



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL SCHOOL

Name of School:	The Children's Hospital School
Head teacher:	Stephen Deadman
Hub:	Ash Field
School type:	Foundation Special

Estimate at this QA Review:	OUTSTANDING
Date of this Review:	18/03/2019
Estimate at last QA Review	OUTSTANDING
Date of last QA Review	19/02/2018
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	OUTSTANDING
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	27/06/2017



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Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising of host school leaders and visiting reviewers agree that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

School Improvement Strategies	OUTSTANDING
Outcomes for Pupils	OUTSTANDING
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment	OUTSTANDING
Area of Excellence	ACCREDITED
Overall Estimate	OUTSTANDING

Please note that a Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review is not equivalent to an Ofsted inspection, and agreed estimates from the review are not equivalent to Ofsted judgements.

1. Context and character of the school

- The school educates and supports students who cannot access education due to physical or mental health issues. Students join the school following a referral supported by medical evidence.
- The ages of students range from three to 18. There are currently 98 students on roll, with approximately 400 students in total receiving education in some form last year. This number changes frequently, sometimes on a daily basis, as students move back to mainstream settings when they have recovered.
- The school is designated as a Leicester City Local Authority school. Students come from across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The school is well connected with other schools in Leicester as it is a member of the Leicester Association of Special Schools, the Well Trust and the Ash Field Teaching Alliance.
- The school comprises three sites. Leicester Royal Infirmary (LRI), for primary and secondary aged students, is based on the hospital wards. Willow Bank is a secondary school offering longer term provision. Ward 3, at Coalville Community Hospital, supports and educates pupils from 11 to 18 with predominately mental health needs, on an in-patient basis.
- The outreach service provides home tuition for students who cannot attend the school settings.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students is above the national average. The proportions of students from ethnic minority backgrounds or who speak English as a second language, are well below the national average.
- Some students have education, health and care plans (EHCPs) from their home schools. Others may be in the process of receiving an EHCP with the support of the Children's Hospital School.

2.1 School Improvement Strategies - Progress from previous EBIs

Outreach work has been effective in helping leaders better understand the key factors which lead to successful transitions for students' life after school. Leaders are also learning from more frequent tracking of placements and how well students sustain these after leaving school.

2.2 School Improvement Strategies - What went well

- Leaders are ambitious for their school, its students and their families. Leaders continue to seek out priorities and drive improvement. Through more refined improvement planning, they are better able to focus on things that really matter. All staff colleagues are encouraged to offer ideas for improvement. They are then empowered and trusted to pursue these. Art therapy is an example of such work.
- Leaders state the rationale behind their identified priorities for improvement. This rationale is informed by a range of quality assurance activities. These include achievement information reviews and observations of teaching. Leaders are currently exploring an electronic version of their school improvement plan (SIP) to enable them to keep it 'live' for colleagues.
- Leaders have reflected on learning and adapted daily provision to better suit their students. Examples include morning staff briefing meetings, where students who are particularly vulnerable are discussed, and a more relaxed start to the school day, to enable students to prepare for their learning. Such work enables the staff team to better understand current ways of working and their impact for each student.
- Leaders' roles complement each other well. The outreach co-ordinator, for example, monitors post-school placements to check if they have been sustained. The school's information management system is used to capture information which leaders then use to inform discussions about current school provision.
- One of the many aspects of school success is the extent to which students return to, or begin at, their mainstream school – once medical advice deems it appropriate to do so. Leaders ensure that they and their staff colleagues are skilled in both identifying barriers and subsequently helping students to overcome them. For example, some students are very anxious about the journey to and from school. Hence some staff have successfully engaged with independent travel training, and subsequently delivered this for many students.
- Leaders are clear about the rationale for their curriculum. This is based on *work ready, ready for further study, life ready*. They ensure that their students, many of whom have gaps in learning owing to medical aspects, secure skills in the core subjects. This is why they employ specialist teachers. Leaders recognise that students may not be able to access a broad and balanced curriculum at certain times. So, they ensure that their time at the school is spent wisely by keeping track of the curriculum offer each student experiences. This relates well to the accredited area of excellence.
- Leaders ensure that they can draw on a range of external services to support their provision. Psychology services, for example, help students who feel particularly anxious when approaching and during examinations. As a result, students feel secure that their school will support them effectively.

2.3 School Improvement Strategies - Even better if...

- ...leaders continued to reflect on their monitoring and evaluation processes, notably to identify the impact of each priority / action on students' learning, to enable all leaders to feel more confident and competent in evaluating their work.
- ...leaders further refined how they facilitate teaching and learning discussions to enable teachers to have a greater sense of ownership for their development.

3.1 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Progress from previous EBIs

Effective teaching has been shared via a lesson study approach, with triads reflecting on different aspects of teaching and learning in different subjects. The school is now ready to develop such collaborative practice further.

3.2 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - What went well

- Students value their education at the Children's Hospital School. They talk about feeling safe and recognise how staff nurture their skills and confidence. They know that staff are invested in their growth and development. Respectful, trusting relationships between students and teachers lead to students wanting to work hard. A gentle humour exists between the two groups which supports students' feeling of belonging. Such aspects contribute to a very high quality, healthy school ethos.
- Teachers pose well thought out questions to students which enables them to expose students' misconceptions. Where best, teachers phrase questions skilfully to encourage students to reflect on their thinking. In a science lesson, for example, students were required to consider which variables to change during an experiment. Leaders were pleased that questioning was identified as a strength as recent professional development has focused on this.
- Teachers' passion for their subjects is infectious. Teachers are charismatic. They use their secure subject knowledge to plan sequences of lessons well. This enables students to develop secure knowledge bases. Further, teachers guide students' learning skilfully. Students are well equipped for life.
- During the review, a range of students' work was looked at which demonstrated effective teaching and learning over time. Art portfolios and written accounts about film and media were effective examples here. Components of students' learning, including acquisition of skills and knowledge, were very evident.
- A positive ethos flourishes. Success is celebrated. Staff use legitimate praise, which supports students' well-being effectively. Students are able to articulate their joy about being at this school. Staff are skilled at creating normality for many of the students who crave this, including those in the LRI and at Coalville.

- There are many examples around school of students having to think hard and, as a result, experience deep learning. For example, when discussing their art portfolios with students, they were able to present their ideas relating to British values through their art work.
- Staff are well supported in developing and maintaining a healthy life-work balance. Their well-being is a priority for leaders. Teachers have additional time to plan for, and reflect on, tutorial sessions and schedules for the year are mapped out from the beginning of the new year. Staff well-being remains on the school's action plan because more investment is needed to support staff in dealing with loss.

3.3 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Even better if...

- ... teachers had opportunities to discuss 'what if' ideas with leaders and then determined how they can improve their own teaching practice (with teachers having greater ownership of their professional development)
- ... teachers took frequent opportunities in lessons to check that students have understood, and/or can apply accurately, what has been taught.

4. Outcomes for Pupils

- Given the complex nature of students' needs, coupled with high mobility, it is difficult to apply typical approaches in evaluating outcomes. Leaders have decided to measure effectiveness by checking how well students make progress with respect to a number of key outcomes. These include academic, social, emotional well-being, resilience and successful transition to the next phase of learning. Such key performance indicators are measured across all school sites.
- Leaders and staff have established a numerical system of recording progress rates. Essentially these are zero (no progress), one (some progress) and two (good progress). This informs discussion about the impact of teaching on individual students.
- Typically, leaders reflect on achievement information six times through the course of the year. A current focus of assessment work is securing more helpful baseline information for those students new to the school. Given the geographical nature of the school, this is also about commonality across each site. Every student is allocated a mentor, which means that knowledge about each student is built over time.
- Strong progress results from teaching which is tailored to specific needs and high expectations of what students can achieve. This feature of provision was evident in teaching across all sites visited during the review.

- The average number of qualifications achieved per student has increased year on year. This figure rose from 5.8 in 2017 to 6.8 in 2018. Leaders are interested in any differences between the performance of different groups of students. Currently, there are no significant gaps in achievement.
- Academic qualifications are typically on an upward trend. For example, last year 39% of students achieved a grade 9-4 in mathematics, compared with 18% the previous year. There was 100% pass rate for students entered for Preparation for Working Life, ECDL and FSMQ money management.
- Last year, 86% of Year 11 students continued in further education, employment or training. Leaders are aware of reasons why the other 14% did not. This is because leaders have improved their knowledge about placements post-school.
- For children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, a baseline assessment booklet is used to establish children's skills and knowledge when they first arrive. Activities subsequently presented are aligned to the early learning goals. The self-evaluation form states that children make outstanding progress through this key stage.

5. Area of Excellence

A personalised continuum of education and care.

Accredited.

5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength?

The school supports vulnerable students with medical needs, both physical and mental health. Staff quickly identify a student's needs through a series of assessments and through close liaison with the home school. Staff develop programmes and lessons with each student's needs in mind which leads to improved outcomes. Transition processes into the school have improved over the past four years. This means that students' academic, social and health needs are accurately assessed to place them on the most appropriate pathway. The daily curriculum for each student is developed carefully to ensure positive outcomes are maximized. There is flexibility of approach when needed, with timetables tailored around particular needs.

The school has distinctive aspects of provision. These include morning 'uplift', nurture slots and a therapeutic curriculum (music, art, sport, animals). These sit alongside an academic programme which has been shown to have sufficient challenge. Teaching staff create pen portraits for their classes, ensuring lessons are tailored for each student, taking their academic and health needs into account. Each morning there is a staff briefing where the RAG rated 'risk register' is discussed so all staff are aware of the specific student vulnerabilities. When they sign in and out each day, each student at

Willow Bank is asked to assess their own well-being which allows key staff to quickly identify those needing additional support. At the inpatient settings, there are daily briefings between medical and school staff to ensure accurate student information is shared.

Detailed student knowledge allows staff to have an accurate picture of the specific needs of each individual – academic, medical and social. This allows for the right targeted support to be in place quickly which has helped support the yearly trends of improved outcomes in a variety of areas.

Multi-agency partnerships help staff ensure that each student accesses the kind of support they and their family need in order to thrive. This includes close working with CAMHS, home schools, EWO, social services and family support workers. Each student has a tutor who looks after the day to day welfare of tutees. The tutor supports student reviews and has an overview of progress. They ensure timetables are reviewed regularly with parents, students and medical professionals.

5.2 What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?

The school is affiliated with the local Ash Field Teaching School Alliance and, through this, has provided input into Wellbeing CPD training days for schools. This involved specific work around how needs for each student are identified and then used to help align support. One primary school that attended changed its practice by using signing in apps to assess well-being each morning.

Being part of the CLASS group (Leicester Special Schools), which conducts joint work each year, has enabled the headteacher, senior leaders and data groups to meet regularly. They have shared their work through these forums and other joint initiatives, such as a TA exchange programme and peer to peer review. Data sharing between the schools has been helpful in supporting students' transition in and out of different schools.

Staff have delivered aspects of this work at a local Teach Meet last year, specifically around the positive impact of the uplift programme and how students with mental health difficulties are supported when designing a curriculum. This has led to leaders supporting some other local schools. Through the hospital education network nationally, school leaders and staff have supported colleagues from other places. Two specialist leaders in education have recently been appointed, specifically for supporting students with medical (mental health) needs. They have taken part in local SEND reviews on several occasions this year.

5.3 What evidence is there of the impact on pupils' outcomes?

2018 examinations data shows evidence of strong impact. Key headlines include:

- Highest number of qualifications per student (over the past 13 years)
- More than 50% of students achieved GCSEs in English, mathematics and science
- 84% of results were either in line or better than predicted
- 80% of students achieved GCSE grade C or higher
- Increase in mathematics and science GCSE grade 9-4 from 2017.

All stakeholder surveys (pupils, parents, home schools) are positive. This is notable with respect to academic progress, quality of teaching, level of challenge, taking difficulties into account, planning next steps and enjoyment of school.

5.4 What is the name, job title and email address of the staff lead in this area?

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Title: Headteacher

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6. What additional support would the school like from the Challenge Partners network, either locally or nationally?

Leaders would welcome an opportunity to talk with Challenge Partners about developing the QAR process further with regard to capturing information about, and discussing, quality of teaching.

This review will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities.