

# Oxfordshire Hospital School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123337
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	340318
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Patricia Potheary

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	91
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	8
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Theresa Davey
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Matthews
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Level 2 Children's Hospital John Radcliffe Site Headley Way OX3 9DU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01865 231584
<b>Fax number</b>	01865 231584
<b>Email address</b>	head.7017@oxford-hospitals.oxon.sch.uk

---

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2009

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited five sessions or lessons, held meetings with governors and staff, interviewed parents and pupils, and spoke to staff from a very few of pupils' home schools. They took account of pupil and staff survey views. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' records, information on progress, monitoring reports, policies, planning and 11 parent questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well pupils in all parts of the school's provision learn, including students in the sixth form and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the systems used by school leaders to gauge quality and their impact on improving outcomes for learners
- strengths in the outcomes for learners' personal development and well being.

## Information about the school

The Oxfordshire Hospital School contains a wide mix of provision. It consists of an outreach teaching sector working mainly in pupils' homes, but sometimes in the community, with approximately 37 pupils aged 5 to 16 who have medical conditions. There is also a hospice base, two hospital bases for all age groups, and one base in a psychiatric adolescent unit for pupils and students aged 11 to 18. The majority of the sixth-form students are in the psychiatric adolescent unit. The Early Years Foundation Stage usually contains very few children at any one time. All learners are dual-registered with their mainstream schools. Learners are from all types of background, ethnic groups and abilities. By virtue of being in hospital all learners are classed as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A small minority of learners have additional learning difficulties. The number and range of learners change on a daily basis and no one remains on the school roll for longer than a few months, but usually for a much shorter period. Most learners are in the hospitals for between one and five days and a few return on a regular basis. Learners in the psychiatric adolescent unit usually remain for a few weeks to a few months. This means that the number of learners educated by the school in any one year is much larger than the number on roll. Most learners are not well enough to attend school for part of their time on roll and roughly a third are well enough on any given day. The school has the Healthy Schools and Investor in People awards. The outreach teaching sector has only been part of the school since September 2009. The new head of this service and the new head teacher were also appointed in September 2009.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

Oxfordshire Hospital School is a good school. It is effective in helping pupils to do well in their school work and supports their confidence and sense of achievement while they are in hospital or at home because of illness. This is due to good teaching and a good curriculum. A warm and welcoming environment, which includes many lovely pieces of pupils' art work, immediately puts pupils at their ease. Learners in all parts of the school do equally well, with the exception of those in the sixth form, where progress, although good in parts, is satisfactory overall. Pupils' attainment is broadly in line with national averages. Pupils with additional learning difficulties also do well due to the skilled support they receive. The more able learners keep up well with their studies and usually attain good results in their examinations.

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support; pupils are kept very safe and develop a very caring and supportive attitude to each other and staff. Their behaviour during lessons, or in more social situations, is outstanding and contributes significantly to the good learning taking place. This is in part due to the excellent joint working practices between school staff, parents and all the other agencies connected with the hospital and school. Pupils' needs are very carefully considered and balanced, with high expectations of what they can achieve. The school provides a sense of normality which helps give pupils a purposeful focus at a time which is often very difficult for them. For this reason their enjoyment of the school is very strong; they really like the fact that, as they themselves say, they are 'helped to keep up' and that the 'curriculum is personalised'.

Good leadership, management and self-evaluation have been effective in leading to a number of good and sustained improvements over time. These include enhanced provision and better outcomes for the very youngest children and much better communication and progress for pupils with additional learning difficulties. The capacity to continue improving is good. Despite their accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, senior leaders recognise that, in order to improve provision and outcomes further, the framework for evaluating progress of different groups is not clear enough. Links with pupils' home schools are often good, but not consistently so. This means that joint record keeping, to track progress against long-term targets for pupils who stay the longest or who return to the school regularly, is not consistently effective.

Lessons are full of fun. Staff, in all the bases, including the outreach teaching sector, are very skilled at quickly identifying pupils' needs and helping them to make good progress. This gives the best chance of a smooth transition back into their home school. The curriculum is enriched exceptionally well and pupils experience many exciting visits, visitors and specialist sessions. Pupils from the psychiatric adolescent unit went on a

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

recent visit to the science park in Oxford, for example. This engaging programme contributes to their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. In the sixth form some aspects of the curriculum are strong particularly in helping the more able achieve their examinations. However, leadership has not been sufficiently focused on developing provision for this small, but significant group. As a result, although satisfactory, the provision for sixth-form students is not fully relevant or engaging to the broader range of student interests, particularly with regard to vocational options. The school is successful in giving pupils a voice and they have contributed in several ways to the running of the school, recently having been instrumental in improving specialist mathematics provision, for example.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Secure a clearer framework for evaluating the quality of learning and provision for significant groups of learners by March 2010 through:
- using information from the progress of longer-stay or frequent-stay pupils, to identify more clearly priorities for improvement in outcomes
- working more closely with pupils' mainstream schools to track their progress towards long-term targets.
- Focus more clearly on developing the sixth form, in particular by broadening the range and relevance of the curriculum, including vocational subjects.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils' enjoyment of their learning is evident in the enthusiasm with which they go to school and in the way they are fully absorbed in the activities. When they are well enough, pupils' attendance and engagement at the school are good. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of attainment, although it is broadly average overall. Those aged 4-16, including those with additional learning difficulties, make good progress and achieve well. For example one pupil learned to read while in the hospital, and another was able to work more independently in researching the solar system. It is encouraging to see the pupils asking searching questions of the teacher and playing their full part in lessons. In one lesson, for example, pupils wondered at dinosaur bones and excitedly put forward their theories about life long ago.

Progress in English and mathematics particularly, as well as in a range of specific examinations such as science GCSE and A levels, is usually good. Several students have achieved more than they were predicted to do in these subjects. A few sixth formers do not engage as readily because they cannot find enough courses to suit them and their progress is satisfactory rather than good. Some secondary pupils being educated at home have shown some excellent progress in their English and mathematics while following live lessons on the computer. This has not only improved their attendance and increased their self confidence but has made it much easier for them when returning to school. Preparation for the future in this way is good. Art is a particular strength and good progress in this subject leads to development of some very good skills and raised

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

self-confidence. It enables pupils to contribute well to the school and hospital community. For example, a stained glass window project led to a lovely, pupil-designed window in one ward. Pupils feel very safe and understand well how to lead healthy lives, exercising or playing in the outside areas whenever possible. Those in the psychiatric adolescent unit enjoy regular swimming and physical education. There is a great deal of spiritual awareness and pupils show considerable care and kindness for each other, regardless of their different ages or backgrounds.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge across a broad range of subjects and for different age groups and abilities. They are exceptionally skilled at assessing individual learners' needs, involving pupils closely and starting right away to build skills and understanding. They are also very flexible in constantly adapting to an ever-changing pupil group, making lessons interesting and working effectively to support individuals with their different targets. Learners like the way they receive 'constant encouragement'. Relationships in lessons are very positive, leading, in the hospice for

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

example, to an improved quality of life and a renewed sense of purpose and enjoyment for pupils. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning is often very good, but is not consistent. The school recognises that the skills needed for teaching ICT within all areas of the curriculum vary, and has begun to address this.

The main strength of the curriculum is the highly flexible approach tailored to each individual pupil. Working closely, where possible, with the pupils' home school, learners are enabled to keep up with their most important work. Although rich and engaging, school leaders are aware that the curriculum in the outreach teaching sector and sixth form lacks sufficient breadth because of the limited specialist knowledge in some subjects. Where possible, the school uses outside specialists and other schools but this is not always sufficient. With the recently increased teaching force, plans are already in place to expand specialist subject knowledge which can be used across the different parts of the school. The highly effective use of computers to deliver lessons for some pupils based at home is also being extended to other parts of the school.

The outstanding care, guidance and support are evident, for example, in the service the school now provides. Support staff increasingly accompany the pupil on their return to their home school, so that transition is smooth. This has significantly increased successful re-integration rates. The home schools are confident that this contributes to pupils' eventual success. Exceptional patience and very skilled encouragement enable many pupils to continue their studies, or come back to learning. Excellent links with other agencies including Connexions and the often daily discussion with parents support this work very well.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The new headteacher, very well supported by governors, has achieved a great deal in a remarkably short space of time, particularly in securing the future shape of the school. The aims are communicated effectively to the staff, who are sharing the work of developing the provision. Through good self-evaluation senior leaders have accurately identified how to improve provision to develop consistently high quality outcomes for learners. For example, an initiative where teaching methods have been adapted differently for pupils with particular types of medical conditions in the hospitals has resulted in increased progress for those groups. Engagement, progress and

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

re-integration rates have also improved for the 11 to 13 age groups through improved specialist teaching. Parents and pupils testify that teaching and progress in the newly acquired outreach teaching sector have already improved. These, among many other examples, demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve. The very strong engagement with parents and carers supports the day-to-day work of the school and enhances the outcomes for pupils.

Senior leaders are aware that they do not have enough information to be sure of trends in progress for significant groups of learners. This is exceptionally difficult to do for the majority who may only be with the school for less than a week, but for those who stay for longer and for those who return regularly the school recognises that its framework for providing an overview of pupils' progress is not sufficiently clear. The links with schools to track progress jointly over time to support this work are variable in quality.

The school secures good equal opportunities through the highly individual approach and there is no discrimination. Safeguarding procedures, linked closely with hospital systems are exceptionally well organised and effective. The school promotes community cohesion well. For example, pupils are helped to move away from the inevitable focus on themselves when they are ill, and mix with a new group of people. There is strong and successful attention paid to exploring the differences between their different communities. They also have links with a school in South Africa and receive visits from, and undertake projects with, local schools.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**



**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**  
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

There was only one child in the Early Years Foundations Stage during the inspection. The session observed indicated good teaching and clearly good progress being made in communication, language and literacy skills. Individual records indicate that progress in all the areas of learning for this age group is good. Good leadership has led to improvements to outcomes for children through strong links with Early Years Foundation Stage specialists. There have been improvements in the facilities, the curriculum and teaching approaches. The good curriculum and specialist teaching skills are still developing nevertheless, because of the small number of children over time and their different conditions. The hospitals have attractively designed spaces for outside learning which are used regularly. The care, support and guidance, including links with parents and agencies, are of the same excellent quality as in the main school.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

**Sixth form**

It was not possible to observe lessons during the inspection. Students make satisfactory progress overall and the provision as a whole is satisfactory. This is despite good teaching and learning. Students behave well and usually enjoy school, finding it gives them a sense of purpose and achievement. The curriculum in the hospitals and psychiatric adolescent unit is personalised and students are usually able to follow some of their mainstream school examination courses. This has led to the more able students completing AS and A level examinations and securing good grades. The skilled individual teaching has led others to gain increased confidence. Leadership of the sixth form is satisfactory rather than good, although the same good procedures are in place as in the rest of the school. This is because school leaders have not focused fully on developing the sixth form as a separate group. Numbers are small and the individualised curriculum used in the main school is equally relevant to the sixth form. However, opportunities to follow vocational courses are not fully thought through, and some specialist staff skills are missing. For this reason a very few students find it hard to engage fully with the courses available. Nonetheless, a small number of teachers are skilled at teaching a wide range of subjects and some specialists have been brought in from other organisations.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

## Views of parents and carers

Parents are wholly supportive of the school and no concerns were expressed in the questionnaires returned, or on the telephone or in other interviews. They are particularly appreciative of the skilled staff, often describing them as 'fantastic'. They like the good coordination with their child's mainstream school and the sensitive way their child's needs are handled. They think particularly that their child benefits from such education at a time of great difficulty, as it helps to keep them on track. As one parent typically commented, their child has 'really enjoyed going to school here and I am sure it has helped him recover from surgery'. Parents' positive views are reflected in the inspection findings.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Oxfordshire Hospital School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 11 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 91 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	8	73	1	9	2	18	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	9	82	2	18	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	5	46	6	55	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	4	36	6	55	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	82	2	18	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	8	73	3	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	2	18	6	55	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	4	36	4	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	7	63	4	36	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	3	27	6	55	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	3	27	7	64	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	7	64	4	36	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	8	73	3	27	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



9 October 2009

Dear Students,

Inspection of Oxfordshire Hospital School, Oxford, OX3 9DU

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you, and seeing your lessons. Your school is a good school with many interesting things going on, just as you described. Staff work hard to keep developing the school and, for this reason, your work is getting better all the time.

Skilful teaching helps you make good progress in your lessons. As a result, you are doing particularly well in English and mathematics and in your examinations. We like the way you really enjoy your lessons and always try to do your best. You told us that your teachers make lessons fun and interesting and we can see that they help you to do well. However, we have asked them to look more closely at how the sixth form is organised so that more of you can engage with courses that suit you. We would also like school leaders to look more closely at how different groups of you are doing, by working more closely with your home schools to track your long-term progress. We think it would help if they looked particularly at how well those of you who stay the longest or most often progress. We are sure that you will discuss this with your teachers and help them by working hard and sharing your ideas.

The good curriculum provides many opportunities for you to take part in lots of different activities which you clearly welcome. We like the way you eagerly take on responsibility; for example, the way you look after each other and confidently give your ideas about how things should be run. Your art work is charming and adds a lot to the school environment. Your behaviour is excellent, especially in the way you value learning. You show good respect for others, including those who have different beliefs and ways of living. You were keen to tell us that the school keeps you very safe and looks after you very well. It is therefore very pleasing to see that you are helping yourselves by taking plenty of exercise and eating a healthy diet.

We think that this, alongside your mature attitudes to working with others, helps you to be well prepared for moving back to school or going on to college or university.

Yours faithfully

Patricia Potheary

Lead inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**