

Name of School:	The Pilgrim School
Headteacher/Principal:	Steve Barnes
Hub:	Lincoln
School type:	Hospital School
MAT (if applicable):	Not applicable

Date of this visit:	09/06/2021
Estimate at last QA Review:	Effective
Date of last QA Review:	03/03/2021
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	01/02/2018

1. Information about the visit

In place of a QA Review, The Pilgrim School was visited by a lead reviewer for one and half days. The reviewer visited two of the three bases, met with leaders, a governor, spoke to pupils and observed teaching and learning. The lead reviewer reviewed the following areas with them:

- The Hope Curriculum
- The Hope Curriculum, how it is taught, assessed and outcomes for pupils
- Leadership at all levels

2. Information about the school

The Pilgrim School is an unusual and complex hospital school that serves the whole of Lincolnshire and is located on three widely scattered sites across the county. The main site is in Lincoln and the other sites are in Baumber near Horncastle and Amber Hill near Boston. It has evolved as a school from a tuition service. There is also a specialist autism provision for eight pupils at the Amber Hill site.

Leaders work with the local authority on a weekly basis for admissions to the school. Mobility is high. Admission criteria are clear and pupils must be referred by a medical practitioner and have had at least 15 days out of school. The majority of pupils are dual registered and links with their mainstream school are maintained. Staff work with younger pupils to reintegrate them to mainstream provision. For older pupils, staff focus on successfully supporting them to move to the next stage of their education or training. Pupils have a wide range of needs including medical conditions, social, emotional and mental health difficulties, high-functioning autistic spectrum disorder and school refusal or phobia.

There are 153 pupils on roll, mainly in Key Stages 3 and 4. A third of the pupils receive education in the home. About a quarter pupils have education, health and care plans.

3.1 The Hope curriculum – What went well

- School leaders have established 'hope' as a fundamental vision and value for all aspects of the school. This is from their extensive practical experience of working with pupils with significant mental health difficulties and their academic background and research.
- Hope is a well-established criterion in positive psychology and mental health and there is a great deal of research evidence to show that it is fundamental for success.
- Every person in the school community values all other members. Leaders have enabled the culture, language, systems and structures to develop so that hope is a golden thread visible and woven throughout all aspects of the school's work.

- Leaders use the secure foundation of hope to continually reflect and develop all aspects of the school to strengthen the golden thread; for example, in evaluating teaching and learning in lessons and devising the personal development aspects of the curriculum.
- This culture and ethos have a highly positive impact on pupils who say that they know they are cared for and respected. They articulate clearly how their self-confidence and self-esteem have improved beyond what they would have imagined when they were so anxious, and they could not come out of the house. They are really pleased that they are able to attend the school and make decisions about their futures.
- School leaders are qualified at Master's level in the effects of trauma and attachment. They use their research and well-developed knowledge and skills to continue to develop the provision and curriculum particularly for personal development.
- There are well-established and recognised questionnaires that enable hope to be evaluated, which leaders use to assess pupils' progress. Hope is evaluated through: goal— something you want to achieve; pathway— the steps and alternative routes to get there; and agency— the willpower and determination to carry out the steps to the goal. This enables all staff to provide a well-founded fusion of the academic and pastoral work of the school.
- Leaders have written schemes of work in core and foundation subjects that incorporate hope. They use a mastery approach embodying the highest expectations and continually demonstrating hope through the pathways shown to pupils in every lesson.
- The pastoral team is fundamental to the success of pupils and provides bespoke support for each individual admitted to the school. The team works with parents and sensitively supports pupils at all transitions, whether from home to school, or from the school back to mainstream settings. Most pupils have had negative experiences of school and building hope is pivotal to their future success.

3.2 The Hope curriculum – Even better if...

...leaders continued to develop the Hope curriculum into the wider community, particularly other schools

4.1 The Hope curriculum: teaching; assessment and outcomes – What went well

- Pupils have individualised timetables and curricula to suit their changing needs. Some attend part-time initially, gradually building their confidence. Those pupils educated in the home also receive this bespoke support. Pupils speak positively about the support they receive from the pastoral staff to enable them to attend, and the friendships they form. They say that as all their friends have had similar experiences 'they get it' and this helps them to feel safe and secure at this school.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils' achievement and the quality of their own practice across all subjects of the curriculum. Leaders recruit experienced subject specialist staff and provide an equitable offer for pupils across all bases. All pupils, including those at home have access to staff who continually challenge and nurture them.
- Staff have written a highly detailed personal development curriculum and assessment rubric that enables them to evaluate the nine strands. From a sound research basis, leaders have devised a scale for personal development incorporating hope, resilience, growth and attachment in order to measure pupils' progress. Support staff enable pupils to assess themselves on this scale so that they become aware of their own development and can articulate this clearly.
- For pupils who are highly anxious and do not come out of their homes, staff have devised a ten-point small steps scale that enables them to measure the progress in personal development these pupils make. Pupils describe how staff have supported them in taking these steps, venturing out of the house, spending short times at school until they come regularly and form strong supportive friendships.
- All pupils are encouraged to pursue GCSE and BTEC qualifications, and the EBacc range of subjects is available to them. Subject specialist staff creatively teach curriculum subjects at increasing depth, adapted to individual pupils' strengths. They use 'hope' to illustrate subjects, using examples of historical and contemporary figures who exemplify this such as Nelson Mandela, Malala Yousafzai, and the way artists explore this theme using new life and creativity.
- Teachers dedicate time each week, for 'well-being on Wednesdays', (WOW) sessions. These are systematically planned throughout the year using themes and individual lesson plans to ensure that the nine areas identified are covered throughout the year. For example, through the journey theme, pupils thought about the role of bridges, not just physically, but practically, and enjoyed constructing designs with pasta and marshmallows. Staff provided an opportunity to reflect on the function of 'bridges' in relationships and social networks and pupils reflected and articulated the relationships that were important to them.
- Staff wrote and delivered a recovery curriculum based on science when pupils started to return to school after the second national lockdown, as it was British science week. Staff devised experiments for pupils to carry out at home and delivered the kits for these. This highly successful work incorporated practical experiments, making models and creative illustrations that enabled pupils to record their learning.

- Pupils' work shows that they respond really well to challenge, achieving at high levels in English and science, for example. Pupils working on their final pieces for art GCSE explained their work in great detail and 'hope' is embedded in how they express themselves creatively.
- Staff use continual encouragement and positive verbal feedback in lessons as well as pursuing a dialogue with pupils in their books to question and develop pupils' learning well.
- Leaders meet with staff to evaluate each pupil's progress in all areas of learning and their personal development. The attention to detail for each individual and how well the staff know the pupils are central to ensuring that pupils are successful. All move on to further training and past pupils return to the school to show current pupils what can be achieved. Staff ensure that high quality careers advice and information is central to helping pupils define their future pathways.

4.2 The Hope curriculum: teaching; assessment and outcomes – Even better if...

...all staff continued to ensure that they make explicit and strong the links with the golden thread of 'hope' so that pupils articulate it clearly.

5.1 Leadership at all levels– What went well

- The headteacher has distributed leadership for all areas of the development of the school. Leaders share a clearly articulated vision of 'hope'. They work together as a strong team, communicate and collaborate really well, so energising the continuing development of the Hope curriculum.
- Leaders support all staff to further develop their own goals through coaching. Hope is fundamental to this too. Goal setting pathways and agency are exemplified in this process.
- Leaders recruit staff with a background in psychology and considerable expertise in subjects, for example, science, music and art. Therefore, all pupils are taught by subject specialists who fully understand the pupils they are working with and adapt presentation and feedback to each individual.
- The assessment leader has developed a robust computer-based assessment and tracking system that enables teachers to record pupils' personal development and academic progress. Leaders interrogate this data well. This enables them to evaluate any gaps in provision and outcomes both for individual pupils, groups and year groups and make quick decisions about interventions needed or changes in provision.
- Leaders support all staff and pupils to continually develop the hope curriculum based on the exceptionally secure foundations. Recent examples include the 'hopeful heroes'. Pupils' opinions and contributions are valued so that they are motivated and engaged.

- As a result of the technology used to deliver learning at home through the lockdowns, leaders are continuing to find creative ways of delivering a wider offer to those pupils who are based in their homes. All these pupils have access to subject specialist staff for core subjects and join live lessons virtually with their peers.
- Leaders have created an ethos which sees no distinction between pastoral and academic roles. All staff understand the importance of the pastoral team who act as they key point of contact for the pupils. Communication and joint working are excellent.
- Governors are highly experienced in the forms of education this school provides. They have a clear vision for their strategic involvement in the school's development. They have all the necessary skills and experience to fully hold leaders to account.
- Governors have their own action plan for their development and are looking forward to being able to visit in person and see the evidence of pupils' success for themselves. They are articulating the vision and applying it to all aspects of governance.
- Leaders cultivate strong mutually beneficial relationships within the wider community. Rotary club members are involved in the bases and supported pupils with reading and worked with them to lay out an extensive garden design. The University of Derby psychology department uses the school for placements for students training in art therapy, for example.
- The member of staff with responsibility for training has strong links with local providers and enables the highly experienced professional experts at the school to disseminate their work and make improvements to the wider school system.

5.2 Area 3 – Even better if...

...leaders continued to coach and develop staff skills in teaching in a 'hopeful way' to make this the dominant vocabulary in all lessons.

6. What additional support would the school like from the Challenge Partners network, either locally or nationally?

- To further develop networks with similar providers.

This visit will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities.

Schools can also access the School Support Directory, the Challenge Partners online tool that enables schools to connect with other schools in your hub and across the national network of schools.

Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice events where schools showcase excellent and/or innovative practice. Sharing Leading Practice events allow school leaders with specific improvement needs to visit a school or attend an online webinar hosted by a school, with outstanding provision in that area.

Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website.