

Greenacre School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118817
Local Authority	Medway
Inspection number	358451
Inspection dates	16–17 February 2011
Reporting inspector	John Daniell HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	932
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Butler
Headteacher	Andrew Reese
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2008
School address	157 Walderslade Road Medway ME5 0LP
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 27 lessons taught by 27 teachers. They observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation including performance data, school policies, self-evaluation information and examples of students' work. Discussions took place with staff, members of the governing body, students and the School Improvement Partner. Joint meetings, with an additional inspector from the Walderslade Girls' School inspection team, were conducted with sixth form leaders from both schools. The inspection team scrutinised 68 questionnaires from parents and carers and other questionnaires received from students and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Attainment at Key Stage 4 and whether it is set to rise.
- The capacity within middle leadership to sustain improvement, particularly in the core subjects.
- The extent to which the quality of provision and effectiveness of sixth form leadership drives improvement and promotes equally strong outcomes for all students in the joint sixth form.

Information about the school

Greenacre School is an average-sized school, although the number of boys on roll is steadily increasing. The school is located within a local authority which operates a selective system. Greenacre School has a joint sixth form with the neighbouring school, Walderslade Girls' School, which has specialist status for humanities with arts. Students in the sixth form are taught on both sites in mixed classes. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of students from minority ethnic groups is well below the national average, as is those who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average and the number of students with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.

The school has specialist status for sport and ICT and is a member of the Raising Achievement Partnership Programme. It also holds the Healthy School 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

Students at Greenacre School appreciate the commitment shown by its staff and respond well to the challenges they are set. They start school with low levels of attainment, but make good progress so that, by the time they leave, levels of attainment are broadly in line with the national average. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress at the same good rate as other groups of students. Exemplary care, guidance and support, as well as outstanding work with partnership organisations, contribute to students' good outcomes. These factors contribute much to why Greenacre is a good school.

The school provides a safe environment, which students value. Their good behaviour, in lessons and around the school, along with their above-average attendance rate, is testament to the great efforts of the teachers and support staff. Students have high aspirations and are well prepared for the world of work. Relationships between students and teachers are a strength of the school and consequently, students engage well in their learning. The school's sport specialism has a noticeable impact on students' self-esteem and this provision enables students to make the most of sporting opportunities, which encourage a healthy lifestyle. Students are proud of their school and make a positive contribution within school and also to the wider community.

Through good teaching and the effective use of assessment information, students make good progress in most lessons. In relatively weaker lessons, assessment information does not yet fully inform planning for learning in the way that it does for others, and progress is, therefore, slowed down to a satisfactory level. Good informative marking is not yet widespread, but where it is effective, students know how to improve the quality of their work in order to move up to the next level. A good curriculum, which is well matched to meet the needs of students, enables them to enjoy and achieve in a wide range of areas.

Outcomes for students in the joint sixth form are good because of the effective management of the good quality shared provision. Students appreciate the sixth form provision, as demonstrated by one student, who said, 'I don't think of it as having to be at school. I'm here because I enjoy it and I want to learn.'

Leaders and managers at all levels have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development, and the headteacher's vision is shared by all staff. Nevertheless, information gathered from lesson observations is not yet maximised to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching. The governing body provides well-targeted support and holds the school to account for its performance. Parents and carers support the school's aims, and the school's virtual learning environment, an interactive website, is a key tool for imparting information. The accuracy of the school's self-evaluation procedures and the good progress made since the previous inspection demonstrate a good capacity to sustain improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment further, by:
 - ensuring routine marking of students' work in all subjects that indicates at what level they are working and offers guidance on how to move up to the next level.
- Increase the extent and rigour of monitoring, by:
 - making full use of data gathered from lesson observations, to ensure that good practice and the finely-tuned targeting of staff expertise converts more good teaching to outstanding.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students experience good learning, which motivates and engages them. Their good behaviour makes a strong contribution to their good achievement, enabling teachers to deliver lessons which effectively meet students' needs. Where learning is good or better, teachers make good use of assessment information to assist students to progress at a rate which is right for them. Lessons are structured skilfully so that students' understanding is tested at various points during lessons. Students, many of whom had special educational needs and/or disabilities, made good progress during a good art lesson taught in Year 8. This success was achieved because the lesson plan demonstrated a good understanding of students' needs, and included an element of challenge for all.

In 2010, the proportion of students gaining five or more A*?C grades at GCSE was 93%, which was significantly above the national average. These students started school with low levels of attainment. However, the proportion of students gaining the same number of grades, but including English and mathematics, was well below the national average and represented a dip in performance. These results were anticipated, and the school has accurately identified the underlying reasons and is now using tracking systems which identify groups of students who require additional support. Current available data indicate that attainment is on track to rise in 2011. Students told inspectors they feel safe because any incidents that do arise are dealt with swiftly. The school actively promotes good behaviour and a strong staff presence in corridors and around the grounds makes a direct contribution. Exclusion rates, too, are decreasing because of the positive impact of the school's inclusion strategies. The sports college status allows for increased participation in healthy activities and all students in Key Stage 4 study a BTEC course in physical education. Students appreciate the large number of extra-curricular activities provided by staff. Students' contribution towards their school community is strong, and the sports specialism creates opportunities for them to support local primary schools on sports days. Students speak highly of the benefits of community activities, including 'Training Them Live', a local project with the police force. Basic skills are well developed and students work well together, especially in groups, due to the impact of a social and emotional learning programme. This programme also contributes towards students' good spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. So, too, does the successful vertical structure of form groups, which comprise students from Years 7 to 11, thus creating several opportunities for older students to be good role models to those who are younger.

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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	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2

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?

The good teaching makes use of strong subject knowledge and engages students in their learning. In the mostly good lessons, students are challenged and effective use is made of resources, including information and communication technology (ICT) to present and record work. Good use is made of assessment information to support learning and teachers make timely interventions to correct misconceptions through effective questioning techniques. Other adults in lessons, including teaching assistants, are deployed well and make a significant contribution to the quality of learning. Students receive good quality verbal feedback in lessons; however, the quality of written feedback is more variable.

The curriculum is well structured, imaginative and effective, and presents a wide range of positive experiences. More-able students enjoy a fast-track curriculum with challenging targets, and the lower-attaining students follow a tailor-made curriculum with a successful emphasis on literacy and numeracy. The regular curriculum review ensures it meets the needs of most groups and extra-curricular provision enhances students' overall learning experience through enrichment days every two weeks, clubs and educational visits. Extra-curricular activities have a high take-up and are much enjoyed, particularly sports and music.

Students whose circumstances make them more vulnerable are particularly well guided through the extremely effective use of external agencies. Learning mentors, as well as

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members of the governing body, support students who fall behind in their studies through effective mentoring. Transition arrangements for students in Year 7 are exceptionally well planned to ensure students adapt to their new environment as swiftly as possible.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers of the school work collaboratively to secure good achievement, using effective systems to monitor and drive the delivery of initiatives for school improvement. Senior leaders' roles and responsibilities play to the strengths of staff and the headteacher's vision for the school is supported by all. Targets for students are challenging and the school's 'monitoring for intervention' programme makes good use of available data to track students' progress and identify those in need of additional support. Middle leaders, including those managing the core subjects, are held to account very well for the performance of their areas and challenged through effective line management. The skilled management of teaching and learning, through the good use of coaching and the targeted deployment of advanced skills teachers, secures good student outcomes.

The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Clear systems are in place for gathering the views of parents and carers and staff, but these systems are weaker for collecting and listening to the views of students. Policies are reviewed on a regular basis and the governing body ensures procedures for the safeguarding of children are robust. Risk assessments are thorough and staff are updated regularly on safeguarding procedures. Most parents and carers are happy with their child's experience at the school and good systems are in place for gathering their views through questionnaires, for example, at consultation evenings. Clear channels for exchanging information with parents and carers exist in order to support student achievement. The school is highly committed to working in partnership with other organisations and the proactive headteacher takes a leading role in ensuring that partnership activity makes a consistently excellent contribution to students' good achievement. Such effective activities include sports partnerships and collaborative work with Walderslade Girls' School for the joint sixth form. The school promotes community cohesion strongly and is starting to evaluate the impact of its work in this area on raising attainment. Equally, the school's firm commitment to equal opportunities and the removal of discrimination is seen in the way it has implemented strategies to ensure any remaining gaps in performance between different groups of students are closing quickly.

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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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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

Sixth form

The number of students from both Walderslade Girls' and Greenacre Schools choosing to stay in the jointly managed sixth form is rising. This improvement reflects the increasing regard in which the joint provision is held, notably because the good curriculum is designed to meet the interests and abilities of students from both schools, with clear routes into both academic and applied courses. These factors, together with students' exceptionally high attendance, result in good outcomes for those from both schools. Attainment overall is close to or, in some courses, above the national average. Students' progress is improving year on year and is good overall. However, there is still some variation in achievement both within and between courses. Students enjoy sixth-form life, feel safe and are fully involved in the life of both schools, for example through their mentoring of and support for younger students. Their positive contribution to the wider community is also good and includes involvement in charity work and work in local primary schools. All students participate in the range of enrichment opportunities, which they have developed for themselves.

Students benefit from and appreciate the good teaching in both schools. Good use is made of staff expertise and resources across both schools, particularly in relation to their different specialisms. Good attention is given to improving students' literacy and study skills. However, while their independent learning is developing well, these skills are not always sufficiently promoted in all lessons. The helpful feedback provided by subject staff contributes to students' good learning.

Students receive good care and support in their tutorial groups, which are based in their respective original schools. Close monitoring of individual progress, attendance and punctuality ensures that appropriate support is given at critical times. Progression to university, employment and training is exceptionally high and well supported by good

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systems for providing guidance. The joint sixth-form leadership is good, and focused on evaluating and addressing any variations in performance through well-targeted actions.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

A much smaller than average proportion of parents and carers completed the questionnaire and there were few additional comments. Responses to the questionnaire were supportive of the school. A very large majority believe that the school meets their children's particular needs and have confidence in the leaders and managers of the school. A large majority feel the school helps their child to have a healthy lifestyle. Inspection evidence endorsed this view, showing students making healthy choices in the school's canteen and the impact of the sports specialism in promoting healthy lifestyles.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Greenacre 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 68 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 932 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	32	42	62	4	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	26	44	65	4	6	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	17	25	45	66	4	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	28	39	57	5	7	3	4
The teaching is good at this school	23	64	38	56	4	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	24	42	62	7	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	13	44	65	11	16	0	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)	15	22	41	60	5	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	26	43	63	3	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	22	37	54	9	13	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	18	39	57	4	6	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	19	28	39	57	3	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	29	41	60	4	6	1	1

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



18 February 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Greenacre School, Chatham ME5 0LP

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave the inspection team during our recent visit to your school. You told us that you enjoy coming to school and the majority believe that school encourages you to be healthy. A minority feel behaviour could be improved, although inspectors witnessed only good or better behaviour during their visit. These are our main findings.

- Greenacre School provides you with a good quality of education because you make good progress by the time you leave the school, although attainment remains average. The school's sport specialism is helping to increase achievement.
- The school provides you with an outstanding quality of care, guidance and support, which contributes towards your good outcomes and above-average attendance.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good because teachers make good use of data they have about you. However, informative marking, which shows you how to improve the quality of your work, is not yet common in all subjects.
- The curriculum is well structured to allow you to progress according to your needs and some excellent work is done with outside organisations.
- The joint sixth form provision is good.
- Leaders and managers at all levels are doing a good job in running the school, but there are missed opportunities for members of the governing body to gather your views.
- Existing effective systems for monitoring have not yet been sufficiently fine-tuned for even greater precision in promoting the quality of teaching.

We have asked the school's leaders and managers to review the school's marking policy and to look at ways of making best use of information gained from monitoring. All of you can help by working hard to achieve your challenging targets and always adhering to the school's code of conduct.

Yours sincerely

John Daniell Her Majesty's Inspector

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