

Inspection of an outstanding school: Gloucestershire Hospital Education Service

St George's Road, County Offices, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 3EW

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 November 2022

Outcome

Gloucestershire Hospital Education Service continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders ensure that the school continues to provide the outstanding quality of education seen at the previous inspection. They are determined that, despite the interruptions to education caused by prolonged illnesses, pupils will learn to love learning. Parents and carers are extremely positive. They speak of how the school 'goes above and beyond', that 'education continues seamlessly' and how staff help pupils to 'maintain confidence and enthusiasm for learning'.

Staff create a personalised, relevant and ambitious curriculum that secures the important knowledge that pupils need. Leaders ensure that staff can work flexibly and imaginatively. Consequently, pupils access high-quality learning wherever and whenever that needs to be. The care, nurture and kindness provided by staff enable pupils to make the most of their learning. Staff are highly skilled. They use their deep understanding of the difficulties that pupils face to create successful environments in which to learn.

Staff build positive, trusting relations with pupils. They help pupils to understand their situations. Creative solutions, such as using technology to bring pupils together remotely, help reduce feelings of isolation. Pupils feel safe and secure. Their behaviour is exemplary, and they are caring and kind to one another. The school has no recorded incidents of bullying.

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

Leadership is a strength of the school. Leaders work with integrity. Pupils are solidly at the heart of the decisions they make. Key to the school's continued success is the rigour with which leaders, including the management committee, review and question every aspect of the education pupils receive.

Leaders and staff work well together. They build strong, cohesive staff teams. Staff feel respected and valued. As a result, morale is high.

Staff use assessment very well to ensure that pupils receive a high-quality curriculum that meets their needs. Link tutors provide consistent communication and coordination between the pupil's base school, parents and medical professionals. Staff create a curriculum that ensures that pupils can transition back to their schools successfully, or move on to appropriate further education, training or employment.

Leaders have put in place a well-planned and ambitious curriculum. They check how well the curriculum is implemented and the impact this has on pupils. They rightly prioritise the key knowledge that pupils need during prolonged periods of absence from their base schools. Staff develop a personalised timetable for each pupil that is based on advice from medical professionals. The well-constructed and detailed personal, social, and health education (PSHE) curriculum outlines the most important knowledge that will help prepare pupils for life beyond school. Pupils discuss themes such as valuing diversity and managing relationships. The core subjects of reading, writing, mathematics and science are rightly prioritised. Foundation subjects such as art are offered as appropriate. Staff are extremely ambitious for pupils. For example, they do all they can to enable pupils to stay on track and work towards their planned GCSEs.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is highly effective. Leaders ensure that teachers have the information they need to successfully adapt the curriculum. Many pupils at the school have social, emotional, or mental health needs. Staff work well together to ensure that pupils learn to manage their anxieties and continue with their learning.

There is a strong culture of reading. Right from the start, staff check pupils' reading abilities and interests. For pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read, teachers work closely with the pupils' base schools to ensure that they keep up with their peers. Extra phonics and reading sessions successfully help pupils who fall behind to catch up.

Pupils develop a love of reading. Staff encourage pupils to read widely. Pupils enjoy reading high-quality texts. Some older pupils attend a 'reading for pleasure' group and discuss books they have read. Links beyond the school support pupils' wider development. For example, pupils worked with an author at a literature festival to produce a resource that supports pupils well-being through creative writing.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are tenacious in their approach to keeping pupils safe. Recruitment processes are robust. Leaders ensure that staff have the knowledge they need to report any concerns about possible risks to pupils. As a result, staff recognise the extra vulnerability of pupils in their care.

Staff make sure that pupils have the opportunity to describe any worries they may have. Strong partnership work between pupils, their families, the pupil's base school and medical agencies helps to ensure that staff notice and report any concerns appropriately.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in November 2012.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	131367
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10227983
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	112
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	0
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Meg Dawson
Headteacher	Beth Warren
Website	www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ghes
Date of previous inspection	28 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Gloucestershire Hospital Education Service provides education for pupils across the county who are unable to attend school for medical reasons.
- The school operates from the Gloucestershire Royal Hospital and from a site in St George's Road, Cheltenham. Most pupils receive teaching in their own homes, either online or from teachers who visit their homes.
- The school uses two alternative providers to provide mentoring to some pupils. These are both unregistered provisions.

Information about this inspection

- 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.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and her senior leadership team. Inspectors also had meetings with members of the management committee and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to a sample of pupils about their learning. An adult was present during these discussions.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors met with the safeguarding leadership team and looked at relevant policies and procedures. Inspectors spoke to a sample of pupils, parents and staff.
- Inspectors took the responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and surveys of staff and parents into account.

Inspection team

Tonwen Empson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Andrew Buckton

Ofsted Inspector

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