

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Chalkhill Education Centre, Chalkhill Hospital

Chalkhill, Princess Royal Hospital Site, Lewes Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 4NQ

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Inspection dates:

21 and 22 February 2023

## **Outcome**

Chalkhill Education Centre, Chalkhill Hospital continues to be an outstanding school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils value the opportunity to engage in their education in this calm learning environment. Depending on their medical needs, pupils may be here for a short or longer period of time. Staff quickly get to know pupils well. They prioritise building trust and treat everyone with mutual respect and dignity. Parents and pupils say that staff go 'above and beyond'. They acknowledge the powerful role that education plays in pupils' health and well-being.

Consistent daily routines are well established. These support pupils to transition successfully between the ward and the classrooms, when they are well enough to do so. Communication between school and hospital staff is exceptionally strong. This provides leaders and staff with a realistic understanding of the challenges pupils face. Everyone shares high expectations of behaviour, and pupils' attitudes are positive. The warm, inclusive culture means that bullying or other incidents rarely occur in the education centre. If issues do arise, staff are highly skilled in helping pupils rebuild relationships.

Leaders and staff aspire for pupils to achieve everything they are capable of. They tailor learning to meet any additional needs pupils may have. Pupils appreciate the highly personalised learning offer.

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

Leaders recognise each pupil as a unique individual. The broad curriculum that pupils study is carefully tailored for them. This includes students in the sixth form. When pupils arrive, swift liaison with home schools provides a clear understanding of their learning pathway. Teachers design a highly bespoke curriculum that is flexible and meets pupils' individual needs. They are experts, and passionate about their subjects. Teachers and staff are skilled in identifying the knowledge and skills that each pupil needs to learn, and

in how and when to deliver this. Leaders resolutely ensure that pupils can study any course or subject they choose. Where needed, specialist tuition is provided. Staff do all they can to enable pupils to stay on track and to work towards any planned qualifications in order to achieve their life goals.

The development of life skills is at the heart of all learning. Using robust risk assessment processes, pupils are able to safely access activities such as cooking, community visits and creative projects. Staff thoughtfully inspire pupils to discover and develop their talents and confidence. Pupils are encouraged to read a diverse range of texts, and leaders constantly promote a love of reading. Always mindful of the backgrounds of the pupils, skilled staff harness pupils' special interests. They create beneficial therapeutic opportunities for pupils to express themselves, for example through art, music or literature. Pupils who have been out of education for some time find this helpful.

Leaders have established a carefully organised careers programme. This includes preparation and practice for interviews and visits to colleges. There are opportunities for work experience, either in the community or through enterprise projects on site. Weekly community meetings led by pupils provide an opportunity for them to influence change and debate ideas. Pupils are particularly respectful. They are inclusive, and supportive of self-expression. Thoughtfully considered lessons support pupils to explore and discuss issues such as equalities, respect and healthy relationships. Throughout all aspects of the provision, pupils' views are listened to, and heard.

When pupils need additional help, leaders are swift to identify this. They work proactively with specialist teachers and health professionals to ensure the right provision is in place. Because every learner's curriculum is bespoke, any targeted support is provided. Ongoing review and communication with prior or future settings are rigorous. This supports smooth reintegration into mainstream education. When pupils are discharged, leaders keep in contact to make sure the transition has been successful.

The intelligent and collaborative partnership that leaders have constructed with the hospital staff is fundamental to the caring ethos here. Staff are proud of the work they do. There is a helpful culture of mutual support and collaboration. Governors know the school well. They share leaders' moral imperative to do everything in their means to provide a high-quality education. Pupils are solidly at the heart of the decisions they make.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding. Recruitment processes are robust. Well-organised training ensures that all staff know how to recognise the signs that a pupil may need help. Leaders work closely and effectively with hospital colleagues to share information. Any concerns are followed up promptly, and records of concerns are well organised. Leaders and staff know pupils extremely well. They swiftly secure any additional help that pupils need.

Leaders are sensitive about how they teach pupils how to keep themselves safe. They collaborate with health professionals to ensure content is personalised and appropriate.

## 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 third ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in November 2012.

## 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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131189
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256565
<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	10
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	3
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Bob Smytherman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Douglas Thomas
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.apcollege.co.uk">www.apcollege.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 November 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Chalkhill Education Centre provides education for pupils admitted to Chalkhill Hospital, which is located at the Princess Royal Hospital.
- Chalkhill is a hospital for young people between the ages of 11 and 18 who have complex emotional, behavioural and mental health problems.
- Full-time education is provided for those who are attending Chalkhill as inpatients and day patients. The day-patient facility is not currently in use.
- Chalkhill Education Centre has recently opened a new education service in conjunction with Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation in Brighton and Hove. Spring Tide is a day service for young people between the ages of 11 and 18 who have eating disorders. The Centre provides education for those who are attending Spring Tide as day patients and has a capacity of 10 places. There were no pupils attending this site during this inspection.

- The number of pupils on the school's roll fluctuates. Some attend for long or shorter periods of time, depending on their needs.
- The school caters for secondary-age and post-16 pupils. Most pupils are dual registered. This means that they remain on the roll of their main school while being educated at Chalkhill Education Centre.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## **Information about this inspection**

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and the senior leaders. The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and the chair of the Chalkhill sub-committee. She also spoke on the telephone with the head of inclusion and special educational needs and/or disabilities for West Sussex local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during visits to classrooms, during breaktimes and while pupils were on the wards.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents. The lead inspector also reviewed some communication from parents to the school. Inspectors also considered the views of staff through responses to the staff survey and during meetings with them. Inspectors spoke to a sample of pupils.
- The lead inspector checked the single central record of recruitment checks and talked with leaders responsible for safeguarding. She also considered safeguarding documents and records.

## **Inspection team**

Jo Petch, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sue Bzikot

Ofsted Inspector

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