

Inspection of Manchester Hospital School

3rd Floor School, Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9WL

Inspection dates:	15 and 16 July 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Manchester Hospital School fosters a truly exceptional haven of calm and learning. There is a deep commitment to helping every pupil flourish, regardless of their circumstances. Whatever pupils' needs, staff work relentlessly to enable them to succeed. As a result, pupils experience not only an exceptional education, but also a space where they feel safe, understood and valued.

The school is highly ambitious for all pupils. Be it from their bedside or in the classroom, pupils rise to these expectations and achieve very well during their time at the school. Staff are nimble in identifying what works best for each pupil. They adapt their approach to meet individual needs and circumstances. Consequently, pupils leave hospital well-prepared to return to their usual school with confidence.

The school is a happy and purposeful place of learning. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They treat each other kindly. They eagerly take part in lessons even when faced with serious ill health.

The school weaves pupils' personal development, particularly the skills needed for adulthood, as a golden thread through all that it does. Hospital stays are no barrier to pupils' full involvement in school life. For example, pupils relish bedside sporting activities, puppet workshops and learning to play musical instruments.

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

All pupils at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Depending on their medical requirements, pupils may stay at the school for either short or long durations. The school makes sure that its provision responds sensitively to pupils who join at different times with very different experiences of prior education.

The school's ambitious curriculum sits at the heart of its provision. Across a broad range of subjects, the school has mapped out the building blocks of knowledge that teachers expect pupils to learn. Teachers make sure that the things pupils learn build on what they already know. In lessons, teachers' expert use of questioning helps them to spot any misconceptions as they arise and address these before moving on to new learning. Teachers use a range of checks to gather essential information about pupils' knowledge when they join the school. This means that subsequent learning pinpoints the precise gaps in pupils' knowledge and is matched to their individual needs.

Learning to read is given the highest priority. Pupils at the earliest stages of reading begin learning phonics as soon as they are admitted. Staff carefully check their phonics knowledge when they start at the school. They make sure pupils practise what they already know, while also learning new letters and sounds. Pupils read from books that are matched accurately to the sounds that they know. Older pupils who need further help with reading receive specific, targeted support to help them catch up. This supports pupils to become confident, fluent and avid readers. Reading widely for pleasure is actively promoted through workshops, 'read for good' trollies and author visits.

When pupils are admitted to the school, staff swiftly gather key information from pupils' home schools. They work deftly with occupational and physical therapists and other health professionals to ensure that pupils' varying SEND needs are fully identified and met. Teachers use this detailed picture about pupils' additional needs to adapt learning fluidly and with real agility. This helps pupils to access and enjoy their learning to the full.

Pupils' motivation and attitudes to learning are exceptionally positive. They welcome teachers at their bedside or in the classroom with a smile. Very quickly, pupils establish strong relationships and rapport with their teachers. Consequently, pupils feel secure and confident to take risks in their learning. This reflects the nurturing environment the school provides.

Many pupils have faced considerable turbulence to their education before joining the school. Recognising that some pupils are initially too poorly to attend school regularly, the school takes thoughtful steps to support those pupils to attend as often as they can. The school works closely with families and health professionals to overcome barriers which prevent pupils from attending school regularly.

The school provides a dazzling array of far-reaching opportunities to promote pupils' personal development. It is unrelenting in its ambition to ensure that every pupil receives a wide, rich set of experiences. Pupils are empowered through leadership roles to make a tangible difference to their school and local community. For example, they are members of the school council, ambassadors of the European junior parliament and volunteers at nearby foodbanks. These experiences enhance pupils' learning and develop their character.

From the outset, pupils benefit from many opportunities to prepare them for adult life. This includes a carefully crafted careers programme that supports pupils to explore the different options available to them when they leave the school. Pupils benefit from work-related learning and comprehensive careers advice.

The school's vision to be a 'beacon of excellence' is reflected in the outward-facing drive of leaders and governors to ensure no limits are placed on pupils' academic or social achievement. The school evaluates accurately the quality of provision for pupils. Its precise oversight ensures continual school improvement and consistently high standards of education. Leaders and governors recognise the dedication of their staff. They make sure staff's well-being is prioritised. Staff are extremely proud to work at this school. They feel listened to and that they make a valuable contribution to what the school offers.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	105602
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10404322
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Julia Scott
Headteacher	Joanna Beswick
Website	www.manchesterhospitalschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 March 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new chair has been appointed to the governing body.
- The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.
- The school is based at the 3rd Floor School, Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9WL. It also operates from several additional sites:
 - The Leo Kelly School, 77 Dickenson Road, Manchester M14 5AZ
 - The School at The Christie, Oak Road, Manchester M20 4BX
 - The School at Galaxy House, The Harrington Building, Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9WL
 - The School at Wythenshawe Hospital, Southmoor Road, Wythenshawe, Manchester M23 9LT
 - The School at North Manchester General Hospital, Delaunays Road, Crumpsall, Manchester M8 5R.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff. The lead inspector also spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair. In addition, an inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading and English, mathematics, geography, modern foreign languages and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors evaluated the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 took account of the views of parents expressed through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Kate Bowker, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Clare Baron	Ofsted Inspector
Louise Atkin	Ofsted Inspector
Ben Hill	His Majesty's Inspector

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