

Inspection of an outstanding school: Children's Hospital School at Gt Ormond Street and UCH

Great Ormond Street, Camden, London WC1N 3JH

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 November 2023

Outcome

Children's Hospital School at Gt Ormond Street and UCH continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school achieve extremely well. Depending on their medical requirements, pupils may stay at the school for either short or long durations. All staff genuinely care about the pupils and are committed to their success. There is a high level of engagement and attendance among the pupils, despite their often complicated conditions. This is because pupils enjoy the lessons, appreciate the staff, and are helped to see the value in learning.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite, welcoming and cooperative. The positive and well-staffed environment ensures that any potential for bullying is minimised. This means pupils feel safe and are kept safe here.

Pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. This includes virtual trips using video robots and working with visiting chefs. A popular annual event is the sports day. This is planned to make it fully inclusive, with some pupils taking part in their hospital beds. Staff know the importance of this work because it helps to reduce the sense of isolation many pupils can feel.

Parents value the school's unique approach and empathetic staff. One parent expressed the sentiments of many others by saying, 'At an extraordinarily difficult time, this school has had a really positive impact on my child's life.'

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has designed a highly ambitious curriculum. When pupils arrive, staff quickly build warm, professional and trusting relationships. This enables them to quickly get to know pupils. The school succeeds in its aim to support pupils who are medically unable to attend their enrolled school to continue their learning. This is because teaching staff are

highly trained in working in a hospital environment. This includes knowing how to adapt learning to meet a range of medical needs, as well as supporting those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff liaise with pupils' healthcare professionals and with the pupils themselves. This ensures that learning is always a high priority. Staff understand the importance education plays in well-being and mental health. This contributes well to pupils' exceptional behaviour and attitudes.

Teachers have strong specialist knowledge of the subjects they teach. They are adept at responding to pupils' daily changing needs, adapting the curriculum and recapping on prior teaching to help pupils learn extremely well. Teachers have high expectations. The curriculum is tailored to accommodate pupils' particular interests or ambitions, such as delivering accredited units for a pupil interested in studying Spanish and learning about other cultures. Some pupils overcome considerable gaps in their education and study successfully for a range of qualifications.

Staff set ambitious and achievable short-term targets for pupils that steer the curriculum and respond to what pupils need. Leaders carefully track progress towards these targets to ensure they can swiftly act on any identified misconceptions or gaps in learning.

Reading has an especially strong focus for pupils of all ages. Those who need to learn phonics use the programme followed by their home school. Even pupils who join this school having had previously negative experiences of education quickly develop a love of reading. This is due to the way literature is celebrated through a weekly book club and themed events, as well as the energy that staff bring to the sharing of stories and poems.

The school's focus on pupils' wider development is exceptional. Work with galleries and museums brings the outside world into the school and hospital wards. This work helps to develop pupils' self-esteem and a feeling of belonging to a community. Pupils are able to take these experiences back to their home schools. They benefit from the confidence they have built through a sense of achievement. Some have never had the opportunity to receive a school certificate, so the recognition of such experiences is really significant for both pupils and parents.

Leaders and governors recognise the dedication of staff. They make sure their well-being is prioritised. Staff are extremely, and rightly, proud to work at the school. This is especially evident in their sense of pride in delivering an ambitious and well-considered education in and among the busyness of a hospital ward or during medical treatment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find

evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second inspection since we judged school to be outstanding in February 2014.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	100060
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	10289764
Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	4 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	79
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing	Lisa McBreen
Headteacher	Jayne Franklin
Website	https://www.goshschool.org/
Date of previous inspection	26 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is based at both University College Hospital and the Great Ormond Street Hospital.
- The school population is fluid. Pupils are admitted to hospital because of a medical or mental health needs. Pupils remain on the roll of their enrolled school during their time attending the hospital school. When they are discharged from hospital, they are no longer part of the hospital school.
- The school caters for around 1,000 pupils over the course of a year.
- The range of SEND in the school continually changes. All pupils have a medical or mental health need and, at any one time, many may have education, health and care plans.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are point-in-time judgements about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science and personal development. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, met with pupils to discuss their learning and met with teachers. Other subjects were also considered as part of this inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, and they observed pupils' behaviour in lessons in class and on the hospital wards.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff about behaviour and their workload. Inspectors considered the responses from pupils, staff and parents to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Francis Gonzalez, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Nell Nicholson

Ofsted Inspector

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