

Inspection of a good school: Greenside School

Shephall Green, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG2 9XS

Inspection dates:

29–30 January 2020

Outcome

Greenside School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Greenside School pupils feel safe and happy. They develop their communication skills well. Many use signs and symbols to communicate what they want or need. This helps them move towards being independent and make their own choices.

Pupils have individual programmes to meet their needs. Staff have high expectations and a good understanding of how pupils feel. They use this knowledge to help pupils learn well. Pupils access a variety of opportunities to develop and practise their skills in the community outside the school.

Pupils are polite and well behaved. Bullying is rare. Pupils learn to manage their own feelings and behaviour so that they can join in with a wide variety of activities. Staff are always around to help if needed.

Parents appreciate the regular online contact through the school's system of sharing information. As one parent stated: 'My son thrives at Greenside. He is constantly achieving and making us proud. My son is happy in school, obviously feels safe and misses school in the holidays!'

By the time they leave school pupils gain the skills and knowledge needed to become confident and independent in their learning. After pupils leave Greenside, they all go to further education placements.

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

Leaders place a high priority on pupils' ability to communicate. Staff make sure that pupils express themselves through different ways. For example, using pictures and sign language. The ability to communicate their choices means that pupils develop control of what they want and need. This reduces their feelings of anger and frustration and, in turn, improves behaviour and well-being.

There are individual approaches for planning the curriculum for each child. Teachers use an online system to plan activities that help pupils make small steps in their learning. However, not all teachers know how to use the system effectively, ensuring that every pupil has access to the full curriculum.

Some curriculum subjects are better planned than others, for example reading/communication, but others are less secure. Leaders have not ensured that all subjects include the steps pupils need to achieve to deepen their understanding.

Reading is promoted and developed well for each pupil according to their needs. The school uses a wide range of strategies to help each pupil to develop their communication and early reading knowledge and understanding. Pupils use their reading skills to follow instructions and know what to do next. Pupils who can read books are effectively helped to understand what they are reading about. Pupils enjoy reading and choose books they are interested in. Pupils read aloud with confidence.

Leaders have high aspirations for pupils. Recent improvements have seen pupils gain from the expertise of specialist staff in areas such as dance, physical education (PE), speech and language.

Partnerships with neighbouring mainstream schools is good. Some pupils socialise at lunchtime with their mainstream peers, as well as take part in joint reading projects with them in the school library. This enables pupils to learn to behave appropriately and develop their social and language skills.

Positive use is made of the outside learning spaces. This helps pupils both to understand their own physical and sensory needs and about the world they live in. Pupils enjoy visits, for example to the Tate Modern. They learn to use public transport and complete art projects. Dance and drama activities with local groups and mainstream peers are carefully designed to enhance learning.

Pupils of all ages develop 'life skills' and make good progress in their learning about the value of money and how to communicate with people, for example the school's off-site 'community shop', where even pupils with the most profound needs can go to take part in pottery activities and be part of the enterprise centre.

When students are ready to move on, staff in the colleges know them before they start and take advice from the school as to how to meet the needs of each student.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are secure in the processes needed to ensure the safety of the pupils. Statutory processes are carried out and recorded appropriately. Keeping pupils safe is given a high priority and staff are sure of who to go to if they have a concern. Actions taken to help families are extensive. Leaders ensure that families are effectively supported.

Leaders make sure all staff are suitable to work with pupils. Governors regularly check processes in place. They ensure that they fulfil their duties with regard to safeguarding pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The system for identifying pupils' small steps in learning is not used consistently by all teachers. This means that pupils do not have access to the range of subjects in the curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that all staff are developed and trained appropriately so that planning for small steps of progress is consistent for all subjects.
- The curriculum is not well planned and sequenced for every subject. Teachers do not know how to plan activities in a logical order to support pupils' progress. Senior leaders must ensure that curriculum leaders receive the support and training so that all subjects have well-chosen content. Each subject plan must show the sequence of learning so that teachers identify what each pupil needs to know to make good progress.

Background

When we have judged this special school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged Greenside School to be good in 27–28 February 2013.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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

Unique reference number	117690
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10121483
Type of school	Special school
School category	Maintained special school
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	148
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	16
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dave Smith
Headteacher	Dave Victor
Website	www.greenside.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 July 2016

Information about this school

- Greenside School is a special school that caters for pupils from the age of two to 19 years.
- The school provides for pupils who have severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. All the pupils have EHC plans.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- We held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. We also met with a range of teachers and support staff.
- We carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, personal, social and health education. Inspectors discussed the curriculum design with leaders, carried out lesson visits, scrutinised pupil work and spoke to teachers from the lessons. We were

accompanied by senior and middle leaders when visiting lessons and looking at pupils' work.

- Safeguarding processes were scrutinised. I met with the designated safeguarding leader and reviewed processes and procedures related to safeguarding. We looked at the arrangements for entry and exit to the school to see how safe this was. We also observed break and lunchtimes and spoke to pupils and a variety of staff at these times.
- I met with two members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. I also spoke by telephone with the local authority improvement partner for the school.
- We looked at a range of documents, including: the school's self-evaluation of current performance and plans for development; information relating to safeguarding; information about the application of the school's evidence app, showing the link between education, health and care plans targets and small steps for learning; and information on the school's website.
- We took account of the 23 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, including the 17 free-text responses. We also looked at the 43 staff responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jackie Mullan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

John Craig

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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