

Gloucestershire Hospital Service

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131367
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	295455
Inspection date	1 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Sarah Mascal

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5-19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	8
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Holland
Teacher in charge	Caroline Gawler
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Children and Young People's Directorate Shire Hall Westgate Street GL1 2TP
Telephone number	01452 426940
Fax number	01452 425948

Age group	5-19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

At present, the hospital education service consists of the Gloucestershire hospital school which is the only hospital school in the authority. The range of ability of the pupils varies considerably and includes some pupils with statements of special educational need. The number of pupils also varies each week. Many stay for less than three days but a small number of pupils stay for longer and there are others who are regularly readmitted.

The hospital education service has recently been registered as a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and this is the first inspection under its new status. Arrangements for the Service to incorporate other provision for supporting pupils back into school and home tuition are in place and staff appointments are in the process of being made. As a result, this aspect of provision could not be included in the inspection and this report focuses on the work of the Unit's hospital school. The hospital school (referred to, in the report, as the Unit or PRU) is based in the Gloucester Royal Hospital in Gloucester. It is managed by a teacher in charge and has one full-time and one part-time teacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good Pupil Referral Unit with a number of outstanding features. A key strength is the excellent partnership that teachers establish with hospital staff and outside agencies to ensure that pupils are well cared for. This is very successful and, as a result, the care and welfare of pupils are excellent. Parents are very positive about the support they and their children receive from teachers and value their commitment. The very good relationships established by teachers with pupils enable pupils to feel safe and know they have someone to talk to. Pupils clearly enjoy attending the school room and make good progress in their personal development. The confidence they gain is very evident and the opportunity to work with pupils of different ages has a very positive effect on their social skills and self-esteem.

Although the standards pupils achieve are below those expected nationally, often because of their medical conditions, they make good progress in their learning. Teachers establish excellent links with pupils' schools and this enables pupils to continue with their studies. Because of this, they achieve well. They benefit from a good curriculum which, despite some shortcomings within the accommodation, is matched well to their needs. Teaching is good and particular strengths are the flexibility and adaptability of teachers to support pupils. Their subject knowledge is good and enables them to teach a number of subjects with confidence. They plan well for activities, although the recording of pupils' achievements is inconsistent and does not always make clear what the pupil needs to do next to build upon prior learning. As a result, the reports to parents and the pupils' school are not always sufficiently detailed about what aspects of learning could be extended further.

Leadership and management on the Unit are good. The teacher in charge and her staff are held in very high regard by parents and hospital staff and have achieved much in establishing the excellent working relationships with all those associated with the pupils. There is constant dialogue amongst the teaching staff about how they can improve the work they do with pupils. Because of this, the Unit has a satisfactory view of its strengths and weaknesses. However, this is not reflected in the Unit's documentation and both self-evaluation and improvement planning are at an early stage of development. The Unit is not sufficiently analytical of all the good work that goes on, and does not adequately focus planning for further improvement in a way that is clear and helpful to the staff, management committee and parents. The local authority fulfils its duties well and has effective plans for developing the service further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop systems for analysing and evaluating the work of the Unit so that this can be used more effectively in self-evaluation and in planning improvements.
- Improve how pupils' achievements are recorded and how they are reported to home and the pupil's school so that pupils can build upon their experiences.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Although the standards pupils achieve are below those expected nationally, these can vary considerably because of the wide range of ages and abilities of the constantly changing population. However, pupils achieve well while in the Unit and make good progress. They benefit from being able to continue with their course and school work and are well supported to complete the tasks set by their school. As a result, they return to school without the worry

of having to catch up with work they have missed and are well prepared to meet the challenges they will encounter as they grow older. Many take their standards assessment tasks (SATs) and GCSEs while in hospital and achieve the levels expected of them.

Pupils are set targets based on information from their schools or linked to their individual education plan. An indication of the good progress they make is the fact that the majority achieve their targets. However, the Unit has recognised that for some pupils these targets could be extended further in order to be more challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Parents are very positive about the Unit and comment that their children become more confident while there. As one parent commented, children learn that it is 'OK to be different'. Much of this is because of the very positive relationships pupils establish with staff and each other. Pupils feel safe and are able to talk to teachers about their concerns and reflect on their present positions. Pupils of different ages work well together and are keen to offer help to each other. This was very evident when a Year 8 pupil and a Year 2 pupil worked together in art and discussed how to mix different colours. The Year 2 pupil clearly enjoyed the opportunity to have his views listened to and valued. It was very evident that he gained in confidence as the lesson progressed. Behaviour is very good and those with behaviour difficulties make good progress in managing their behaviour, responding well to the positive approach of teachers.

Pupils choose to attend the school room and the fact that the vast majority make this choice is a reflection on how much they enjoy the work. One described it as 'fun' and commented on how much she enjoyed all the different work they did. Pupils do much to support others and raise money for charity such as through selling cakes and other activities. They are aware of the need to stay healthy and, for example, understand what foods are safe for them. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of different cultures and they participate well in music and art activities. Whilst overall pupils develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well, there is no clear planning to ensure that these skills are promoted for all pupils during their stay in hospital.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

A considerable strength of teaching is the way staff are quick to adapt their teaching approaches to the needs of the pupils. Lessons are planned well to ensure that pupils can complete the work they have been set by their school. Teachers devise a range of work for younger pupils that supports what they are doing in their primary schools whilst older pupils complete examination course work. It is a reflection of the good skills of teaching that pupils are able to return to school and be at the same stage of learning as their peers. Teachers have developed their knowledge of different subjects well and good use is made of specialist teachers when required. However, despite their best efforts, the limited space within the one classroom restricts the range of activities that teachers can offer.

Staff are keen to ensure that they keep up-to-date and take full advantage of training opportunities in the local area. This, together with visits to other similar schools, has done much to improve their expertise. Marking of pupils' work is positive. Praise is used effectively, although

comments in pupils' work do not always reflect what pupils could do to improve their work further. Teachers have recognised that they need to record more effectively how much support pupils have had to achieve the tasks set.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils like the work they do because it is varied and enables them to keep up with their studies. This is because the curriculum is planned well and provides a wide range of experiences. Teachers have reviewed the curriculum for younger pupils so that it now follows a thematic approach. This ensures that as much as possible the activities are practical and enjoyable. There are good enrichment activities particularly linked to art and music. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good and supports their personal development well.

The accommodation prevents the Unit from offering all the subjects within the National Curriculum. Whilst some practical subjects such as food technology are provided and efforts made to extend pupils' experiences in science, the Unit cannot offer activities in aspects of design and technology and science. Despite this, teachers make the best use of the space available. Resources are good and staff make good use of libraries and local facilities to access materials and books when needed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support of pupils are good overall. They are excellent in supporting the care and welfare of pupils. The outstanding links with medical and nursing staff ensure that teachers are aware at all times of the health situations of their pupils. This enables them to be very sensitive in their approach and manage the pace of work very carefully. A new system has been introduced that ensures teaching staff are aware when vulnerable pupils are admitted to hospital so that the right level of support can be provided. Effective procedures are in place for the vetting of staff and ensuring pupils' safety.

Good procedures assess the abilities of pupils when they arrive, enabling the Unit to establish targets for learning. For those pupils with special educational needs, effective use is made of pupils' individual education plans to ensure that targets are relevant. Generally, these are of good quality, although staff do not always assess how well targets are met. Whilst the recording of what pupils have achieved is good, teachers do not consistently record areas for improvement. As a result, the reports to mainstream schools and home reflect the progress pupils have made but do not always indicate areas that staff have identified that could be developed further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

A strength of leadership and management is the very good teamwork of the teachers within the Unit. They work extremely well together and have established excellent links with hospital staff, parents and schools. The Unit is very well managed on a day to day basis. The teacher in charge has ensured that, as a teaching team, they are constantly reviewing what they do and looking at ways of improving. For example, they have made changes to the curriculum to make it more practical based. However, there is no system for the Unit and the management committee to formally look at and analyse the Unit's strengths and weaknesses or to measure the Unit's

success in terms of the impact it has on pupils' achievements and personal development. This would enable it then to use this information to bring about clearly defined improvements.

Staff work closely with the management committee and regular meetings and reports ensure the committee is kept well informed. The committee has been very involved in the development of the PRU and plans to incorporate the reintegration and home tuition service as part of the Service are appropriate and welcomed by teaching and hospital staff. This, together with the good leadership and management, ensure that the Pupil Referral Unit has good capacity to improve even further.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	2
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	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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	2
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

2 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gloucestershire Hospital Education Service, Gloucester, GL1 2TP

Thank you very much for your time when I visited and for talking to me. I very much enjoyed meeting you and looking at the work you are doing. Your comments and those of your parents and the medical staff helped me understand the work of the Unit.

The Unit provides you with a good education. These are the things it does best:

- Teachers work very well with your schools so that you can keep up with your work while you are in hospital.
- Teachers work very well with the medical team and all the other specialists to ensure you are well cared for.
- Teaching is good and there are lots of interesting activities. Because of this, you enjoy going into the school room and working.
- You make good progress in your work.
- The teachers work very well together and are managed well.
- There are very good systems to make sure you are safe and well looked after.

There are two things I have asked your school to do to make sure you all do as well as you can:

- Develop systems for checking the work of the Unit so that information gained from this can be used more effectively to plan improvements.
- Improve recording and reporting your achievements to help you to do even better in your work.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Mascall Lead Inspector