

# Inspection of Ivetsey Bank Hospital School

Ivetsey Bank, Wheaton Aston, Stafford, Staffordshire ST19 9QT

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Inspection dates: 28 to 30 January 2025

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<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	<b>Yes</b>

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

At Ivetsey Bank, pupils are surrounded by care, support and hope. Education, health and care combine to make a special difference to a group of very special young people. From often complicated and traumatic lives, Ivetsey Bank Hospital School empowers a sense of ambition and belief in those who attend.

Ambitions are high that pupils' health needs will not limit their achievements. Caring and attentive teachers work with health and care teams to prioritise education. Partnerships with home schools, parents and carers develop a sense of what can be achieved. Surrounded by this ambition, pupils overcome barriers caused by their conditions and develop a love of learning and personal ambition.

Relationships at Ivetsey Bank matter. Because of their health needs, pupils' behaviour could be challenging. However, pupils told inspectors they knew the staff cared and wanted the best for them. Consequently, there are few cases of low-level disruption and challenging behaviour during lessons and in the school.

Therapy and treatment work in partnership with education to support pupils' readiness to return to health services in their communities and often to their original schools. Events such as 'The Great British Rake Off' and 'IvetseyFest' provide community activities to develop interests in gardening, music, business enterprise and catering opportunities.

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

Since the last inspection, changes to the proprietor and the governance structure at the school have improved communication with, and support of, the school. These changes ensure that the proprietor understands the school's strengths and weaknesses. The proprietor has ensured that all the independent school standards are met. The proprietor and school leaders have robust systems to ensure these standards are regularly checked and do not drop.

Pupils start at the school after being admitted to the hospital for a wide range of social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH). Working with doctors and health staff, a clear understanding of the pupil's needs and required provisions in school is identified and put in place. However, for those needs additional to SEMH, plans and provisions do not always precisely identify additional needs such as speech, language and communication (SLCN), sensory processing disorder (SPD) or cognition and learning needs (CL).

Staff work hard to develop a strong understanding of pupils' prior learning and attainment. In all subjects, teachers work to talk to pupils, parents, carers, schools and social workers about what the pupils have learned previously. From this, some teachers create precise sequences of lessons to build knowledge over time. In subjects like personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, the curriculums are well written and skilfully communicated to staff for pupils, including

those in the sixth form. However, in some other lessons, these learning pathways are not always well-sequenced or communicated, and it is unclear what pupils will learn and in what order.

Students in the sixth form often have exceptionally complex health needs. Due to current funding models, they often are placed at the school for very short periods of time. Leaders have been creative in finding solution to work with health teams to make sure that they prioritise key learning alongside therapeutic intervention, so that students get the right support in the timeliest way.

When pupils are well enough, the work in books demonstrates that they are learning new knowledge and skills. This is best when a partnership is with the pupils' original school. In these cases, teachers from Ivetsey Bank combine with home school teachers to plan and implement ambitious lessons. For all ages, including the sixth form, these lessons often prioritise personal development and emotional and mental health.

Most pupils start at Ivetsey Bank as confident readers. However, due to inconsistent prior school experience or extended periods of treatment or hospital stays, they do not always have a love of books. On those rare occasions when pupils cannot read, teachers skilfully create programmes to teach phonics and early reading. Inspectors also saw teachers discussing pupils' favourite books, genres and authors.

When pupils are well enough to attend lessons, teachers create a calm and purposeful environment where pupils can learn. This helps pupils manage their feelings and emotions. Understandably, some pupils' attendance is massively impacted by their health needs. Still, leaders work closely with health consultants to ensure pupils return to education as soon as possible. However, when pupils return to lessons, learning does not always prioritise what pupils missed to help them catch up to where they should be.

Visits to Cannock Chase and local shops or even listening to local historians emphasises the world around them and develops a sense of awe and wonder. Lessons in PSHE develop the essential skills pupils need to understand and stay safe in the world. Weekly social issue quizzes, decaffeinated coffee mornings and breakfast clubs provide opportunities to develop social interactions and contemplate the world around them. Careers education and opportunities for enterprise develop a sense of vocational ambition. Pupils' inspectors spoke with had a clear idea of what jobs they wanted to do when they left education.

Leaders ensure that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. There is a suitable accessibility plan in place.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

## **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- In some subjects, written sequences of learning do not always identify how knowledge will build over time. Also, planned learning sequences are only available in some subjects. This risks future learning as only the teacher will know what the pupils need to know next and how, and this is not always communicated with the rest of the school, including the pupils. The school should ensure that there are planned and communicated sequences of lessons that build on previous knowledge in all subjects.
- In some subjects, staff do not routinely adapt the curriculum for pupils with needs beyond SEMH. Written provision plans rarely articulate clearly the precise nature of the needs beyond SEMH. Consequently, teachers are unsure how to adapt provisions for SLCN, SPD, and/or CI needs. The school needs to ensure that all pupils' additional needs are precisely identified and assessed, and that the curriculum implementation is adapted according to these needs.
- In some cases, when pupils are away from lessons due to their complex SEMH needs, there are too few opportunities for them to catch up. While teachers quickly carry on where the pupils left off when they return, teachers do not prioritise catching up on the missing learning. This means that for some pupils, learning progress is delayed. When a pupil is away for reasons linked to treatment and therapy, the school should ensure that it prioritises the most crucial learning missed to help pupils catch up quickly.

## **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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142013
<b>DfE registration number</b>	860/6041
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10342102
<b>Type of school</b>	Other Independent Special School
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	22
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	7
<b>Proprietor</b>	Active Care Group
<b>Chair</b>	Andy Caine
<b>Headteacher</b>	Angela Hudgell
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£37,537
<b>Telephone number</b>	01785 840000
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.activecaregroup.co.uk/ivetsy-bank-hospital-school">www.activecaregroup.co.uk/ivetsy-bank-hospital-school</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:ivetseybankschool@activecaregroup.co.uk">ivetseybankschool@activecaregroup.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	31 January to 2 February 2023

## Information about this school

- Ivetsey Bank Hospital School is an independent special school within the Active Care Group. The school provides education for pupils who are admitted to the hospital with a range of social, emotional and mental health needs. Many have missed significant amounts of their education.
- The school is based on a series of wards at the hospital with classrooms situated within or next to the bedrooms or clinical spaces.
- Since the last inspection a new headteacher took up post in September 2023.
- A new hospital director took up post in August 2023 and has taken the line management role of the headteacher and is a representative of the proprietor group.
- The school is currently preparing for a move to a new purpose-built school building on the hospital site. The funding for this has been approved and builders and plans agreed.
- The school does not use any form of alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.'
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record, considered 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: English, including reading, mathematics, PSHE and science. In these subjects, they visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, and talked with pupils and staff about how these subjects were taught. Inspectors also looked at other subjects in less detail to check how they were planned and taught.
- The team also evaluated the school's in-depth approach to developing mental health functioning for education. For this, they met with leaders, reviewed

systems and assessment records and observed how the curriculum was adapted based on this information.

- Inspectors observed informal times to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- During the inspection, the inspectors had formal meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject teachers, the chair of the governing body and pupils. They also talked informally with parents, carers, pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- An inspector also spoke with representatives of the proprietor.
- An inspector held telephone calls with parents and carers to gather their views about the quality of provision for their child and communication between the school and home.

### **Inspection team**

Chris Pollitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gemma Mann

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
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