

# Inspection of a good school: Manchester Hospital School

3rd Floor School, Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9WL

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Inspection dates:

26 and 27 March 2024

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils experience nothing but the best at this happy, caring school. Many join the school with significant and challenging barriers to their learning. Some pupils face a long and difficult journey towards improvement in their health. Nonetheless, this very special school ensures that whatever their difficulties, pupils feel safe, secure, and ready to learn.

Expectations for pupils' achievement are extremely high. Pupils look forward to their daily lessons, whether at their bedside or in the classroom. They focus well on their work and are rarely distracted. They know that they can ask for help if there is anything that they do not understand. Pupils achieve very well and are more than ready for the return to their usual school when they leave hospital.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They seldom need to be reminded of the school rules. Pupils develop positive attitudes to learning. This helps them to participate even when they do not feel at their best.

The school's provision for pupils' wider development is simply exceptional. Confinement to hospital is seen as no barrier to pupils' ability to participate. For example, pupils take part in performances and assemblies using remote technology. They enjoy having their art work displayed in local department stores. Pupils particularly enjoy caring for the school's small menagerie of animals. These experiences help pupils to develop interests and talents and to prepare for future life.

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

The quality of education that pupils receive is excellent. All pupils at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Their needs are wide-ranging and

sometimes very complex. Regardless of these needs, the school has the highest aspirations for pupils' academic success. These aspirations underpin a broad and highly ambitious curriculum that enables pupils to achieve extremely well in the subjects that they study.

The curriculum identifies the most important learning for pupils at each key stage and in each subject. The school has taken meticulous care to break down this knowledge into smaller, manageable steps. These steps are carefully ordered from the early years to the end of the sixth-form. This helps to ensure that pupils build up a solid body of knowledge in each subject. Staff deliver this curriculum consistently and effectively. The learning that they provide for pupils is interesting, engaging, and helps them to learn well.

Pupils join the school at varying points in the year. Some may have missed considerable periods of education by the time that they start. In lessons, staff are adept at recognising when pupils may have missing knowledge. They provide pupils with prompt support and make adjustments to their teaching so that these pupils catch up rapidly.

The school uses the information from assessments to make sure that the curriculum is having the impact that it intends. For example, staff check that the curriculum is helping pupils to know more and to remember more over time in each subject. This enables the school to continue improving and refining its strong curriculum even further.

The school has made sure that reading is prioritised. As soon as children are admitted to the Reception Year, they begin learning the school's phonics programme. Staff check carefully to establish what children already know when they join the school. They ensure that children keep practising this prior knowledge at the same time as learning new letters and sounds each day. Staff ensure that children's reading books are matched to the letters and sounds that they know. This helps children to read successfully and with confidence.

Older pupils at the early stage of reading receive very effective support to enable them to catch up quickly. This includes pupils with more complex needs. The school provides pupils of all ages with an extensive range of exciting books that capture their interests. Pupils enjoy selecting their favourites as well as titles that are new to them. In all key stages, pupils enjoy reading and achieve extremely well.

Although all pupils at the school have SEND, any additional needs are quickly identified once pupils are admitted. Staff are skilled at adapting their delivery of the curriculum to ensure that these pupils can access the intended learning. For example, staff use a wide range of resources including technology to support pupils who may have sensory impairments. The school communicates regularly and effectively with a wide team of clinicians, therapists and other professionals to ensure that pupils receive any additional support that they need. Pupils achieve high standards from their various starting points.

Staff combine kindness with firmness to set clear expectations for pupils' behaviour. The excellent relationships between staff and pupils make a strong contribution to pupils' willingness and ability to learn.

A number of pupils are admitted to the school having experienced considerable disruption to their earlier education. Some of these pupils are too unwell to come to school every day when they first start. The school works sensitively and effectively with these pupils, with their families and with other professionals to re-engage them in learning. The attendance of these pupils improves dramatically over time. Pupils are well prepared for the transfer back to their home schools when it is judged to be appropriate.

The programme for pupils' wider development is as ambitious as that for their academic achievement. Pupils take part in business enterprise activities to raise funds for charitable works. They participate in the production of television programmes for children. Through international partnership arrangements, pupils learn about life and school for pupils in other countries. Pupils for whom it is appropriate undertake trips to galleries, museums and places of worship. They learn about difference and diversity, and about how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils of secondary school age receive a full programme of careers guidance, and receive relationships, health and sex education that is appropriate for their age and stage of development.

Governors have an excellent grasp of the school's strengths and of its priorities for improvement. This enables them to hold school leaders effectively to account for their work. Leaders consider the impact of their decisions on staff's workload and well-being. Staff are highly appreciative of this concern and enjoy working at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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 May 2018.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105602
<b>Local authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	10289890
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	188
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Marc Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Janet Doherty
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.manchesterhospitalschool.co.uk">www.manchesterhospitalschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	15 and 16 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new chair has been appointed to the governing body.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school is based at the 3rd Floor School, Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9WL. However, it operates from a number of additional sites as follows:
  - The Leo Kelly School, 77 Dickenson Road, Manchester M14 5AZ
  - The School at The Christie, Oak Road, Manchester M20 4BX
  - The School at Galaxy House, The Harrington Building, Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9WL
  - The School at Wythenshawe Hospital, Southmoor Road, Wythenshawe, Manchester M23 9LT
  - The School at North Manchester General Hospital, Delaunays Road, Crumpsall, Manchester M8 5RB

## 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. 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, deputy headteacher and other school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with governors and spoke on the telephone with representatives from two local authorities.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English including early reading, personal, social, health and economic education, mathematics, Spanish and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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.

## Inspection team

Mavis Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Dawn Farrent

Ofsted Inspector

Gary Kelly

Ofsted Inspector

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