



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW
REVIEW REPORT FOR
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL SCHOOL

Name of School:	Children's Hospital School
Headteacher/Principal:	Stephen Deadman
Hub:	Ash Field
School phase:	Foundation Special
MAT (if applicable):	Not applicable

Overall, Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	25 th April 2023
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Leading
Date of last QA Review	10/11/2021
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	27/06/2017

1. Context and character of the school

The Children's Hospital School, Leicester educates students who cannot access education in their usual settings from age 2 to 19. The school has recently expanded and consists of four different provisions that cater for a wide range of physical and/or mental health issues. Willow Bank caters for Key Stage 4 students. The Magpie Learning Centre opened September 2022 and caters for Key Stage 2 and 3 students including an early intervention group that have an eight-week part-time provision. The Beacon CAMHS unit educates and supports students from 13 to 18. Leicester Royal Infirmary educates primary and secondary aged students on the hospital wards. The school provides tuition for children aged 2-16 who are unable to leave the home to attend school, on medical grounds.

Last academic year, 261 students received their education at the school. 43% of students received the student premium grant. 10% of students have an education, health and care plan (EHCP.) These numbers can change daily.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- Leaders are innovative and willing to adapt to the changing needs of the local population whilst ensuring that change is systemic and sustained. Leaders carefully consider what initiatives are no longer necessary, taking account of staff well-being in all elements of change management.
- The culture of high expectation is evident across all elements of leaders. An example is how leaders welcome external scrutiny, alongside the schools own monitoring and evaluation which has led to aspirational targets and a relentless pursuit of best practice across the school.
- Leaders are well connected locally and nationally and are committed to using evidence-based practice to inform their approach and school development. Examples include the invitation for subject leaders from outside the school to support with subject reviews and staff engagement in special school peer reviews.
- The school's exceptional work on mental health has been acknowledged and used as a case study in a recent publication 'How to Maximise Emotional Wellbeing and Improve Mental Health' published in 2021.
- Leaders have raised the profile of literacy across the curriculum by ensuring that all staff have a shared understanding of effective pedagogy to support outcomes. Staff are aware of the importance of access to reading. There are three waves to this approach which are supported by other initiatives such as dual coding.
- Leaders are clear about how to deliver high quality provision to meet the differing needs in the four provisions. Support is in place for subject leaders and heads of

school to meet to discuss data, undertake learning walks and support with staff development.

- Staff development ensures that all class-based staff have the knowledge and skills to support a variety of student needs and have the relevant subject knowledge. Subject collaboration across the locality is used to ensure that staff teaching subjects such as health and social care and art are developed and effectively supported.
- Governors have a better understanding of school provision through an increase in focus visits linked to the school improvement priorities, which has led to effective challenge of leaders.
- Senior leaders know their students and their provision well. They are able to adapt practice to meet the needs of a highly transient population with a large variety of needs and aptitudes. As a result, students and their families are fully supported from the first point of contact through to beyond discharge.
- Parents and carers have access to ongoing support through skilled staff with clearly defined roles, alongside a multi-agency approach where available.

2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if...

...leaders provided subject leaders with clarity of their role in monitoring and evaluation of the school improvement priorities across the whole school.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Relationships, through a well-established culture of a therapeutic approach, are at the heart of all interactions. This has supported with students' personal development and attendance alongside their ability to take positive risks.
- Through a robust analysis of student needs on entry, leaders are adept at putting in place a curriculum offer that both supports their holistic and academic needs. The process on entry, with assessment over a three-week period, has improved engagement and ensured that therapeutic sessions using timetabled slots such as gardening, forest schools, equine therapy can be part of the curriculum offer.
- Leaders are clear that alongside a strong therapeutic model of provision, students are pushed outside of their comfort zone to support their social skills as well as academic outcomes. Carefully planned residential experiences alongside a range of local trips and enrichment opportunities have supported with overcoming high levels of anxiety and self-esteem.
- Bespoke GCSE provision is in place for students using support from referring mainstream schools with examinations. This led recently to a student achieving a grade 9 in music.

- Rigorous evaluation and use of external data is firmly embedded to raise aspirations for individual student outcomes. Teachers set challenging targets that consider the students' health, well-being and starting points but also reflect student potential. These dynamic targets have led to students achieving better outcomes over the last four years which are moving closer to FFT and Progress 8 targets.
- The curriculum offer is regularly reviewed, and changes have been made based on analysis of student need. One change has been to the length of the school day to give more discreet learning in RSE, citizenship and RE due to the importance of these subjects for the current student population.
- Careers information, advice and guidance is well considered to meet the needs of the individuals at all four provisions. This has led to an increase in student aspiration, applications to post-16 placements and a reduction in NEETs.
- Subject leader support, alongside the senior leaders focus on high-quality teaching and learning, has led to highly effective practice in all four provisions, with a particular strength in the use of subject specific language. Staff demonstrate strong subject knowledge, the ability to use questioning and promote metacognitive practice.
- At The Magpie, the well-considered academic, nurture and therapeutic curriculum engages pupils back into education. Excellent partnership working ensures that most students accessing the early intervention programme, successfully transition back to their home school.
- At Willow Bank, the rich environment caters for the academic, social and health needs of students. Through strong relationships, ambitious teaching and high expectations, students make progress over weeks, months and years, achieving improved engagement and sustained change. Assessments, effective liaison, and extra-curricular opportunities ensure that students are prepared for their next steps.
- At The Beacon Unit all students receive a carefully considered educational offer which takes into account their complex health needs, whilst maintaining high expectations and promoting high aspirations which are evident in the interactions between staff and students.
- At The Leicester Royal Infirmary staff are adept at ensuring plans are put in place rapidly to support their education provision. The learning journeys are highly effective in demonstrating personalised learning, supporting with transition, and capturing the rich curriculum across all key stages.

3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if...

...some of the students that are taught at home were able to access elements of their education from the school site.

4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged students and students with additional needs - What went well.

- Targeted work experience is provided for all students, where health needs allow, which has helped to gain more successful transitions. An example is one student volunteering in a geriatric ward leading to a successful job application.
- Monitoring of attendance is a priority for leaders. Currently there is a small proportion of students whose attendance levels are causing concern. The number of students in this category has reduced as the school continues to reflect on the best approach to maintain engagement with the family. Staff have adapted practice and transition into school to further support improved attendance.
- The school's personalised approach to learning has impacted on the improvements in academic outcomes for those students who are disadvantaged or have additional needs.
- The wide range of enrichment interventions have supported student well-being as well as engagement in the core curriculum. An example of this is the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme at Bronze and Silver level which is accessed by students for free. The volunteering, physical and skills elements are supported both in school and within the students' local community, supporting with improved resilience and well-being.

4.2 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged students and students with additional needs - Even better if...

...the school continued to look at evidence-based practice, wider expertise, and multi-agency support to support family engagement to improve attendance for the small proportion of students that are currently not attending.

5. Area of Excellence

Mental Health

Accredited

5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength? What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?

The school has a long history of supporting young people with mental health problems which affect their attendance, wellbeing, and education. In September 2022, the school introduced an Early Intervention provision for students in Years 5 – 10 who struggle to attend school but were waiting for a CAMHS referral. Students follow a curriculum that is academic and nurturing with opportunities to build social skills, self-control, self-awareness, self-worth, resilience, independence, and ambition. This new provision has proven to be highly successful with most students successfully moving back to their home school, often after extended periods of non-attendance. The main aim of this model is to intervene earlier once problems are identified so that issues do not escalate, leading to longer placements outside their community.

The school delivers a number of internal training packages covering common aspects of mental health challenges, including attachment, trauma, anxiety and eating disorders, as well as nationally accredited mental health first aid through Mental Health First Aid England. The school has staff trained to deliver the two-day First Aid course, one-day Mental Health Champion course and half-day Mental Health Awareness course. Further opportunities are currently being explored with the police force and colleagues within social care, as well as the possibility of setting up a mental health hub, parent awareness sessions for schools and a violence reduction network with the police related to trauma.

5.2 What evidence is there of the impact on students' outcomes?

A range of school data demonstrates the impact of this work to date, including:

- Increase in number of young people transitioning from Year 11 into college / FE (80% in 2021 and 96% in 2022, which equates to one student)
- Benchmarked attainment data, using a national Alternative Provision data base for young people with mental health, shows that the school achieves highly across all measures when compared with other similar provisions. These measures include average points, attainment 8, English, mathematics and science levels.
- There is a four-year trend of increasing attendance.

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

Lorraine Biddle, Head of School – Beacon CAMHS Unit
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QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

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Following the QA Review

The review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. However, we encourage you to share the main findings with your hub/hub manager so that they can support your hub's activity planning. Challenge Partners will also collate and analyse report content to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector each year.

For further support following your QA Review, 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 (SLP) 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. (<https://www.challengepartners.org/>)

Finally, following the QA Review, schools may find it useful to refer to research such as the EEF toolkit to help inform their approach to tackling the EBIs identified in the report (<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit>)