

Greenwich Steiner School

Woodlands, 90 Mycenae Road, Greenwich, London SE3 7SE

Inspection dates

27–29 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' progress across the curriculum in the lower and middle school is inconsistent. Overall, pupils' achievement requires improvement.
- Assessment is not used well enough by all teachers to plan work that challenges pupils, particularly the most able.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is not good. The achievement of these pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils do not get enough opportunity to practise their literacy skills and, where relevant, mathematical skills across the curriculum.
- Systems for assessing pupils' progress and attainment are not embedded. Leaders have only just begun to use this information to identify and address underachievement.
- Some subjects do not demonstrate clear progression in the skills and knowledge taught in the lower and middle schools.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of what the school does well and what needs to be improved. Although not yet good, the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes are improving rapidly.
- Staff are vigilant to any potential dangers which may affect pupils. There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. As a result, pupils feel safe and well cared for.
- Behaviour is exemplary, and pupils' personal development is strong. Pupils are respectful of one another and all adults. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and strive to achieve their very best.
- Children get a great start to school life. The early years provision is of high quality. Children excel academically, socially and emotionally.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to raise pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
 - teachers are effective in using assessment information accurately to identify actions which will challenge and extend pupils' thinking and reasoning
 - teachers have the knowledge and skills to adapt their teaching when required to meet the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
 - pupils are given greater opportunities to apply their literacy skills and, where relevant, mathematical skills across the curriculum.
- Further improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the systems for assessing pupils' progress and attainment are fully embedded
 - all subjects show clear progression in the skills and knowledge taught across all classes in the lower and middle schools.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and governors are effective in ensuring that all the requirements for the independent school standards and the early years foundation stage are met. A culture of high expectations of pupils' behaviour is well embedded across the school. The quality of provision and outcomes in the early years are outstanding.
- The headteacher and leaders are united in their vision and ambition for the pupils at Greenwich Steiner School. They know the pupils, staff and community very well. Leaders have put in place a curriculum that gives pupils access to a wide range of opportunities and experiences that serve them well as they grow. Although the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes require improvement, both are improving strongly as a result of leaders' sustained good work.
- Leaders ensure that regular checks are made on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They know where teaching is strongest and where further improvements are required. Teachers value the training and support school leaders provide. All staff who responded to the staff survey agreed that the school is well led and managed.
- The school improvement plan is built upon detailed self-evaluation. Leaders ensure that outcomes are specific enough to allow them to evaluate effectiveness accurately. Clear milestones enable governors to challenge leaders confidently about how well the school is doing on its journey of improvement.
- Leaders use the strengths of experienced staff to develop leadership capacity. Leaders ensure that there is a focus on teaching and learning, and on improving outcomes for pupils. They lead by example and are beginning to influence their teams through professional dialogue, so that teachers review and refine their practice together.
- The school's improvement partner works closely with leaders to identify priorities for improvement. Together, they make regular checks on the progress and impact of the actions put in place.
- The curriculum provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to develop strong personal skills and be well prepared for life in Britain. Subjects such as eurythmy, drama and music enable pupils to develop a positive frame of mind and instil in them the belief that they can succeed.
- Pupils study a wide range of subjects and enjoy the many experiences on offer, such as visits to the theatre, art and drama clubs, musical tuition, and cookery sessions. However, leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is effective in developing pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics across a range of subjects.
- A new assessment system now allows leaders to ensure that teachers have a better understanding of pupils' starting points and the standards pupils need to reach. However, this is not embedded across the school.

Governance

- Governors provide effective support to school leaders and bring a wide range of experience. For example, they have employed an additional member of staff to

strengthen leadership capacity for pupils with SEND. Consequently, this aspect of the school's work is showing early signs of improvement.

- Governors are increasingly effective in challenging school leaders about the progress pupils make across the curriculum. This is because they are beginning to get better information about the standards pupils reach in different subjects. Members of the education committee scrutinise performance information and ask pertinent and challenging questions. This is one of the ways governors ensure that school leaders are held to account.
- Governors are keen to ensure that they fulfil their duties, and have ensured that statutory policies to guide the school's work are up to date.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders are effective in ensuring that staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff are vigilant, and there is a strong culture across the school to ensure that pupils are kept safe from harm. Leaders have made sure that all staff are clear about their duty to keep children safe and how to report matters of concern.
- Record-keeping is meticulous and indicates a strong commitment to making sure children are safe. There is evidence of good links with external agencies and parents and carers to make sure children, especially the most vulnerable are safe.
- There is a designated governor for safeguarding. Regular reports are made to keep governors up to date about safeguarding requirements. Checks are made by governors to make sure pre-employment checks meet requirements, and staff training covers all safeguarding matters.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Assessment of pupils' knowledge and skills across the curriculum lacks precision. For example, pupils study several subjects daily, but the depth of their learning is not clear. A new system for assessing and evaluating pupils' learning and progress has been implemented very recently; however, it has not had enough time to have impact.
- There is some strong practice in the use of assessment information to challenge and extend pupils' thinking and reasoning. For example, middle-school pupils discussed the implications of Octavius's rule during the golden age of Rome from different perspectives. However, teachers do not use assessment information to deepen pupils' learning, in particular that of the most able.
- Not all teachers have the knowledge and skills to adapt their teaching to meet the learning needs of pupils with SEND. As a result, these pupils do not make strong progress in the lower and middle schools.
- Improvements in the teaching of mathematics have ensured that pupils are well practised in using and applying the basic mathematical skills. Pupils enjoy the different levels of challenge they are presented with in lessons. Middle-school pupils, for example, articulated their mathematical reasoning and worked well together to solve problems.

- Leaders identified some weaknesses in the teaching of writing and have worked closely with teachers to address these. There has been a greater focus on improving pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling. This has resulted in improved progress and attainment in writing for pupils across the school.
- Pupils start learning to read in class 1, in accordance with the school's philosophy of child development. Although initial progress is slow, this changes soon, as pupils are immersed in the joy of books and reading comprehension. Most teachers are skilful in modelling reading, for instance by showing pupils how to probe a text thoroughly to find answers and make inferences.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct. They establish a productive working atmosphere, and there are good relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils. This means that time in lessons is spent on learning, and is reflected in pupils' good attitudes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. Pupils understand how to manage risk. They understand the risks of using the internet and social media.
- Pupils are interested in each other's ideas and show a high level of respect for each other. They support each other well and encourage those who are less sure of themselves. Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding and acceptance of their peers with SEND.
- Pupils know the boundaries and school rules, and are keen to apply them. They can explain these rules to others and talked confidently about keeping themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when working online. They understand what constitutes bullying and are confident that, when this does happen and is reported to an adult, swift action is taken to resolve the situation.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given high priority. Pupils take responsibility for organising fund-raising events for charity and learn how to be good citizens. They celebrate their own heritage and learn about other cultures. In assemblies, they share reflections. Pupils are knowledgeable about respect, tolerance and acceptance. They understand democracy linked to fair decision-making and the rule of law, and these are explicit in their school rules. Pupils can talk in depth about the school values of kindness, honesty and humility.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- The school is a calm and welcoming place where pupils conduct themselves admirably well, inside the classroom and around the school.

- Pupils are keen to behave well and to participate in a wide range of activities. They demonstrate remarkably good manners when having their morning snacks and lunch in their classrooms.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. 'It's a place where everyone gets educated well,' was typical of the pupils' comments. Pupils are courteous, well mannered and confident to engage in conversation. They listen well to adults and their peers, and show respect for the views of others. They play cooperatively in the 'woodlands' (playground), and move around the school in an orderly way.
- School leaders set high standards for attendance and punctuality, and pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. Attendance is in line with the national average and improving; repeated absence has fallen dramatically.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Scrutiny of pupils' work in a wide range of subjects shows that many do not make good progress in relation to their starting points. Sometimes this is due to lack of challenge or too low an expectation of what pupils are capable of achieving. For example, pupils' science work contains a lot of description about practical work, but little analysis and evaluation of what has been learned. Clear progression in knowledge and skills across all classes is not evident in some subjects' curriculum plans, for example handwork.
- The achievement of pupils with SEND requires improvement because of the imprecise monitoring of their progress to match work to their abilities. In class, the quality of support these pupils receive from teachers and teaching assistants is variable.
- All pupils from Class 2 take the Wide ranging achievement test (WRAT) on a regular basis, at least once a year. The standards that pupils reach are generally below average in the lower classes. Standards are consistently broadly average in Classes 4 to 7.
- Once pupils start learning to read in the lower school, most pick up the skills quickly. By the time pupils reach Classes 5 and 6, many confidently read challenging texts. They share their opinion about their choices, and express preferences for authors. Pupils show a good understanding of an author's intent and style, and can relate this to their writing.
- Pupils' writing in English shows that, when they are challenged, many are confident writers and can use adventurous vocabulary. Spelling attempts are appropriate for their age. The presentation of work and handwriting is of a high standard in pupils' 'main lesson' books. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to write for different types of audience across the curriculum. This limits the progress many are clearly capable of making.
- French and German are taught in all classes, and pupils make strong progress over time. Effective strategies are used, linked to pupils' age and stage of learning, to develop pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is improving strongly across the school. For example, many can apply their understanding of number to a range of mathematical word problems, and explain their reasoning verbally and in writing.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leaders are determined that every child in the early years is happy, safe and receives a high-quality start to school life in a nurturing environment. This is achieved very successfully. For example, leaders track children's progress in detail, spotting and addressing quickly any gaps in learning.
- Teaching in the early years is outstanding. All staff have an excellent understanding of the early years curriculum. They plan highly engaging learning activities which meet not only the needs of every child, but also their interests. Staff have high expectations of what all children can achieve and use every opportunity to take their learning forward. Consequently, children make exceptional progress throughout the early years.
- The majority of children start school with skills and abilities in line with those typically expected for their age. Staff check carefully where children are in their learning to ensure that teaching provides them with a suitable level of challenge. Staff are astutely aware of any child with SEND. Excellent support is provided for these children, to ensure that they make strong progress in their learning.
- Staff immerse children in a language-rich environment, for example by routinely reading to them stories and poems rich in vocabulary and vivid imagery. Children readily absorb the language and quickly learn to communicate effectively. As a result, children make excellent progress in developing their speaking and listening skills.
- Children have frequent opportunities to learn indoors and outside. During the inspection, children thoroughly enjoyed measuring and weighing ingredients to make their own bread. Practical activities such as this allow children to develop their mathematical skills and understanding.
- Relationships between children and staff are remarkably strong. As a result of the excellent care, guidance and support staff provide, children grow quickly into confident individuals who are keen to tackle any challenge they may face. Children show a high level of respect to all staff, and follow routines from a very early age. For example, they line up sensibly, wait patiently when taking turns and show excellent manners when having their lunch.
- All the independent school standards are met, along with the early years safeguarding and welfare requirements. Appropriate paediatric first aid is in place, and all staff know, understand and apply the safeguarding policies and procedures.

School details

Unique reference number	132066
DfE registration number	203/6299
Inspection number	10085335

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	173
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Lucy Beverley
Chair	Lucy Beverley
Headteacher	Adrian Dow
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,100
Telephone number	020 8858 4404
Website	https://www.greenwichsteinerschool.org.uk/
Email address	hr@greenwichsteinerschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 May 2007

Information about this school

- Greenwich Steiner School is an independent co-educational day school registered for pupils aged between three and 14 years.
- It is situated in a residential area in the London Borough of Greenwich. There are five Kindergarten classes, three on the main school site and two at the nearby St George's Church.
- The Kindergarten classes include 63 children aged from rising three to six plus. Those up to age five follow the early years foundation stage (EYFS) curriculum, with agreed

exemptions from the Department for Education. The early years provision is exempt from teaching phonics, technology and some aspects of mathematics.

- Admission to the school is non-selective. There are 173 pupils on the roll, of whom 61 children, aged between three and five years old, are in the Kindergarten. Currently, there are five classes in the lower school and two classes in the middle school.
- The school has identified 10 pupils with SEND.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2016. He is supported by a senior leadership team. The governing body is the proprietorial body of the school.
- The school follows the Steiner Waldorf curriculum. Steiner's philosophy and his views on child development and psychology underpin the school's educational approach.
- No pupils are in the care of the local authority.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and a wide range of staff, including members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes in a range of subjects. Several sessions were observed jointly with the headteacher and some members of the leadership team. Inspectors carried out scrutiny of pupils' work in several subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Inspectors held a meeting with seven governors (proprietors), including the chair of the governing body. They also held separate meetings with two groups of pupils and the school's improvement partner.
- Inspectors considered the 47 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire from parents. They also considered the 22 responses received from staff.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including: leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness; analysis of the school's performance data; information relating to the attendance and behaviour of pupils; safeguarding and child protection records; and minutes from governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Nasim Butt, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Matt Tiplin

Ofsted Inspector

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