

Devon Hospitals Short Stay School

Bramble Unit, Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital, Barrack Road, Exeter, EX2 5DW

Inspection dates 25–26 September 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils engage positively in learning and achievement is good. Both those attending on a recurring basis and those attending for short stays make good progress.
- Teaching is good and engages pupils in learning. Teachers have good links with pupils' home schools, supporting continuity in learning.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Behaviour is excellent. supported by a bullying policy with a focus on cyber bullying and e-safety. Safety is of paramount importance and staff are well trained.
- The teacher in charge shows ambition and vision. A newly expanded age range is now provided for and there are plans for further expansion. Staff are committed to excellence and supported through effective professional development. This includes opportunities to observe best practice in mainstream schools.
- The management committee and the local authority provide strong support. Issues raised at the last inspection have been addressed effectively and the school has continued to improve in relation to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Systems for recording the progress made by pupils with complex needs do not yet capture in sufficient detail the small steps made in their learning.
- The outdoor curriculum for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is narrow.
- The information and communication technology network does not provide effectively for the needs of pupils and staff. There is an unequal distribution of technology resources across the bases.

Information about this inspection

- A total of 10 lessons were observed during the inspection, taught by five teachers and amounting to five hours of inspection time. In addition, learning walks and shorter observation sessions took place to see staff working with pupils at their bedsides.
- Meetings were held with the teacher in charge, teachers and representatives of the management committee, the local authority and the hospital. Pupils and parents and carers were spoken with. Although not enough parents and carers responded to the Parent View website to trigger an analysis of their questionnaire returns, recent school questionnaires completed by parents, carers and pupils were taken into account. Those submitted by members of staff were also considered.
- Samples of pupils' work over time were looked at and pupils were heard reading.
- A range of documentation covering teaching programmes, schemes of work, pupils' progress data and a range of policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding, were examined.
- Arrangements for maintaining contact with the home schools of those pupils admitted on a recurring basis were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Robert Arnold

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school has bases in two hospitals. The main provision is at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital in Exeter, the other base being in the North Devon District Hospital at Barnstaple. Education is provided throughout the academic year at both sites.
- All pupils who attend on a recurring basis have a chronic medical condition, are disabled or have special educational needs that are supported at school action plus or by a statement of special educational needs.
- Although only eight pupils were on roll at the time of the inspection, numbers change on a daily basis dependent on hospital admissions. Over the last academic year 568 in total were taught in the school.
- Numbers known to be eligible for the pupil premium fluctuate from day to day, as do the numbers of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. However, a large majority of pupils over the year are of White British origin and few speak English as an additional language.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that systems for monitoring progress provide a sharp focus on small steps in all pupils' learning.
- Improve the provision of information and communication technology through enhancing the wireless network and quality of current laptops, ensuring equality of provision at both sites.
- In relation to the school's newly expanded age range and to planning for further expansion:
 - enhance resources for Reception-aged children, especially those to support the outdoor curriculum
 - ensure that plans for admitting post-16 pupils identify gaps in expertise and resources
 - utilise the support and expertise of the local authority in planning for the wider age range and expanded curriculum in order to secure their effective delivery.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The attainment of pupils varies widely. Some have profound and multiple learning difficulties which have a huge impact on their ability to learn, whilst others demonstrate attainment well above average. Crucially, all pupils have clear targets on admission and subsequently make sustained progress, resulting in good achievement.
- Pupils are able to make good progress irrespective of the length of their stay. The achievement of those pupils who are admitted to hospital on a recurring basis, the majority, is supported by good links with their home schools. Older pupils who have had longer stays are well supported and achieve well at GCSE. Others return to their home schools, able to sustain progress and achievement in line with that prior to admittance to hospital.
- A recent development has been provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Reception-age children demonstrate good progress from their varying starting points, although facilities to deliver the outdoor curriculum are limited.
- The provision made for pupils with complex needs is good and the appointment of a specialist staff member with skills in this area supports their progress well. This was reflected in a successful session of sensory stimulation using light, sound and touch to which the pupil responded positively and was able to identify, reach out and touch the various stimuli.
- Target setting and tracking for pupils with complex needs is now in place and has developed and improved since the last inspection. However, the process for monitoring and recording their progress does not always provide a sharp enough focus on small steps made in learning. This in turn inhibits planning for individual needs and is a barrier to raising achievement further.
- Reading skills develop well because they are promoted effectively across the curriculum by staff with good expertise. For example, younger pupils are supported in developing their reading skills through effective use of phonics (the recognition of letters and sounds). Staff are also skilled in adapting to the varying needs of pupils, which often include emotional and social needs. For example, careful liaison with medical staff enables good support in addressing psychological and mental health needs, helping overcome barriers to learning.

The quality of teaching is good

- Despite illnesses, pupils readily engage in learning, which supports good progress. In part this is because teachers are skilled at creating a positive climate for learning, so pupils want to be in school, where a strong rapport develops.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations, show good questioning skills and help pupils to develop a range of skills across the curriculum.
- However, weaknesses in the systems for monitoring and recording progress are a barrier to more precise planning for individual needs, particularly for those with profound and multiple learning needs, and this prevents teaching from being outstanding overall.
- At the start of the day there is an effective handover from the medical staff, so that any needs can be highlighted and discussed. Despite being in hospital there is an expectation that pupils will learn whenever they can. This is equally true for all pupils, including those with more severe disabilities or learning difficulties.
- Core skills are taught well, often through a topic or theme based approach for the younger pupils. This was illustrated in a lesson on the tropical rainforest, where the pupil also read a carefully chosen story book about animals in the jungle.
- Effective use of information and communication technology is a successful feature of those lessons where resources are available. I pads, e-books and cameras to film or record learning are used well. However, the current wireless network is not efficient enough for the needs of pupils and staff and this is currently limiting the overall effectiveness of technology as a teaching tool. There is a lack of parity between the sites with regard to

technology resources.

- Planned initiatives include the development of video links with pupils' home schools to enable them to remain in touch while in hospital.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are very positive about school and this is illustrated in their exemplary behaviour and attitudes. They feel safe and appreciate that staff are sensitive to their particular needs. Parents, carers and staff are also extremely positive about behaviour and safety.
- The school seeks to ensure that pupils have a good understanding of bullying. Technology is used frequently as a tool for learning and this involves pupils in considering e-safety. Pupils are also aware of the different types of bullying that can occur and how to avoid it.
- There are stringent safeguarding arrangements, including those necessary to meet the medical needs of some pupils. Huge care is taken to avoid the risk of infection, whilst all staff undertake annual updating of their skills in resuscitation and manual handling in addition to general first-aid. Effective liaison between medical and education staff seeks to ensure best practice is in place.
- Sometimes pupils are not well enough to attend school. Education staff are made aware of this at the morning handover from the medical staff. Apart from that, pupils clearly enjoy school and attendance is very regular.
- Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are utilised effectively. This extends from helping pupils come to terms with their own conditions and to appreciate they have a positive role to play in society, through to an appreciation of art, music and poetry. These are well illustrated in displays, including pupils' own work around the classrooms.

The leadership and management are good

- The teacher in charge was newly appointed at the time of the last inspection and in the intervening period she has brought about improvement through her vision, commitment and extremely high expectations.
- Staff respond very positively and there is a shared drive for excellence. Clear and effective systems for appraisal and performance management support the measurement of performance against clear job specifications. Staff are aware of the new Teachers' Standards and these are reflected in the expectations set against an individual's experience when assessing performance and salary progression.
- Effective monitoring of teaching supports good professional development which is aimed at meeting individuals' needs whilst addressing the key priorities for school improvement.
- Planning for post-16 education is a recent development. The effective self-evaluation and identification of key priorities for the future contribute much to ensuring a good capacity for further improvement.
- Given the need to improve systems for measuring pupils' progress and to improve even further the quality of teaching, leadership is good but not yet outstanding.
- The curriculum provides an enriching experience and pupils are able to maintain and develop work already undertaken in their home schools through the effective links established.
- There are strong and effective links with the local authority, including representation on the management committee. Support includes enabling staff to develop their good practice through facilitating access to outstanding practice in each phase in mainstream schools. The local authority is keen to support the school as it expands the age range of its pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - provides effective challenge to the school through the specific curriculum links being developed by every member of the committee
 - utilises the range of expertise reflected in its membership, including representation from the local education service, the hospital and other providers who work with the pupils, and

- their parents and carers to promote the effectiveness of the school
- ensures that the local authority’s statutory obligations for this pupil referral unit are carried out, including the effective implementation of safeguarding, including child protection and safe recruitment of staff
- ensures that there is financial probity, with funding directed to supporting the identified needs of the school.

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	134859
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	402645

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	8
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Teacher in charge	Denise Benson
Date of previous school inspection	22 January 2010
Telephone number	01392 402675
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