised encouragement and support that brings learning alive. This is especially so for those taught at home, who appreciate the way teachers celebrate their successes. Behaviour is good, as a result of structure and consistency and, where they have a choice, pupils' attendance is good, often much better than previously. Their spiritual, moral and cultural sensitivities are developed well and the positive, enabling atmosphere of the service encourages good social skills. Pupils develop an understanding of the workplace and are successfully prepared for their future lives. They are helped to understand their rights and responsibilities and the service is actively involved in an initiative to encourage and develop their 'patients' voice'. Longer-term pupils support charity events and are sympathetically enabled to access social activities, although these are understandably difficult to arrange.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good, depending importantly on creativity and flexibility to meet constantly changing demands. Staff encourage pupils to work successfully through their sometimes initial negativity, planning work carefully to take full account of their individual needs, teaching to pupils' strengths and providing engaging activities. The unusually close and

trusting nature of relationships sometimes prompts pupils to admit difficulties in particular areas of work, and this can then provide a valuable focus for their learning. When teaching longer-term pupils, teachers work collaboratively with their home schools to ensure that targets take account of prior learning, whilst challenging them to be ambitious for the future. Teachers' good subject expertise is well used to enable pupils to enter successfully for a range of GCSEs. Older pupils who are taking examinations that require coursework are helped effectively to build up their portfolios. Teachers' use of assessment to demonstrate pupils' progress is inconsistent, but satisfactory overall. The best examples of developing practice recognise and value pupils' varying learning styles. Teachers in both settings work in valuable partnership with parents and carers to nurture productive relationships. Home tutors especially encourage parents to be involved in ensuring that homework is completed and supporting their children in any necessary research.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because it is well planned to provide an engaging and relevant range of activities, whilst offering nearly all National Curriculum subjects. It is, for example, not possible to provide either music or physical education in the service's particular circumstances. Careful individual tailoring of programmes ensures that all pupils, no matter what their backgrounds or capabilities, are appropriately stretched and experience successful learning. There are imaginative opportunities for pupils to take part in practical activities through, for example, science, art and design and design and technology. A well planned personal, social, health and citizenship programme plays an important role in meeting the requirements of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda. Pupils in receipt of home tuition are enabled to participate in limited work experience placements and a programme of work related learning. The service is actively involved in a valuable local authority initiative which is successfully developing e-learning opportunities to enable pupils at home to use computers and the internet to access areas of the curriculum on-line that they might not otherwise be able to experience.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good, being a significant strength of the service's work. All safeguarding requirements and procedures are rigorous and secure, reflecting the reality that all staff have pupils' welfare at the centre of their concern. Well focused pastoral support ensures that pupils are nurtured sensitively and effectively. It focuses successfully on helping them to deal with their difficulties, so that they can develop appropriate coping strategies, and, especially in the case of those taught at home, face the world much more confidently, consequently achieving well in their studies. Collaborative working with medical professionals on the wards is of high quality, securing the best use of time and resources. Partnerships with a wide range of agencies ensure that relevant and effective specialist support is readily available when required. Longer-term pupils benefit from good academic and careers guidance. The exchange of information between the service, other schools and services and parents and carers is effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's sensitive leadership style has steered the service successfully through challenging times and her thoughtful approach to recruitment, induction and training is resulting in the creation of a cohesive and efficient staff group. Consequently, there is a strong sense of team, and she is ably supported in managing the service's provision by most staff, who, together, ensure that resources are used to best effect, and both elements of the service run successfully. Recent distribution of management responsibilities across the curriculum is, however, not effective, because individual staff members are not yet fully accountable for their work. The service has a clear, though modest, picture of its overall effectiveness and benefits from the range of information it gathers. It does not, however, have a properly structured approach to collecting, recording and analysing data about some aspects of its work or to making the best use of this to demonstrate its effectiveness. The steering group has played an important supportive role over time, but the local authority is currently reviewing these arrangements to ensure that the group's members are enabled to properly fulfil their monitoring responsibilities. They are not, for example, currently providing an appropriate level of challenge through questioning the headteacher on the basis of a flow of detailed information.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

18 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hospital Education Service, Coventry, CV2 2DX

As you know, I recently visited the service to find out how well you are doing and how effectively the staff help you. Thank you for talking to me, showing me your work and telling me so openly about how you feel. I really enjoyed being with you and finding out your views. I was particularly interested to hear about some of the difficulties you have experienced, and was very pleased to hear how much you appreciate the good quality support and guidance that you and your families get from the service's staff.

I judged that the Hospital Education Service is good at helping you to learn and provides you with sensitive pastoral care. Staff have successful and productive relationships with you, and this encourages you to work hard and take full advantage of the good range of learning opportunities on offer. You clearly enjoy these activities, despite the difficulties many of you are experiencing at the time. The strong support and encouragement that you receive, particularly those who are being tutored at home, sometimes helps you engage properly in education for the first time in your career, resulting in you achieving impressive results in examinations. I felt that the good leadership of the headteacher and her management colleagues is an important contributory factor to the service's success.

For the service to become even better I have suggested that it should:

- develop better ways to collect information about its work and use it to show how effective it is
- develop the role of the steering group (a bit like a school's governing body) so that it is more effective in its support of the service's work.

I hope that many of you are feeling a lot better than you were at the time of my visit. I wish those of you who are still being educated by the service good luck in your studies, and encourage you to make the best use of the help you are being given.

Yours sincerely

Steven Parker Lead inspector