



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR  
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL SCHOOL  
LEICESTER

<b>Name of School:</b>	The Children's Hospital School Leicester
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Stephen Deadman
<b>Hub:</b>	Ash Field
<b>School phase:</b>	Foundation Special
<b>MAT:</b>	Not applicable

<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:</b>	Leading
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	10/11/2021
<b>Overall Estimate at last QA Review:</b>	Leading
<b>Date of last QA Review:</b>	16/11/2020
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Outstanding
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	27/06/2017



## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

### REVIEW REPORT FOR CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL SCHOOL LEICESTER

#### Quality Assurance Review

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

**Leadership at all Levels** Leading

**Quality of Provision and Outcomes** Leading

#### AND

**Quality of Provision and Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs**

**Area of Excellence** Not applicable

**Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence** A personalised continuum of education and care, 18/03/2019

**Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate** Leading

***The Quality Assurance Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades. The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is developmental not judgmental.***

## 1. Context and character of the school

The Children's Hospital School Leicester (CHSL) educates students with a wide range of abilities from the ages of two to 19. Students cannot access education in their usual settings, due to a wide range of physical and/or mental health issues.

During the last academic year, 268 students from Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland received a form of education and support, ranging from two days up to several years. The school provides a personalised continuum of education and care.

The school comprises three sites. Willow Bank secondary school offers longer term provision. Currently, this provision is being expanded to include a separate provision for Key Stage 3 students. Leicester Royal Infirmary (LRI) educates primary and secondary aged students on the hospital wards. The recently opened Beacon CAMHS unit educates and supports students from 13 to 18. These students with mental health needs are educated as inpatients from across the country. In addition, the school provides outreach support for students who are unable to attend school settings.

The school actively contributes to improving students' outcomes, locally and nationally. The school is a member of the City of Leicester Association of Special Schools (CLASS), the Ash Field Teaching Alliance and the National Association for Hospital Education.

### 2.1 Leadership at all Levels - What went well

- Due to clear and skilled leadership from senior leaders, the vision and values of the CHSL are shared and 'live' across all settings. The mixture of experienced and new governors' clear knowledge reflects the vision and values of the school.
- Morning briefing is highly effective in bringing staff together and sharing important details to improve student outcomes. Leaders model excellent practice.
- Reflective and supportive leaders use their networks, to share practice, to improve outcomes for students. Self-evaluation is concise, accurate, and evidence based. School improvement planning is strong, with clear accountability, success criteria and appropriate areas for action.
- CHSL is a centre of excellence. Practitioners from the local area and beyond visit and learn from the school. The relevant training programme reaches education, health and social care professionals and parents. For example, the mental health first aid programme is delivered to educational and non-education professionals. The school provides bespoke training and support to numerous schools. The 'whole child attributes' assessment tool, developed at CHSL, is used in similar settings across the UK.

- Leaders have a realistic picture of holistic progress, rapidly responding to issues to increase progress. Improved target setting, based on Fischer Family Trust methodology, is further challenging teachers to raise attainment.
- Leaders continue to address ongoing challenges to schools such as CHSL in reducing the numbers of students who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), including links to and support for colleges, increased tracking and 'check ins' with vulnerable leavers. This year, a small group of previous Year 11 students, currently NEET, are re-engaging with school, improving their resilience and well-being.
- Subject leaders plan and reflect together in protected time, using research to share practice, and improve pedagogy and standards in their subjects.
- Leaders thoughtfully support staff well-being. At the end of each day there is protected planning and debriefing time. Leaders analyse workload and have developed a culture of appropriate 'give and take' where staff are understood and valued. The 'Friday breakfast', prepared by the skilled school chef, is an example of one of many ways that leaders support staff well-being.
- The delivery of the therapeutic offer at CHSL is personalised and highly effective, including interventions such as THRIVE and Forest Schools. Art therapy is built on fostering trusting relationships and delivering high quality teaching. Assessment processes at CHSL have informed accurate diagnoses, such as autism spectrum conditions. Students and families are supported to understand their diagnosis, and its impact on their lives.
- The effectiveness of careers education is measured through Gatsby Benchmarks. The school retains a Connexions adviser, working closely with colleges and work placement providers, to find the right placements post school. Above all, the school supports students in raising aspirations and finding their future direction.

## 2.2 Leadership at all Levels - Even better if...

...leaders facilitated further governor visits to gather more information about each provision so that they could all enhance their support and challenge to school leaders.

## 3.1 Quality of Provision and Outcomes - What went well

- Staff at CHSL know students well and show exceptional commitment to improving their lives. Trusting relationships are a key strength of the school.
- Teaching staff have high expectations of and for students. As a result, students rise to the challenge, improving their attendance, engagement and academic knowledge and skills.

- Teachers use strong subject knowledge in their planning, to make their subject appealing, resulting in high levels of engagement and strong progress. Teaching staff use questioning well, checking understanding and deepening learning. In an art lesson the teacher used 'backward chaining' to support students to complete the task. A student eloquently and confidently demonstrated her knowledge of art, discussing a piece of work by Van Gogh.
- Teaching assistants (TAs) feel valued and listened to, using their skills and interests to broaden the curriculum. For example, TAs lead baking, felting and physical education sessions. They are trusted and supported to lead learning and do it highly effectively.
- The school council and students generally make important contributions to the school. The student council took pleasure in devising a sponsored 'taste test' for certain teachers on 'Children in Need' day. They take responsibility for showing visitors around the school and suggest appropriate improvements to enhance school life.
- Teaching staff take advantage of the high-quality training, development and support provided by the school, the NHS, partner schools and local subject specific networks.
- Attendance is an area of constant focus. Most students start from 'zero' or low levels of attendance, for a variety of reasons, including anxiety and other mental health conditions. Attendance almost always improves significantly, producing improved outcomes and holistic progress.
- At the Beacon Unit, relationships between school, clinical and wider staff teams result in strong teamwork, providing clear boundaries, high expectations and a positive learning ethos. Students respond well to the minimum three classes per day expectation.
- At the Leicester Royal Infirmary, due to high expectations of staff, and teamwork with clinical staff, families and their host school, students make strong progress, often in challenging circumstances. For example, a student was struggling at their host school. The host school considered repeating the year. Due to the highly effective teaching and excellent progress made at the LRI, the host school reversed this decision.
- The carefully thought out and relevant curriculum in each setting improves well-being, resilience, skills and knowledge, preparing students for the next phase of their lives. Recently, the highly effective 'uplift', now embedded at the start of the day, was reduced to allow for personal development sessions in the middle of the day. Standards in the core subjects are strong overall, with some exceptional practice, for example in mathematics and film studies.
- Despite most students missing large periods of education before arriving at CHSL, each year the number and level of qualifications per student increases. The proportion of students attaining Grade 9-4 in GCSE mathematics and film studies is above the national average. The proportion of students achieving grades 9-7 in health and social care was also above the national average.

Numerous case studies show that students make exceptional progress from adverse beginnings.

### **3.2 Quality of Provision and Outcomes - Even better if...**

...the findings and improvements arising from the teaching and learning group continued to inform and increase staff knowledge of how students learn.

### **4.1 Quality of Provision and Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well**

- The school chose to focus on the students who will not engage with school, as student engagement opens the doors for students to make changes, which significantly improve their lives.
- School staff and the family liaison officer, alongside the education welfare officer, engage with families to support students to come to school.
- Once in school the carefully thought-out interventions and approaches engage students. They build trust and gain confidence and students see that being in school is a positive experience which enhances their lives.
- Rigorous monitoring of attendance data by the school clearly shows how attendance and progress are strongly linked.
- The remote learning offer has improved since the Covid -19 pandemic, which has had some impact on a proportion of students engaging with their learning. Staff have conducted home visits and been creative in their approaches to encourage attendance.
- Almost all of the students at CHSL engage with the school, attend and make excellent holistic progress and turn their lives around.
- The school has many case studies of successful increased attendance and re-engagement with learning, in person and/or remotely. For example, a young person who had been out of school for a year, exhibiting suicidal thoughts, joined Willow Bank in the autumn of 2020, and left after Year 11 with attendance at 77%, strong GCSE results and enrolment on an 'A' level course at a local college. This level of improvement is a common feature of the school. However, progress is also demonstrated in other important ways, such as forming friendships, making improvements in emotional intelligence and role modelling. A student on a work placement was described as a 'wonderful young person who was helpful to other students.'

#### **4.2 Quality of Provision and Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...**

...the school continued to use its expertise in engagement, to work with the small minority of students and their families who still find it difficult to engage, to improve their outcomes.

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

School leaders are fully engaged with the local and national Challenge Partners network and are proactive in seeking and providing support to improve outcomes.

**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.**

**Schools can access the School Support Directory; the Challenge Partners online tool that enables schools to connect with other schools in your hub and across the national network of schools.**

**Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice events where schools showcase excellent and/or innovative practice. Sharing Leading Practice events allow school leaders with specific improvement needs to visit a school or attend an online webinar hosted by a school, with outstanding provision in that area.**

**Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website.**