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Amanda Morris-Drake  
Head of PRU  
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Dear Ms Morris-Drake

### **Short inspection of Pilgrim PRU**

Following my visit to the school on 15 November 2016 with Her Majesty's Inspector Mary Rayner, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be outstanding in September 2011.

### **This school continues to be outstanding.**

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and your team, alongside the healthcare professionals, secure better life chances for young people at Pilgrim PRU (pupil referral unit). Pupils arrive at the hospital wards with very complex and varied medical needs. You and your centre leaders are emphatic that your pupils should be supported to achieve to their maximum potential, no matter what challenges they face. Staff work diligently in partnership with a dedicated healthcare team to ensure that pupils' needs are met. Consequently, whichever of the four centres the young people attend, (Darwin, Croft, Phoenix or Addenbrook's), the pupils make outstanding progress academically and socially.

Pupils access a wide curriculum which interests and engages them. Leaders in each centre work quickly to ensure that they know what pupils can do and already know when they first arrive. Leaders create a personalised curriculum for each pupil. For pupils at key stages 4 and 5, this ensures that they continue with qualifications for which they were studying in their mainstream school. For other pupils who have been out of education for some time the individualised provision allows them to access qualifications meaningfully for the first time. While you have worked very effectively since the previous inspection to improve the accommodation at the PRU,

you are still limited in the number of on-site facilities that pupils have to study practical subjects, such as science. The local authority have acknowledged this as a shortcoming, and in response to this they are going to seek some joint commissioning with the hospitals so that these facilities can be created on-site.

Pupils make outstanding progress in all four centres. Teachers and teaching assistants really know the pupils well. Staff routinely assess what each pupil has learned and use this information effectively to plan for the next lesson. Consequently, pupils make exceptional progress over time, especially those who study with you for a longer period. Pupils make notable academic progress in the early years and key stage 1 at the Addenbrook's Centre, where the teaching is highly personalised to the specific needs of the pupils, incorporating a detailed understanding of their medical provision. Equally, the 2016 results for GCSE in the Darwin and Phoenix centres once again show outstanding progress and attainment for pupils, especially the most able, who achieved a high proportion of A and A\* grades.

Parents are rightly effusive in the praise that they give to you and your team. The parents who spoke to inspectors, and those who wrote comments on Ofsted's text-messaging system, commented on the 'brilliant' and 'excellent' support given to them and their children by the centre. They value the high-quality and regular communication that you give them, whether it be the phone calls, the weekly reports or the detailed monthly updates. They appreciate how well you work alongside the healthcare teams in the hospitals to ensure that they receive information that depicts all aspects of their child's care and development. The work of leaders and staff in the Croft Centre is especially noteworthy, as it puts communication with the pupil's whole family at the centre of what it does.

You have worked diligently since the previous inspection to act on the areas for improvement. You and the team have been exceptionally thorough in your analysis of pupils' progress over time, using your 'the difference we make' tracking and evaluation system. This system is being used proficiently by all staff so that it not only shows the difference the school makes, but also supports staff to have a rigorous dialogue about pupils' achievement. This monitoring also gives pupils and teachers a tool to communicate about learning, which they use very well to continue to better standards.

Since the previous inspection, the quality of the management committee has also improved dramatically. Your management committee represents a broad spectrum of expertise, including education, health, finance and the local authority. The members of this committee offer first-rate challenge to you and your team, always seeking the very best for pupils in your care. The management committee has been pivotal in the improvements you have made to your strategic planning, your assessment processes and financial forethought.

You and your team work collaboratively with other professionals in the hospitals so that all aspects of pupils' development are supported. Your healthcare colleagues feel that the educational experience that pupils receive from your team is a vital and

excellent part of pupils' therapy. Your team maintains exemplary professional standards. For example, your team in Addenbrook's, led by an experienced and skilled head of centre, face their many specific challenges with humility and professionalism. They support one another and their colleagues from other disciplines effectively during times of sometimes significant challenge.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Pupils feel safe at Pilgrim PRU. For many pupils, this is a real achievement, given their challenges and complex needs. Staff develop very positive and trusting relationships with pupils, based on mutual respect and understanding. Your team uses constant dialogue and communication with pupils to find ways forwards when they are sometimes frustrated or struggling to access their learning. Pupils are always treated with dignity and respect, and they value this enormously. You work closely with the professionals from many other teams to ensure that pupils receive joined-up support from you all. The communication between yourselves and these professionals is timely, efficient, insightful and specific.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe. Your team, especially your heads of centre, work very effectively with the health professionals to create learning in the curriculum about how to stay safe online and in the wider world. You undertake this work sensitively but rigorously. Your team do not shy away from difficult conversations with pupils, but undertake these conversations with care and guidance from the health teams. Pupils say that they enjoy these aspects of the curriculum, and your colleagues from other professional agencies speak exceedingly highly of the work that you do here.

Safeguarding is at the centre of all your work at Pilgrim PRU. You and your team have a thorough understanding of the most up-to-date guidance, and you access regular training and use this effectively to remain vigilant to your pupils' potential vulnerabilities. You use the hospital safeguarding systems to highlight where you have any concerns. You use the daily communication with the nursing, safeguarding and social care teams on-site to ensure that your referrals have been followed up and to gain further insight into what more you need to do to secure the well-being of pupils.

### **Inspection findings**

- You, your leaders and the management committee are a reflective, insightful and dedicated group of professionals. You and the team are remarkably self-critical, constantly seeking quality assurance and guidance about how to improve in all areas of your work. You are never satisfied that you have done enough for your pupils. You put pupils first and in all your evaluations you constantly strive to think about how pupils in different contexts feel as a member of your school. You actively use pupil and parent voices in your evaluation because you want to know what they think.
- Your excellent communication with a range of stakeholders ensures that pupils receive seamless support at Pilgrim PRU. You are meticulous in the

communication that you undertake with pupils' schools, their parents and carers and the multi-disciplinary teams involved with each child. You work as one with the health professionals on-site to ensure that pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs are met, so that pupils can engage fully with their learning.

- You overcome difficulties in recruitment well. You develop staff internally so that they are well ready for the enhanced responsibilities that they receive. Your staff team is also very resilient and incredibly flexible to the changes required to meet the varying needs of pupils in your care. For example, teachers teach a variety of subjects across year groups, and take incredible care to ensure that they are clear on the criteria and content of each new subject. Consequently, they know subjects well, provide pupils with excellent learning opportunities that are appropriate and support pupils to make outstanding progress.
- Leaders use the additional funding that they receive for disadvantaged pupils very effectively to raise pupils' achievement and engagement. The school does not receive the full amount of the pupil premium. However, the funding you do receive is used very specifically on pupils who are identified as requiring additional support. Extra tuition for specific examination courses, tools and equipment for these courses and reading materials are just some of the ways in which the school uses its funding on specific pupils. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils, including those who are the most able, are supported well.
- Pupils access a curriculum which supports the raised national expectations at key stages 1, 2 and 3, as well as a broad range of qualifications at key stages 4 and 5. For example, the most able pupils at key stages 4 and 5 continue with any GCSEs or A levels that they started at their mainstream school. You hire in subject-specialist tutors on the few occasions where your talented staff do not have the expertise to teach some subjects, for example A-level physics. Consequently, pupils, especially the most able, make exceptional progress. The most able pupils achieve year on year in a varied and vast curriculum and attain a high number of A and A\* grades.
- Reading and literacy are given high emphasis across the provision. Many older pupils listen to younger pupils read. Pupils voluntarily use poetry or creative writing to express their feelings when going through difficult periods in their therapy. More than this, reading and stories are used adeptly by teachers and staff to ensure that all pupils, especially the most able pupils, build a large vocabulary that they use with confidence and skill. Pupils are constantly challenged by staff to use this language accurately throughout their curriculum.
- Pupils are taught how to be good citizens and about the importance of care and community. Your leaders and staff emphasise kindness and understanding in their work. They regularly, but sensitively, show pupils information about the suffering and hardships that many people face in the world. Staff encourage pupils to think about others and what they can do to help those less fortunate. Pupils, despite many of their own challenges, respond very positively to this and, consequently, participate in charity work, visit senior citizens and undertake trips, visits and small acts of community work. They are also kind to one another, and often support each other in their social and lesson time.

- The leader for special educational needs and/or disabilities responds rapidly to the changing needs of vulnerable pupils. Pupils' support plans are of a high quality, taking real and genuine records of pupils' own views. Leaders ensure that the many different professionals involved in the care of pupils are actively involved in the support plan, so that it is a well-rounded review of pupils' development. Teaching assistants are well trained and proactively use these plans and their knowledge of the pupils to intervene effectively. Consequently, teachers and teaching assistants use these documents to plan bespoke activities to support pupils to make rapid progress.
- All pupils who leave the Pilgrim PRU achieve the next step in their education or training. Most return to mainstream schools, while a number secure a place at a new school or college. However, you have identified that some pupils who are discharged are not always fully ready to return to mainstream education. These pupils require further transition support that goes beyond the work that you currently undertake to support schools. You are actively seeking ways in which you can finance and develop your provision to include this 'transition phase' for pupils to fully ensure that they sustain their mainstream education.
- Leaders ensure that the website is compliant with what it is required to publish online. However, the management committee have rightly identified that the website and some policies do not reflect the unique and outstanding practice at Pilgrim PRU.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the website and policies fully reflect the unique and outstanding practice at Pilgrim PRU
- they support the local authority with their joint commissioning to create purpose-built facilities for practical subjects such as science, and to support further pupils' transition into mainstream schools.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the management committee, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cambridgeshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kim Pigram  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

Our lines of enquiry focused upon four things:

- How far had leaders improved on the areas for improvement since the previous inspection?
- How far have leaders secured outstanding outcomes for pupils by the time they leave Pilgrim PRU?
- How do leaders and staff ensure that pupils are kept safe?
- How do leaders ensure that they involve parents and pupils in the provision?

During the inspection, we spoke with you and the heads of the four centres, (Darwin, Croft, Phoenix and Addenbrook's). We met with three representatives from the management committee, including the chair. We also spoke to a representative from the local authority. We met several health professionals on each of the four sites. We visited classrooms and undertook a scrutiny of pupils' work on all four sites. We spoke with pupils throughout the day and heard pupils read.

We took account of the free text messages on Ofsted's online questionnaire from six parents, as well as 13 pupil responses and five staff responses. We spoke to several parents, both face-to-face and on the telephone. We also reviewed an array of school documentation, including information related to safeguarding and progress.