

Greenacre School

Keresforth Hill Road, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 6RG

Inspection dates 6–7 March 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- This school has continued to improve markedly since the previous inspection. Senior leaders and all of the staff share the highest expectations for students.
- Students make exceptional progress from their starting points in all areas of their learning. Their progress in reading, writing and mathematics is outstanding. Students' progress in literacy and communication is extremely strong.
- The quality of teaching is at least consistently good and a significant proportion is outstanding. Teachers and support staff plan highly individual activities for each student so they make exceptional progress.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students make excellent progress as a result of a varied curriculum, the high expectations their teachers have of them and the many opportunities they are given to develop their independence.
- Students feel safe and secure in this school. Any difficulties with behaviour are managed with consummate skill. Staff use their excellent understanding of each student so that students develop high levels of independence in relation to their needs and wishes.
- Parents are key partners in their children's learning and progress. The school creates many successful opportunities for parents to share activities in the school and to talk to staff, so students benefit from consistent approaches to their development and progress.
- Senior leaders and managers, including the governing body, work together effectively so they can realise their ambitions for their school. They constantly review their own work. They look regularly at information that tells them how well students are doing to make sure students are making rapid progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons, three of which were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff, a representative from the local authority, an external partner, members of the governing body and groups of students. Inspectors also talked informally to students in lessons and around school.
- Many documents were reviewed including those related to teaching, behaviour and attendance, safeguarding, students' progress, the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school's plans for further improvement and performance management for staff.
- An inspector visited a group of older students in the school's Life Skills Teaching House in Barnsley town centre, who follow a programme to develop skills for independent living.
- Inspectors also took account of 85 responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Nell Banfield, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Maureen Coleman	Additional Inspector
Rosemary Eaton	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Greenacre School is a large special school which provides for children and young people with severe and complex learning difficulties. A number of students have profound and multiple learning difficulties and many also have additional special educational needs and/or difficulties including physical and sensory impairments or difficulties on the autistic spectrum.
- The school has an additional provision for 32 children and young people with communication and interaction difficulties and specific speech and language difficulties, funded by the local authority.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs. They attend the school from across Barnsley local authority. Some students from neighbouring authorities also attend the school.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has moved into a newly built and re-furbished building. The number of students on roll has increased substantially and there is significant demand for places for new students.
- The proportion known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding) is high.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- There are a small number of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage who are taught alongside children of pre-compulsory school age.
- A large number of students aged 16 to 19 attend the school's sixth form, Greenacre College, which is housed in the same building as the main part of the school. They attend the school's Life Skills House in Barnsley town centre for part of the time.
- A small number of students follow courses and/or work experience in construction, car mechanics and equine care at Barnsley Community Build, Riding for the Disabled and Motor Mouth.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consolidate the high quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that all teachers:
 - use their subject knowledge to enthuse and inspire students, energise students' learning and increase their engagement in lessons even further
 - re-shape tasks and activities to build on progress during all lessons so students can make even more rapid progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students make outstanding progress from their starting points when they arrive at the school. By the time they leave the school, they are exceptionally well prepared for the future. Most students reach the challenging targets set for them and some make progress beyond these.
- Progress is consistently high for all groups across all key stages. The youngest children make rapid progress through imaginative use of learning spaces, skilful support to help them to communicate and approaches that engage all their senses so they are fully involved in activities.
- Students who are eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium make exceptional progress as a result of additional and individual teaching and support. Consequently, they are catching up other groups of students in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The vast majority of students make rapid progress in their reading and writing. All staff work together to make sure that lots of opportunities are given to recognise sounds and letters, and to begin to write and form letters to represent sounds. More-able students write sentences and paragraphs accurately as a result of regular and constant reminders of the function of full stops and capital letters. On World Book Day, many classes dressed up as characters in their chosen story and experienced events in the story in imaginative ways. This led to a high level of enjoyment and understanding of the pleasure of reading.
- Other students show they recognise sounds, symbols and words and are able to select a particular sound or object or choose their next activity. They show great pleasure in their success.
- Students' progress in mathematics, including numeracy, has improved as a result of actions taken to improve the accuracy in assessing progress and improve the understanding of what each student needs to be able to do to reach the highest levels.
- All students at every stage in the school make exceptional progress in developing independence and social skills and this is one of several key strengths of the school. Nothing is done for them if they can do it for themselves.
- The students in the sixth form make excellent progress through a wide and imaginative curriculum which includes the core skills of literacy and numeracy, a life-skills programme and a range of vocational options. They are able to gain qualifications and the majority successfully move on to employment or further training.
- Students who access the Life Skills house make outstanding progress in learning how to clean, shop, cook and manage a budget so they can look after themselves and keep themselves safe.
- Those students who attend off-site courses and training for some of their time to follow courses in construction, horse care or car mechanics are well supported by the school, make excellent progress and attend well.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The majority of students make outstanding progress as a result of teaching that is at least good and a rapidly increasing proportion of outstanding and inspiring teaching. Teachers plan lessons that are accurately matched to students' needs so they make sustained progress in their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work extremely closely together as a team. They use a mix of each other's strengths in their joint planning to provide a range of expertise and skill so students are able to succeed both in their academic learning and in their personal development.
- All opportunities are taken to recognise, repeat and understand key terms. One student identified one of his strengths for employment as 'always being on time' and was supported in repeating this by pointing at the word, recognising the initial sounds and saying 'I'm always

punctual’.

- Teachers check students’ learning very effectively at the end of each lesson using a colour coded system of red (don’t understand), amber (understand it a bit) or green (understand it well). Students describe what each colour means and choose a colour to assess their progress. Their assessment is then confirmed or challenged by a member of staff and a final judgement agreed. Opportunities are sometimes lost to check progress during a lesson which means teaching or support needs are not always adjusted to consistently maintain the highest expectations.
- Most lessons move quickly and are fun. Students are confident in trying new and more difficult tasks. A mixed group of early secondary-age students were fascinated to learn about how their body worked and enjoyed finding out more about the world around them.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use imaginative resources to make learning mean more. A group of younger children understood more clearly what a zoo was as a result of talking about a range of soft toys. One child could meet her target by answering a ‘What is it?’ question with ‘little giraffe’. A child returning from a farm visit was fascinated by the baby pigs she had seen under a lamp and described them with great pleasure and detail to two staff on the school corridor.
- Staff use signs and symbols consistently well to support learning and students use communication aids confidently to maintain their independence.
- Every minute of the school day is used well, from the ‘Good Morning’ and ‘morning work’ sessions at the beginning of the day, in the sensory and physical activities, including singing, in the lunchtime karaoke sessions, or in the learning areas during lessons. No time is wasted.
- The emphasis the school places on developing numeracy skills is evident in rigorous planning so every opportunity is taken in all lessons and activities outside the learning areas to reinforce the use of number skills to work out how much things cost. Some students organise times to offer eggs from the school’s chickens in return for donations so that the chickens are self sufficient.
- There is a clear ethos of positive encouragement of students so they extend their experiences in a safe environment, build their confidence to try new activities and strive to learn more.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students’ attitudes to learning are excellent. They enjoy coming to school, showed their work to inspectors with pride and confidence and took inspectors to see photographs of visits outside school. Their attendance is high and students are only absent when this is unavoidable. Over time, their belief and confidence in their abilities increases considerably.
- Many students who, because of the complexity of their needs, have difficulties joining in with others and the school in general, make friends, behave well, and settle down very quickly. Older students have the confidence to succeed in a work environment, either in school or outside.
- Students take great pride and demonstrate high levels of responsibility in helping other students and in contributing to events. Older students make items for sale from stalls at a school coffee afternoon and are working with staff to set up a gift shop. They are keen to compete with similar shops and are investigating how they can make a profit from this enterprise.
- Students know that any member of staff will help them and say that staff make them think hard about their learning. A group of older students agreed that ‘you can put your hand up if you need help with something you find hard’.
- Most students’ behaviour is outstanding. A few students have some difficulty doing this of their own accord, and any student who cannot manage to stay calm and cooperative are effectively managed and supported. As a result, the school is a calm, happy and welcoming environment.
- Students feel exceptionally safe and secure. Any occasions when someone is unkind or disrespectful are quickly resolved. The vast majority of students treat each other with respect and understand they are all different but of equal importance.
- The school’s arrangements for making sure students are safe are excellent. This includes extremely effective software that enables all staff to share and record concerns and safety issues

promptly and securely. The broader curriculum ensures students understand how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school has improved steadily over a number of years, and the rate of improvement has accelerated since the move to the new and re-furnished building. This is because of the appointment of high quality leaders, excellent planning and committed professional development by staff. The learning spaces in the new building are used well to provide flexible learning opportunities for groups and individuals.
- The headteacher, the governing body and senior and middle leaders have an accurate view of what works successfully and what needs further improvement. They share an understanding that high quality teaching and learning is the key to the school's continued success. They monitor the quality of teaching and learning rigorously and accurately to identify what remains to be improved, using this information to provide well chosen and regular professional development.
- For example, at the previous inspection, the provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage children and students' progress across the school were identified for improvement. Since then, leaders and staff have appointed a number of new leaders and developed a rigorous and consistent system used at the end of lessons for students to assess their learning. As a result, the school's practice in these areas is now exemplary.
- Very effective management of teachers' performance has been a constant feature of the school, so all teachers and teaching assistants have clear pathways to increase their knowledge and understanding of how to meet the students' different and complex needs. Performance is closely matched to promotion and pay progression.
- The curriculum has been significantly improved to offer a wider choice of useful accreditation and an excellent choice of high quality vocational courses, including drama, construction, hair and beauty and catering. The school is planning to extend choice still further by offering courses in media studies.
- The school plans events and experiences carefully to ensure that students understand that other families might live in ways that are different from their own and realise the consequences of key events in the past. The school held an assembly where students thought about the Holocaust and reflected, in dim light with a single candle, which helped them to remember what happened to many people at that time.
- Safeguarding arrangements are exemplary. The school has recently added an excellent software system to their procedures so that any concerns can be recorded and acted on promptly. The safety of the small number of students who attend courses off-site is monitored carefully and all reasonable steps are taken to check the systems for safeguarding within the provisions they attend. Staff are well trained and vigilant in ensuring that all students are safe.
- Links with parents are very strong. One parent described all the school staff as 'very special people'. In the event of concerns being raised by parents, the school takes appropriate steps to discuss and resolve these openly and helpfully.
- The local authority and health trust provide a wide range of specialist services so that the needs of students, including those in the school's additional provision, are very well met. An external partner supports the school well in confirming the areas for improvement identified by the school and in making clear plans to improve further.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has an excellent understanding of the work of the school, based on regular reports from the headteacher and other senior leaders, from visits to the school and discussions with staff and parents. The governing body makes difficult decisions so teachers' promotions and pay relate directly to the effectiveness of their work, based on a range of evidence. They keep a close check on the school's finances, always considering the effects of

any expenditure on the learning of students. This ensures that the pupil premium funding has been spent wisely, so that most of the students known to be eligible are making better than expected progress.

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	133394
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	402571

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	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	268
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	56
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Molly Beever
Headteacher	Susan Hayter
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2009
Telephone number	01226 287165
Fax number	01226 295328
Email address	greenacre@barnsley.org

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