

Wirral Hospitals School and Home Education Service Community Base

157 Park Road North, Cloughton, Wirral, Merseyside, CH41 0EZ

Inspection dates 26–27 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The visionary, strong, uncompromising and outstanding leadership of the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, governors and the dedication and commitment of all adults have enabled the school to build successfully on the many strengths found at the previous inspection.
- Governors provide exceptional support and rigorous challenge. They are very well informed about students' progress due to their frequent visits to school and the information they receive from the headteacher and senior leadership team.
- Every staff member is dedicated and fully committed to providing a nurturing environment where students are supported and cared for exceptionally well.
- The curriculum has been revised, adapted and successfully meets the needs of all the students.
- Senior leaders have devised and completed their own systems of assessments which clearly monitor and evaluate the individual progress of every student.
- Outstanding teaching over time has had a very strong impact on students' learning. However, the high standards in marking seen in some books is not yet consistent across all classes.
- Student's achievement is outstanding. Their wide range of abilities are well supported, enabling everyone to make exceptional progress from their starting points.
- Challenging behaviour is sensitively and very well managed so that it does not have a negative impact on learning.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school and prepares students very well for adult life in the wider world. Equality of opportunity for all is promoted exceptionally well.
- All parents who responded to the online survey Parent View believe the school is well led and managed, their children are well looked and are taught well. All would recommend the school to other parents.
- Students say school provides a safe welcoming place for them to gain confidence, self-esteem and the necessary academic qualifications to support them in the next stage of their education.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes to look at teaching and learning and its impact on students' progress over time. A learning walk and three lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, governors, a school consultant and a group of students.
- Inspectors took account of the 20 responses to the Parent View questionnaire (the online questionnaire for parents), of an email sent to school by a parent and of the 28 questionnaires returned by staff.
- An inspector spoke to a group of parents as well as to the school nurse and school counsellor.
- Inspectors looked at a range of written information including the school's view of its own performance, development planning, information about student's progress and attainment and a range of policies and procedures including those relating to safeguarding and child protection.

Inspection team

Maureen Coleman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Marilyn Massey

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Wirral Hospitals School offers full-time education to students aged 11-16 on its main campus base for those well enough to access it. Admissions are for young people with mental and physical problems including anxiety, depression, self-harm, eating disorders, chronic fatigue syndrome, sometimes alongside social and communication difficulties and autism spectrum conditions which have prevented them from being able to succeed in mainstream schools. The majority of students are of White British heritage.
- Many students have been out of school for lengthy periods of time and are often in their later years of schooling at the time of admission. Additionally, the governing body supports the provision of teaching to pregnant school girls and young mothers in an on-site facility. The school also provides outreach education in the form of individual tuition for 5-16 year-olds who are in-patients at Arrowe Park Hospital and teaching to small groups of students attending the Child Adolescent Mental Health Service/Education Assessment Unit in Adcote House.
- The main campus at Joseph Paxton Campus is also host to Wirral's Home Education Service with which there is close liaison. However, this is a local authority provision and not managed or funded by the school. This provision receives a separate inspection and a separate report, which is available on the Ofsted website.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is above average. The school holds a large number of awards including Leading from the Middle, the International School award, the Eco School (Green Flag) award, and the Extended Services award. It is also a nationally-recognised Healthy School, and has Mental Health Awareness in School status, and the Unicef Rights Respecting School award. It is currently working towards Autism Friendly School status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the existing high quality of teaching to support students' achievement by ensuring all marking clearly identifies the next steps in their learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The highly-motivated and inspirational headteacher, ably supported by his deputy head, senior and middle leaders are uncompromising in their drive to raise the quality of teaching and achievement for all students.
- Collectively with the governors, the leadership team is ambitious for the school and has high expectations for all. Much is done to support students to gain the necessary skills and qualifications to prepare them for adulthood.
- Middle leaders are very well informed and share the vision and goals of the senior leadership team. They are a highly motivated team who are fully committed to continuous improvement and development in response to the current needs and increasing numbers of students.
- Rigorous and careful monitoring of students' progress and attainment provides leaders with a clear view of how well each student is doing. Swift action is taken if students fail to make the progress expected of them, by the provision of high-quality support and additional one-to-one tutoring.
- A major factor in the schools success is the continuous monitoring and meticulous checking of every aspect of its work.
- Attendance has improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- The school's view of its own performance is accurate, honest and provides a sound base for further improvement. Teachers' performance is checked regularly and sustained high performance is linked appropriately to salary increases. The training and development of all teachers and teaching assistants has been successful in raising the quality of teaching since the previous inspection.
- The curriculum is stimulating and interesting and has recently been extended to provide greater opportunities in music, science and drama. Additional sports funding has supported the development of a wide range of sporting activities.
- As a result of the exemplary preparation and support offered to students moving on to the next stage in their education, all students who left school at the end of Year 11 in 2014 successfully gained placements in further education or training.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and all who responded to the online Parent View questionnaire say the school is well led and managed and that students are taught well. In addition, all would recommend this school to other parents.
- The school fully promotes equality of opportunity for all. Highly-effective behaviour management contributes exceptionally well to students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, creating an oasis of calm for young people to have the time and space to develop into well adjusted young adults, excited about their future prospects and opportunities. Students are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are a highly skilled, committed, well informed and hold the school to account with the utmost rigour.
 - Together with the senior leadership team, they share the aims and aspirations for further improvement and are rightly proud of the achievements of students and staff.
 - They gather first-hand knowledge and understanding of how well the school and its students are doing by analysing data, looking at students' work, taking part in frequent learning walks and meeting regularly with the senior leadership.
 - The governing body effectively oversees the financial arrangements including the salary arrangements for teachers. Governors closely monitor and check on the impact on students' progress of additional funding received from the government. There are regular health and safety checks which ensure current safeguarding and child protection requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Many students display physical and mental health problems when they first arrive at school but, as a result of the work of highly skilled and dedicated staff and consistency in the application of effective policies and procedures, students are given the skills to manage and overcome their difficulties.

- All adults are exceptionally well trained in catering for the needs of all students. Adults are highly skilled in communicating with students and this has a significant impact on helping to reduce their anxieties enabling less formal situations and lessons to remain calm and purposeful.
- Students, parents and staff are very positive about the school's management of behaviour.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. One student, expressing the views of others stated, 'We feel safe at school and receive an educational hug when we are here.'
- High levels of supervision and engagement with students as they move around the school ensure they understand risks and keep themselves safe.
- Bullying is very rare and there have been no fixed term or permanent exclusions during the past five years. The majority of students have significantly improved their attendance in comparison to the level of attendance at their previous school.
- Statutory safeguarding requirements are met and risk assessments are comprehensive and monitored closely.
- The school provides a calm harmonious place for learning. Behaviour in the dining room and around school is exemplary with staff always on hand to intervene and support if necessary. Students enjoy the flexible arrangement at lunch time which enables them to sit in small groups in the dining room, or around school, with their friends to eat their meal.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- As a result of rigorous and meticulous monitoring of students' progress and attainment, significant improvements have been made to the quality of teaching over time since the previous inspection.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together and have very high expectations of what their students can attain and achieve.
- Progress is scrupulously checked throughout each lesson and feedback given to individual students; however, this is not always recorded in students' books in a consistent manner across all classes. This can on occasions impact on student progress and make it more difficult for senior staff to monitor progress and attainment across the school.
- The content and challenge of activities are well matched to the individual interests and abilities of each student, which helps them make excellent progress. For example in science, an informed debate between a Year 11 student and science teacher sensitively explored moral issues and lasting health problems for the local population as a result of radiation being used during the last World War.
- Support staff are well trained and highly skilled and, under the direction of the class teacher, provide exceptionally high-quality teaching and care for individual students.
- The creative curriculum stimulates and engages students very well. Students are well supported to become resilient learners and provided with opportunities to take risks in their learning. In art, for example, students commented how they relished opportunities to be individual and be creative in their work. They also enjoyed the extensive range of resources available to them, experimenting with different mediums to complete pieces of art work.
- In literacy, reading and mathematics, teachers successfully build on students' prior knowledge and skills, setting work at the right level to ensure gaps in students understanding are addressed and do not inhibit further accelerated learning.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- The majority of students join school with attainment below national expectations. As a result of timely and highly effective intervention strategies and outstanding teaching most make rapid and sustained progress.
- Most students, including those in the outreach settings, make significantly better progress than is expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics. However, lack of consistency in written feedback slows the rate of progress for some students towards the next steps in their learning.
- Recent published results show that overall attainment has significantly improved and greatly exceeds figures for similar schools nationally. The proportion of students gaining 5 A*-C grades at GCSE was 11 times greater than national figures for similar schools and the number gaining 5 A*-C grades including

English and mathematics was 13 times greater than similar schools nationally.

- In English, 67% of students exceeded their expected progress and 70% exceeded their expected progress in mathematics.
- Attainment in English, mathematics and science is broadly in line with other subjects while attainment in art is much higher.
- As a result of skilled teaching in English, school records show impressive gains in reading and comprehension skills over a sustained period.
- The high proportion of disadvantaged students are well supported by the excellent use of pupil premium funding and make the same outstanding progress as others within school. Their progress is closely monitored to ensure there are no gaps in their performance compared to other students in school and nationally.
- Older students, without exception, gain an increasing wide range of qualifications and as a result of excellent preparation and move on confidently to the next stage in their education. All Year 11 students who left at the end of the summer term 2014 gained a placement in further education or training.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	105139
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	447926

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	91
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Longster
Headteacher	Derek Kitchen
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2011
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