

Anne Hamilton, the headteacher of [Evelina hospital school](#) in London, also worked in primaries for many years, before moving to hospital education, a sector she says that most people don't even know exists. She and her staff teach unwell young people, on the hospital grounds, from key stage 1 right up to A-level.

"There's a full gamut of children who come through our doors," she explains. "We get life-limited children, children who have a diagnosis that means they will lose their sight or have memory loss.

"Then there are diseases that cause children not to be the same as they were before, so we have some who didn't have special needs before but now have learning difficulties that take them to a different place. And we have had experience of children who have passed away. We have to be resilient to that."

Many students are concerned about falling behind their peers or missing exam preparation, so a large part of the job is liaising with schools to ensure that they stay on track. Most students will have significant gaps in their learning, so staff must work out how to meet them.

But the act of participating in learning, even in the bleakest of circumstances, can make a striking difference to health. "On the ward, the child behaves as a patient," Anne says. "But when they come to the school, they behave as pupils and that makes a difference. Children can come on leaps and bounds."

Anne adds that they might not hold parents' evenings or sports days, but their help goes beyond education. "We're an integral part of their [the child's] recovery."

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