

Greenside School

Shephall Green, Stevenage, SG2 9XS

Inspection dates 27–28 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress particularly, in literacy and numeracy.
- Those with speech, language and communication needs make considerable strides in developing and improving their communication skills.
- Children attending the Early Years Foundation Stage make excellent progress. This gets them ready for learning and eases their move to Year 1.
- The sixth form is good. It enables students to continue their good progress and achieve nationally recognised qualifications. In particular, they make considerable improvements in their independence and social skills.
- Teachers plan their lessons well and check carefully how well pupils are making progress towards their individual targets in lessons.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding, which is a result of highly effective support from all staff. Pupils respond particularly well to the care and sensitive interest staff show.
- Pupils say they are happy and feel very safe at the school, and at the other sites they attend for some of their lessons.
- The headteacher and his senior leadership team have maintained a strong focus on improving all aspects of the school's work. They have continued to make the best use possible of the cramped accommodation.
- Senior leaders and governors work together effectively. They know the school well and understand what is needed to improve it further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The tasks set for all pupils in lessons are not always hard enough.
- At times, staff do not give pupils sufficient time to respond to tasks on their own.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons, seeing 11 teachers and one specialist learning support assistant. Three of the lessons were observed jointly with a member of the senior leadership team.
- A meeting was held with a small group of older students and five mixed-age pupils read their books to an inspector. Meetings were also held with the senior leadership team, others with posts of responsibility and the chair of the governors' curriculum committee. Telephone conversations were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, the governor with responsibility for safeguarding and a representative of the local authority.
- The lead inspector took account of 13 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the school's own recent parent and carer questionnaire, and 66 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's practice and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning, information on pupils' progress, documents used by senior leaders to check the school's work, governing body documentation and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding. The lead inspector visited the Greenside Studio situated in a nearby local shopping centre, the Hyde.

Inspection team

James Bowden, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Aileen Thomas

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Greenside School educates pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) or profound multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Some have additional needs such as speech, language and communication difficulties and complex medical, physical and sensory needs. An increasing proportion of pupils, currently about a tenth, have autistic spectrum disorders (ASD).
- There are three specialist classes for pupils with ASD and two specialist classes for pupils with PMLD, as well as complex medical needs. The school is organised into two departments: the primary department (ages 2 to 11 years and including the Early Years Foundation Stage) and the secondary department (ages 11 to 19 years and including the sixth form). Numbers vary in each year group.
- Currently, boys outnumber girls by three to one. The great majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds, with a few from a range of ethnic minority backgrounds. A very few are from families where English is not the home language. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and children from service families, is average. Currently, there are no children from service families and very few in local authority care.
- Originally designed for 60 pupils, there has been no significant increase in space since the school opened. However, building works are now underway to enable the school's 14 to 19 year old students to join with a neighbouring mainstream secondary school in January 2014.
- In December, 2012, the school opened the Greenside Studio in a nearby shopping centre. This is a sweet shop and ceramics studio with an attached kitchen, which is also used as a teaching base for older students to develop their independence.
- The school uses a number of external organisations to provide extra learning for Key Stage 4 and sixth form students. These include North Hertfordshire College, Ardley Farm and the Ridgemoor Training Centre.
- A new Chair of the Governing Body was elected in October, 2012.
- Among its many awards the school has recently achieved Gold Artsmark and Green Flag Eco-School awards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning by making sure that:
 - the tasks set in lessons for all pupils are always hard enough
 - pupils are given enough time to respond on their own to tasks and questions.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 is low as a result of pupils' complex needs. Attainment remains low in all age groups. However, in relation to their starting points, pupils make good progress and achieve well whatever their abilities.
- Good quality support for all means there are no particular differences in the rates of progress made by those with different levels of learning difficulties, boys and girls, the very few who speak English as an additional language or those supported by pupil premium funding. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the very few children looked after by the local authority achieve as well as others. Extra support and resources helps these pupils to make good progress.
- Pupils make good progress throughout the school. In 2012, at the end of Year 11, taking into account their starting points, the majority of pupils achieved well in English and mathematics. All pupils also make good progress in improving their communication skills. Some pupils are making good progress in learning to read, including using new technologies and visual prompt cards to enable them to do so.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff check carefully the needs and difficulties of children when they arrive. Individual targets are then set for learning and development. The excellent progress they make in all areas of learning and development prepares them well for moving on to Year 1.
- On leaving at the end of sixth form, all students are prepared well for the next stage of their education or life beyond the school. In 2012, almost all continued to Further Education colleges. Students achieved well in literacy, numeracy, communication and gained nationally recognised qualifications in personal development and independence. Their achievement is supported well by work experience opportunities, and the weekly courses they follow at North Hertfordshire College and the other providers used, as well as at the Greenside Studio.
- In almost all lessons, progress is good. In a primary music lesson, the teacher's use of the sounds that letters make improved pupils' understanding of how to copy rhythm. In a sixth form domestics skills lesson, a small group of students prepared toast for one another, laid the table and chose which spread to use. This promoted their independence well.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching throughout the school promotes good learning for all pupils. Teaching in English and mathematics is good. In all lessons, there is a strong focus on the important skills of literacy, numeracy and communication. Teachers ask questions skilfully to check how well pupils are learning throughout the lesson as well as at the end. Although staff try to provide as many opportunities as possible to develop pupils' independence, there are occasions when they do not allow enough time for pupils to respond independently to tasks and questions.
- Staff work well together in all lessons to help pupils make the best progress possible towards their individual learning targets. Progress being made towards these targets is checked carefully, which helps teachers plan lessons to support pupils' next steps in learning.
- Staff make sure pupils are fully involved in lessons. In a sixth form lesson, at the Greenside

Studio, students were involved in identifying 'same' and 'different', weighing out 100g packs of sweets to be sold in the shop and checking prices. In a primary department information and communications technology lesson, the more-able pupils matched numbers and letters successfully by 'dragging' images across the computer screen. At the same time, a small number of pupils with more complex needs had successful one-to-one intensive communication support.

- Lessons start with lively activities that are used to interest and motivate pupils. In a secondary mathematics lesson, recapping three-dimensional shapes there was a good focus on improving students' speaking, listening, signing and communication skills through the use of new technologies and visual prompt cards. Students also took turns at holding the different shapes to compare and contrast their different features. One student was clearly delighted when he realised he had said 'sphere!' However, in some lessons, tasks set for pupils are not always hard enough. This means that some do not therefore make the progress they are capable of making.
- Parents and carers feel their children are taught well. Pupils say teachers help them learn and that there is lots of hard work in English and mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school because of consistent routines, staff's high levels of support throughout the day and their respect for pupils' dignity and well-being. Typically, behaviour over time has been outstanding. For five years, there have been no permanent exclusions or instances where pupils have not been allowed to go to school for a short period because of poor behaviour.
- There are no recorded instances of bullying or unacceptable behaviour. Pupils understand what bullying can involve and say it does not happen in this school. One pupil commented, 'If there was, Dave (the headteacher) would help!' In lessons observed, there were no instances where learning was disrupted by untoward behaviour.
- Pupils arrive happily in the mornings, maintain their enthusiasm for learning throughout the day and leave happily at the end when meeting their escorts or parents and carers. Although a few are absent sometimes because of medical problems, there has been no unauthorised absence since January, 2012.
- Movement around the school is safe and sensible because of high levels of sensitive and careful supervision. Very well-organised lunchtimes provide excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their independence in choosing food options, collecting and returning plates and cutlery and communicating with adults who supervise them. Supervised play activities during lunchtime are popular with pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent because of the wide variety of well-chosen activities in lessons. There are opportunities for making choices, working alone or for working cooperatively in small groups. Pupils particularly enjoy using new technologies to help them communicate as well as working with computers, including choosing their own activities when they have completed a set task. Individuals are also keen to take responsibility, for example, for collecting and returning registers.
- Without exception, parents and carers who responded to Parent View and the school's own recent questionnaire agree their child is happy, safe and well looked after. This was also confirmed by a small group of older students who met with the lead inspector. They commented that all pupils across the school get on well together and that they feel safe at the school and at

the other sites where they learn.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and his senior leadership team are highly effective and committed to sustained improvement. All staff are committed to helping pupils achieve as much as possible. Staff and governors are involved in checking all aspects of the school and know what needs to be improved for the school to become outstanding.
- Senior leaders check the quality of teaching and learning carefully. They set teachers targets to improve the quality of their work and make recommendations to the governing body regarding additional responsibilities and training opportunities.
- As a result of the school's strong commitment to equality, there is no discrimination of any kind. All pupils, regardless of their circumstances or needs, make good progress in their learning and personal development.
- The subjects and topics pupils study are similar to mainstream schools. All pupils have equal opportunities to succeed because the subjects and topics studied are tailored to match the needs of individuals. The Gold Artsmark and Green Flag Eco-School awards show how well the school makes learning even more exciting. All pupils are, for example, involved in lots of creative arts activities and older students look after the school's own allotment. These opportunities, along with learning about different faiths, contribute very well to their strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school works highly effectively with a range of other professionals to support the pupils' wide-ranging needs. Parents and carers also appreciate the school's work to involve them in their children's learning. This is reflected in their very positive responses to Parent View and the school's own recent parent and carer questionnaire.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is effective in supporting the school and holding the senior leaders to account for pupils' progress and achievement. As a result of training and visits to the school, governors have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and how well pupils are doing. The governing body checks the work of senior leaders and other staff to help them take decisions about how well they are working, any action that should be taken, training and pay. It makes sure national 'Teaching Standards' are met and safeguarding procedures are fully in place at the school and other sites where pupils are taught. The finance committee is diligent in making sure the school's finances are in order and oversees the use of pupil premium funding. Current funding has been used effectively to improve pupils' reading and communication skills, support those with sensory needs and to provide extra outdoor learning opportunities to develop older pupils' independence.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	117690
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	401681

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	114
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	24
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dave Smith
Headteacher	Dave Victor
Date of previous school inspection	16 November 2009
Telephone number	01438 315356
Fax number	01438 748034
Email address	head@greenside.herts.sch.uk

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