

# The Children's Hospital School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120363
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicester City
<b>Inspection number</b>	313590
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Arnalena Bee

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Foundation special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	105
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Newcombe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Brian Bangay
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 June 2005
<b>School address</b>	Leicester Royal Infirmary Infirmary Square Leicester LE1 5WW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01162 585330
<b>Fax number</b>	01162 471060

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<b>Age group</b>	3–16
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

### Description of the school

The school is on two sites. The main site is based in the Royal Infirmary Hospital in the centre of Leicester. It provides education for pupils aged between three and 16 who are long-or short-term patients on the eight children's wards. A number of these pupils suffer from recurring conditions and frequently attend the school. Approximately 40 day pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 who have mental, emotional and/or physical illnesses are taught on a second site in rooms at a local Academy school. This arrangement is not permanent. A few pupils are taught in their own homes by the Outreach Service. These are pupils who are recovering from surgery or treatment and are too ill to attend school. Very occasionally, but not during the inspection, this service supports pupils in another Leicester hospital. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. A large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The pupils are generally working at levels that are appropriate for their ages or slightly below.

### Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This hospital school provides outstanding quality of education and care. Key to it all is the tremendous teaching that is evident in all classes. The support that pupils receive from the teachers and the teaching assistants is second to none. As a result, pupils are able to achieve their best both personally and academically. Pupils' achievement is outstanding in recovering from ill-health, developing social skills and learning skills in a new environment and then reintegrating back into their home school. It is an excellent accomplishment. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve as well as other children because they receive similar provision to their classmates. By the end of their stay, whether short or long, the preparation for pupils to return to their home school or transfer to another school or college is outstanding. One pupil, happily working in one of the hospital classrooms, proudly showed a letter she had written and printed off using a computer. She confidently said, 'I often have to come into hospital and I learn as much as my friends do in my home school. Perhaps even more.'

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. A key factor is that all adults have an excellent understanding of the pupils' illnesses and rapidly and effectively assess their needs. Consequently, very good relationships are established extremely quickly between adults and pupils. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils work hard. They thoroughly enjoy themselves, despite their illnesses, in the calm and stimulating environments that have been created for pupils in both the hospital and in the day school. Assessment information collected on pupils who are taught at home shows that they too develop very good attitudes to learning and achieve as well as those in hospital and day school. Attendance has previously been a major issue for most pupils in day school. Staff work very successfully to encourage pupils to attend regularly by giving all day pupils individual targets related to attendance. Day pupils, many of whom have had long periods out of school, wrote about how they used to 'bunk off school' but now enjoy coming because they have made so many friends. Assessment information collected on these pupils shows lots of success stories. A number of Key Stage 3 pupils are successfully being integrated back into mainstream schools. All of the current Year 11 pupils are on their way to college or the world of work.

The good curriculum is well organised to meet the needs of all pupils. However, despite improvements in the accommodation, it is not yet perfect and at times adversely affects the curriculum that is offered both in the hospital and the day school. The headteacher and the governors are working with the local authority to improve the accommodation. A small minority of day pupils who have mental and emotional illnesses do not feel entirely safe in school and get anxious when they have to mix with the mainstream pupils. To reduce their anxieties, starting and finishing times have been altered so that they are different to those of the mainstream pupils. Lack of sinks and water in the hospital classrooms and space when beds are wheeled in from the wards limits opportunities for pupils to do practical activities. Leadership and management is outstanding. Team spirit is marvellous and everyone has the pupils' best interest at heart. The headteacher has reorganised his senior leaders and managers so that their teaching specialisms and experiences are used very effectively to ensure that pupils all achieve the best they can. Excellent outcomes for pupils demonstrate the school's outstanding capacity to improve further.

Pupils receive the very best care and personal support possible. The academic support that pupils receive is good. Pupils' progress is tracked very carefully and pupils are generally given

good feedback on how well they are doing. However, at times, although teachers' marking is always supportive, it does not always inform pupils what they need to do to improve.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

At the time of the inspection, very few children were taught as part of the Foundation Stage. As with the older pupils, these young children receive outstanding provision. Initially, they are skillfully assessed to identify their personal and academic needs and then activities are very carefully matched to their needs. One parent said it all when she wrote, 'I am impressed with the variety of activities and appropriateness of the pitch and level of the activities that my child receives. Liaison with the home school has been very good and my son is thoroughly enjoying the schooling provided by the hospital.'

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the accommodation so that pupils in the hospital have better facilities to do practical activities and the day pupils have facilities that are more suitable for their needs.
- Improve marking so that all pupils receive good quality guidance that enables them to see exactly what they need to do to improve.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' achievement, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is outstanding whether they are in hospital, the day school or taught at home. This is because teaching is excellent and the way that the curriculum is tailored to suit pupils' individual needs is outstanding. Skilful teaching assistants who work with the pupils contribute significantly to the excellent achievement that pupils make. Academic targets are challenging but realistic and progress is tracked very carefully to make sure that all pupils do their very best. The achievement of the day pupils is exceptional when compared to the times when they did not attend school or were very poor attenders. All of the current Year 11 pupils are leaving with some examination qualifications. Pupils and their teachers are rightly proud of this accomplishment.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils get on exceptionally well with each other because developing relationships and confidence is a key part of what goes on in this school. As one of the day pupils wrote, 'Since I have been here, I've been happy because I have made lots of friends and got my education back on track. This has made my family happy too.' Another pupil wrote, ' My biggest achievements are coming to this school when I didn't know anyone and not being scared when I go to my home school for two lessons each week.' Pupils know they are safe and secure in the hospital and the majority of day pupils feel safe at school. However, a small minority do not and get anxious at times, especially when having to move about the large school in which they are based. Older pupils show an outstanding understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and, unless they are too ill, exercise regularly. Photographic evidence shows how pupils in the hospital, some in wheelchairs, have great fun taking part in activities in the hospital gym. Day pupils enthusiastically take part in many activities that promote the need to take regular exercise, for example wall climbing as well as games they can play with each other such as golf and football. Day pupils spoke very enthusiastically about how much they enjoy using the sports hall in the

school where they are based. Pupils' contribution to the school community and wider world is good. A school council is in its early stages of development. Day pupils spoke about the successful coffee morning, which they organised to raise money and proudly spoke about collecting money for different charities because 'some people are not as well off as we are.' By the time they leave the hospital school, pupils are exceptionally well prepared to take up their education in their home schools, a new setting, college or the world of work.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

All adults who work in the classrooms are very successful at instilling confidence in pupils so that they feel valued and enjoy learning. This and the excellent match of activities to pupils' needs are very important ingredients for all of the pupils in this school. Staff liaise very effectively with home schools to gain as much information as they can which is then used to feed into the activities they plan for their pupils. Adults very accurately assess pupils' needs and identify suitable targets for them to work towards. All teachers keep very detailed records, which clearly show the outstanding progress that each pupil makes. Teamwork amongst the staff is tremendous, relationships throughout the school are exemplary and, as a result, pupils are happy and develop very positive attitudes to learning. This is despite being away from home, in the case of those in hospital, and without their friends for those being taught at home. Parents are impressed with the quality of teaching their children receive and inspection evidence endorses this. One parent wrote, 'The Hospital School has provided invaluable home tuition for my son. I have found the standard of teaching to be excellent. My son's confidence has grown and he has made very good progress.' Another parent, whose child is in hospital, wrote 'I am very happy with how the school liaises with my child's home school and us, giving her a high level of education.'

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

A strength of the school is the way the curriculum for each pupil is tailored to their individual needs. This helps them considerably whilst they are ill, for example, to re-engage in learning in situations that are new to them such as being in hospital, learning at home or attending the day school. A good number of accredited courses are offered to the older day pupils and there are good opportunities for pupils to take part in work experience. Issues from the previous inspection report relating to the accommodation continue to be a concern. It is difficult for adults to organise practical activities that need water or washing facilities because the classrooms lack sinks and are cramped when beds with sick pupils are wheeled in. The school where the pupils who suffer with mental, emotional and physical illnesses are housed is not one hundred percent ideal because some of them get very anxious about mixing with the mainstream pupils. Discussions are taking place with the local authority but at present, there is no solution to solving the accommodation issues.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

A key factor as to why this school is so successful is the high quality care, guidance and support that is provided for its pupils. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are very rigorous and well

documented. Links with others, particularly medical links, are excellent and vital to the care and support these pupils need. Pupils' personal welfare is excellent. All adults are extremely aware of each pupil's illnesses and difficulties. Pupils achieve their academic targets because they are generally very well supported in everything they do. Pupils are given lots of positive verbal feedback which gives them confidence and ensures their attitudes to learning remain positive. Marking of pupils' work is good overall but not all of it effectively informs pupils what they need to do to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The headteacher, staff and governors work very well together as an extremely effective team. Their main aim is to make sure that all pupils receive the very best education possible despite their illnesses. Excellent links with numerous schools and external agencies enhance many aspects of pupils' schooling and care. The staff are an experienced, dedicated and talented group who expertly teach across a very wide age range. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are very thorough. Subject leaders have a very good grasp of what is happening in their areas of responsibility across all parts of the school. All staff are involved in school development planning, which is good. The senior leaders and managers have a very clear idea of how well the school is doing and which areas need further development. They acknowledge that they were overly cautious over some areas in their self-evaluation. The governors are kept well informed by both the headteacher and the subject leaders and thus are able to support and challenge the school well. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of all that the school does to help their children.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

13 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Children's Hospital School, Leicester LE1 5WW

I am writing to let you know what we found out about your school when we came to visit you recently. We enjoyed talking to you and were pleased to see so many smiling faces in the hospital classrooms as you completed the activities you had been given. We think you do exceptionally well, especially as you are too poorly to attend your home school. We also really enjoyed talking to the pupils in the day school. We think you all have done very well.

Congratulations to those of you who are returning to mainstream school. You have worked very hard to achieve that. Good luck for the future to those of you who are leaving and either going to college or work. We were sorry that we did not have time to talk to some of you who are taught at home but we did find out how well you are doing because we talked to some of your teachers and looked at the reports that your teachers have written. We know that you too work very hard and do very well. We think the hospital school is excellent.

These are the main things we found out about your school.

- The way you are cared for and looked after is outstanding.
- We think the way the headteacher, along with the other adults who work with him, lead and manage the school is excellent.
- We think you receive outstanding teaching and your teachers are some of the best.
- You all behave very well and are kind to each other. We think you are also very polite to the adults who help you and to those who come and visit you.

We have asked the school to do two things to make it even better.

- Make sure that when teachers mark your work, you can see what you need to do to improve and reach your targets.
- Keep thinking of ways in which they can improve the accommodation to give those of you in the hospital better facilities to do practical activities. In addition, improve the accommodation for day pupils so that you always feel happy, safe and secure when in school.

Keep smiling and working hard.

Best wishes

Nina Bee Lead inspector



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Lead inspector