

Chelsea Children's Hospital School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100549
Local Authority	Kensington and Chelsea
Inspection number	285822
Inspection date	21 June 2007
Reporting inspector	William Geoffrey Robson

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Warren Felson
Headteacher	Mrs Janette Steel
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2002
School address	Chelsea and Westminster Hospital 369 Fulham Road London SW10 9NH
Telephone number	020 8746 8672
Fax number	020 8746 8683

Age group	3–18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school provides for pupils who are unable to attend mainstream schools because of chronic or acute medical and mental health needs. There is a constant flow of admissions and departures from the school. Some children require regular medical treatment and receive much of their education in the hospital school; others attend for only a short time.

Children are taught in classrooms, by the bedside, or individually in isolation wards in three hospitals. These are Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, Royal Brompton Hospital and St Mary's Hospital. The latter provision has recently become part of the school. It was inspected in February 2007 as a pupil referral unit, pending reorganisation which has since taken place. In addition, children aged three to five, with cerebral palsy and other profound and multiple difficulties, are taught at the Cheyne centre. Another centre at Collingham Gardens caters for children with a wide range of mental health disorders. Several other children with medical needs, who are not admitted to hospital but are unable to attend their normal school, also attend the school or have individual home tuition. Approximately half of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Many pupils have special educational needs including a statement. One sixth form student was being taught at the school during the time of the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the excellent quality of provision for their children. Two comments typify their views - 'My daughter has blossomed at this school', and, 'Our son has made fantastic progress; we cannot praise the school enough.' As a result of excellent teaching, the achievement of pupils of all ages, with a wide range of medical needs, is outstanding. Overall standards are close to the national average although there is a very wide range of attainment in all age groups. Standards are lowest in the foundation stage but here, too, the quality of provision is outstanding. Many children have severe and complex needs but make excellent progress with social and communication skills. Staff involve parents fully, keep them informed of progress and support them very effectively to help their children further.

The school benefits from outstanding leadership and management. The headteacher and all staff are dedicated to enabling children to achieve as well as they can during a difficult time in their lives. Impressive teamwork between teachers, support assistants, medical staff and outside agencies ensures that pupils also make outstanding progress in terms of personal development. They clearly enjoy lessons immensely and many attend despite feeling unwell. One pupil said that the hospital school was the best thing that had ever happened to him. This is partly because teachers assess pupils' needs very carefully and provide a stimulating, individualised curriculum that meets these needs very well. Pupils whose mental health problems have previously led to very challenging behaviour begin to overcome their difficulties. All behaviour during the inspection was exemplary. Pupils trust staff and feel safe in a secure environment. In hospital, children learn to look after their health needs very well. All are keen to participate in physical education at the level at which they are able. Some pupils have limited opportunities to get involved in the community because of their medical needs. For example, pupils in isolation wards cannot meet other pupils directly. However, excellent use of video conferencing facilities reduces this isolation and enables social interaction and participation in lessons, to the obvious delight of these pupils. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education. All older pupils move on to further education, training or employment when they leave the school. Others return successfully to mainstream or other special schools.

The senior management team is not complacent about the school's success. The recent expansion of the school to include provision at St Mary's Hospital has been extremely well managed. Since the last inspection, classroom accommodation has been improved, in line with recommendations in the report. This excellent track record in bringing about planned developments means that the school has excellent capacity for further improvement and the maintenance of high quality provision. Self-evaluation is good and the work of staff and pupils is closely monitored. However, the large amount of data that the school collects about pupils' progress is not analysed sufficiently as part of the self-evaluation process.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the available data about students' achievement and personal development to evaluate the school's work more rigorously.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

There is a very wide range of attainment in all years. For example, some pupils with very complex needs in the Cheyne centre are just beginning to communicate with a few sounds and facial expressions. At Collingham Gardens, some pupils have clearly been held back by the amount of education they have missed prior to attending the school. By comparison, some older pupils who are taught in the hospitals gain several GCSE passes at grades A-C. Some art coursework, submitted for advanced level GCE, is of the highest standard. Given this extremely wide range, overall standards are close to the national average.

Whatever their levels of attainment, learning difficulties, disabilities or ethnic background, pupils' achievement is outstanding. This is because of their extremely positive attitudes and the excellent teaching they receive. Accurate assessment of pupils' needs and close links with parents and previous schools result in individualised work that is pitched at the right level. When asked whether they ever found the work too easy or too difficult, one Year 9 pupil said, 'Neither. I think the right word would be and;quot;challengingand;quot;!' As a result, short-term pupils make excellent progress in lessons; the individual education plans of long-term pupils show that they achieve challenging targets very successfully.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They feel very safe in school and totally trust teachers and support staff. Their attendance is good, even when they feel unwell, because they enjoy school so much. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The parent of one child with complex learning difficulties said, 'His social skills and communication skills have improved so much more than I thought possible.' Staff very quickly allay any concerns that pupils have when they first arrive at the school. Pupils quickly gain confidence and self-esteem because their views are listened to, although there is no school council to allow them to develop responsibilities more formally. They are very aware of each other's needs, and are courteous and polite. They are eager to help more vulnerable pupils. There are frequent examples of pupils making sure that their friends in isolation wards can see and share work in the classroom during video conferencing. Behaviour during the inspection was excellent in all lessons, even though some pupils have been referred to the school with very challenging behaviour. Pupils' cultural development is also excellent, as they respond extremely well to frequent opportunities to develop their skills in creative and expressive arts.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers plan lessons extremely well. They base work on a careful assessment of pupils' individual needs. Pupils' work is assessed at the end of each lesson and comprehensive records are kept. These show that pupils make excellent progress but, in lessons, teachers do not always help pupils to understand how well they have achieved, or what they need to do to get even better. The relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils are excellent. They work so well together that any difficulty that may arise concerning pupils' comfort or medical treatment is addressed so efficiently that there is little disruption

to the lesson. Pupils who return from treatment in the middle of lessons receive immediate support from staff to get back to work. This helps to generate pupils' great trust in their teachers and evident enjoyment of their lessons. Classrooms are bright, inviting places, with attractive displays to stimulate learning. Despite the need to teach outside their specialisms, teachers' subject knowledge is very good. The school is concerned that pupils in isolation wards are not taught as effectively as others. However, teachers are becoming increasingly confident in the use of on-line teaching and video conferencing to help these pupils to participate in lessons and interact with their peers. Teachers make excellent use of information and communications technology throughout the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. A major strength is the way in which each pupil has an individual curriculum plan as well as many who have individual education plans. These ensure that all pupils receive teaching that is appropriate to their needs. Excellent links with pupils' home schools enable short term and recurrent patients to keep up to date with their work whilst in hospital. The curriculum is greatly enriched by creative arts activities that take place during lunchtimes and after school. These include poetry with a poet in residence and art, music and drama with visiting professionals. Remarkably, the school provides such activities for pupils for fifty weeks of the year. One parent said, 'My son has lots of opportunities he wouldn't have had in his regular school.' Close links with a careers agency and opportunities for work experience prepare pupils very well for their future economic well-being. The curriculum is planned to GCSE or advanced GCE level for the most able pupils. For those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, a multi-sensory curriculum provides a wide range of activities that are very effective in developing basic communication skills in pupils who have little or no speech. The curriculum is carefully monitored across all sites to ensure that everyone has equal access to this excellent provision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support that pupils receive are outstanding. This is a reflection of the dedication and commitment that is shown by all staff. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. There are excellent links with parents and the many agencies that work together for the benefit of the pupils; these include nurses, child workers, students, psychiatrists, registrars, social workers, occupational therapists and speech and language therapists. The support and care that pupils receive is reviewed weekly in order to ensure that the many changing situations are addressed fully. Appropriate targets are set for each pupil according to their individual needs. Individual education plans are written for all pupils who have statements of special educational needs and these are used very effectively to track the progress that pupils make. Procedures for the safeguarding of pupils are rigorous and meet statutory requirements fully. The health and safety of pupils are of paramount importance and this is clearly demonstrated by detailed risk assessments and the careful checking of all adults who work with pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school benefits from outstanding leadership and management at all levels. The headteacher has a clear vision and determination to help children overcome their learning difficulties and disabilities. Her excellent leadership means that all staff share this vision, which shines through the school's work. The staff have clear roles and responsibilities and work very successfully as a dedicated team. The recent inclusion of educational provision at St Mary's Hospital into the work of the school has been very well managed, ensuring a smooth transition for staff and pupils. Excellent management also means that staff and pupils are able to share the wide range of medical and educational expertise available in the five centres that constitute the school. Common procedures and policies are effectively implemented and closely monitored in each establishment. Teachers develop their own professional skills by experiencing work in the different centres. The school has become an important resource for other schools in the borough, offering valuable advice and training programmes about provision for children with medical needs. These excellent links also support the reintegration of pupils into mainstream schools very well.

The school's evaluation of its own work is good and leads to a comprehensive improvement plan. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning takes place. The school gathers detailed information about the academic progress and personal development of individual children. However, it does not analyse this data enough to identify how successfully it is meeting pupils' needs, or to set future targets. For example, the school's self-evaluation clearly describes how it provides for pupils' needs but makes little reference to specific evidence of their achievement or personal development.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

3 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chelsea Children's Hospital School, London, SW10 9NH

I really enjoyed visiting your school recently and would like to thank you for being so friendly and helpful. It was so obvious that you get on well with teachers and support staff. You also get on very well with each other and I was most impressed with the way you help each other during lessons. You enjoy school and work hard even when you don't feel very well. You make excellent progress as a result. This letter is to let you know what your school does well and to tell you of one way that it can become even better. My main finding is that it provides you with an outstanding quality of education.

The best things about the school are that:

- excellent teaching helps you to make excellent progress with your work
- the school provides lots of interesting courses for you that meet your needs very well
- staff work closely with your parents, carers and medical staff and provide you with excellent care, support and guidance
- your headteacher is an excellent leader; all teachers work very well together as an excellent team.

To make your school even better I have asked staff to improve one thing:

- to evaluate more precisely how well the school is doing.

Thank you again for your help. It was a pleasure to meet you all. I hope you continue to enjoy the excellent opportunities that the school provides for you.

Very best wishes,

Bill Robson Lead inspector