

The Greneway School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117542
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	358157
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Joan Hewitt HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	412
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Denise Graham
Headteacher	Susan Kennedy
Date of previous school inspection	15 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. One inspector focused on safeguarding for half a day. Inspectors observed 19 teachers in 26 lessons and also conducted a series of brief lesson visits focused on the engagement of boys. Meetings were held with groups of students, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including the school's development plan, data and analysis, policies, the school's monitoring records and the minutes of the governing body meetings. They considered the responses to questionnaires from 287 parents, 109 students and 38 members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- How effective are teachers in using assessment information to teach lessons that meet the needs of boys, the most and least able pupils?
- How effective are leaders and managers in ensuring progress is consistent across all subjects and Key Stages, especially in Key Stage 2?
- How effectively do leaders and managers evaluate the work of the school and take decisive action to improve the achievement of all groups of pupils?

Information about the school

The Greneway School is an average sized middle school. It gained specialist status in mathematics and computing in 2008. Most pupils join the school from local first schools. The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage although a few other ethnic groups are represented. The proportion of pupils that speak English as an additional language is below that found nationally and all speak English fluently. Eligibility for free school meals is lower than average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above that found nationally and the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is lower than average. The school has achieved National Healthy Schools Status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**2****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

This good school is providing a happy and safe learning environment for pupils in its care. A particular strength is pupils' outstanding social, moral and spiritual development. They are caring and friendly to each other and to the adults in the school. The excellent relationships in the school create a harmonious environment in which pupils feel extremely safe. Sport is an important part of pupils' school life and the vast majority take part in activities after school or at lunchtime. As a result, their commitment to adopting healthy lifestyles is outstanding.

Most pupils make good progress. The impact of the school's specialist status is seen clearly in the good progress pupils make in mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Good developments in teaching and in the additional support they get are showing rapid signs of improvement, especially for younger pupils. Leaders are acutely aware of this unevenness and the school's data demonstrates that this gap is closing rapidly.

Teaching has improved since the last inspection because teachers are careful to provide interesting and engaging tasks. This is one of the reasons for improvements in boys' achievement. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and sometimes outstanding. This is especially the case in lessons where they have the opportunity to assess their own work. For example in an outstanding English lesson, Year 6 developed an excellent understanding of creating character descriptions from using success criteria they had helped to write. This excellent practice is not consistent across the school.

Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and teachers are developing a good level of skill in using the information to identify the needs of pupils. Many teachers use the information to make sure every pupil is appropriately challenged. For example, some teachers have excellent questioning skills and use assessment information to make sure their questions offer exactly the right level of challenge. However, this is not fully consistent and at times the needs of the most and least able are not met fully.

Senior and middle leaders work effectively in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and pupils' work. They take swift and effective action to address underachievement. For example, results in English have improved because of the effective work middle leaders have done in improving the skills of teachers who are not specialist English teachers. The evaluation of other aspects of the school's work is effective but sometimes lacks sharpness. For example, the school does good work in promoting pupils' understanding of different cultures but this is not evaluated systematically. Consequently, opportunities to coordinate activities and share existing good practice are missed.

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Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of the work of the school. This can be clearly seen in the very high response to the Ofsted survey. Pupils and staff are equally positive about the school and consequently morale is high. The school's good capacity to sustain improvements is clearly demonstrated in the rapid development of good teaching, better progress for pupils since the last inspection and the effective evaluation of teaching by senior and middle leaders.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Iron out remaining unevenness in progress made by different groups, especially the most and least able by:
 - ensuring teachers consistently use assessment information to meet the needs of all groups of pupils.
 - ensuring pupils have consistent opportunities to assess their own work using precise success criteria
 - sharing existing outstanding practice to improve teachers' questioning skills.
- Sharpen the accuracy of monitoring and evaluation by building on the existing good practice in monitoring and evaluating teaching and pupil progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils enter the school with attainment that is above average. In Key Stage 2 they get off to a steady start and this accelerates in Key Stage 3. By the end of Year 8 pupils reach the standards normally expected of Year 9 students.

Learning in most of the lessons seen by inspectors was good or better. Pupils are motivated and engaged by lively tasks and imaginative use of resources. This captures their imagination and they work hard. Pupils work well together. The good opportunities they have to work in groups and solve problems foster good workplace skills. Boys respond especially well to this approach. Pupils' good behaviour and eagerness to learn make a strong contribution to their good progress. Learning accelerates when tasks are matched precisely to pupils' needs. For example in an outstanding mathematics lesson the most and least able pupils made excellent progress in solving algebraic equations because the tasks they were given offered exactly the right amount of challenge and support. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because tasks do not always meet their needs and they struggle to complete the work. The few pupils from minority ethnic heritages make good progress. The school's specialist status has had a good impact in making mathematics lessons fun and students particularly enjoy using ICT in all lessons.

The school has a family atmosphere and it helps pupils to develop an excellent sense of right and wrong. Pupils from all backgrounds and ages socialise very well together. Pupils take advantage of the many opportunities for them to take on responsibilities. For example, older pupils act as 'active listeners' for younger pupils. They also raise money for various charities, most recently for Children In Need. Behaviour in and out of lessons is good. Pupils say bullying is a rare event and they are confident that any adults take effective action when it does occur. As a result pupils say they feel extremely safe and

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they enjoy school life. Their enjoyment is demonstrated by their above average attendance and good punctuality.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good because teachers use a variety of approaches to suit pupils' different learning styles. Tasks are relevant and practical. Consequently pupils' engagement and motivation is high. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and this gives pupils' confidence. The relationships they have with their teachers are good and these promote good behaviour. Teachers have access to thorough assessment information and some use this well to make sure the needs of all pupils are met. However, this is not consistent and sometimes teachers identify pupils needing extra support but do not plan how they will meet their needs in the lesson. Consequently the progress of the most and least able is not as rapid as others in these lessons.

The curriculum is well organised to meet pupils' needs and aspirations. The impact of the school's specialist status has improved pupils' access to ICT. Most subjects make good use of new technology to enhance pupils' learning and, as a result, pupils' ICT skills are good. The work the school does in tailoring the curriculum in response to pupils' individual needs is particularly strong. The curriculum for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable is responsive to their changing circumstances and needs. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities to ensure the needs of different groups of students

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are met. For example to improve girls' use of ICT the school has worked with a local upper school to provide a computer club for girls in Year 5 and 6. A range of trips and visitors to the school enhance the curriculum and provide additional challenge for more-able pupils.

Pastoral care for pupils is strong. The care for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable is outstanding because adults tailor support to their needs. The work done with outside agencies is also strong and the school is effective in securing precisely the right support pupils need. The school has been successful in securing above-average attendance. Work with individual pupils who find it difficult to attend school regularly has also been successful. However, because this day-to-day work is not evaluated effectively, outstanding practice is not always shared. Guidance to pupils at key times is good and transition from first schools and to the upper school is smooth.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers demonstrate good ambition. They have been highly successful in gaining the overwhelming support of parents and carers. Pupils and staff are inspired to continually seek improvements, consequently morale is high. Governors provide a good level of support and challenge. They are particularly active in seeking the views of pupils and parents.

The school's good level of ambition is underpinned by thorough and rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress and work. This effective tracking enables leaders to take swift action to address underachievement. For example in recent years, boys' achievement has not been as good as girls. Leaders took effective action to ensure their learning styles were catered for in lessons. Consequently boys' achievement is now good. Leaders have taken effective action to reduce the unevenness in the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently the gap is closing quickly and pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. Senior and middle leaders are also effective in evaluating the quality of lessons. The feedback they give to teachers is focused on identifying practical ways to improve learning. This is further supported by the good-quality training for teachers and other staff. However, this rigour is not replicated in evaluating the quality of other aspects of the school's work.

Procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust and effective. The school's strong links with outside agencies further supports pupils' safety and well being. The work to ensure the suitability of staff is excellent. Good and regular training ensures adults' awareness of safeguarding is well-developed. The school has effective links with its partners especially through its work as a specialist school. This has resulted in enhancements that the school

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could not have provided alone. Links with local schools are particularly strong and enhance transition arrangements for pupils. Community cohesion is promoted well and pupils play an active role in the school. They also have good links in the local, national and international communities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and the very large majority of these agreed with all the statements. They were very positive about the experience their children had at school. A few raised concerns about the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that the school has clear systems to deal with any poor behaviour and that pupils' behaviour is good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Greneway School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 287 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 412 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	152	53	127	44	5	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	151	53	130	45	4	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	111	39	162	56	11	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	118	41	157	55	8	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	137	48	147	51	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	110	38	163	57	12	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	108	38	171	60	5	2	1	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	128	45	141	49	2	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	115	40	164	57	5	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	102	36	157	55	17	6	1	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	88	31	180	63	9	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	149	52	130	45	2	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	173	60	109	38	3	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



3 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Greneway School, Royston, SG8 7JF

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. We found it very helpful to talk to you, look at your work and visit your lessons. You helped us to understand what it is like to be a pupil at The Greneway School. There are some things that the school does very well.

You have outstanding social, moral and spiritual development.

All the teachers and other adults help you to feel very safe and adopt healthy lifestyles.

Lessons are interesting and help you to make good progress.

The school's specialist status is providing you with lots of opportunities.

Senior leaders and all the staff want the school to be even better so we have asked them to do the following things.

Make sure everybody makes good progress. They can do this by making sure teachers use your assessment information to give you work that is exactly right for you. They should also give you more opportunities to assess your own work. Teachers could learn from each other so that all of your lessons are as good as the very best.

Make sure middle and senior leaders check the quality of all the things you do in school so that they can make sure everything is as good as it can be.

You can play your part in improving the school by continuing to work hard and behave well.

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt

Her Majesty's Inspector

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