

Inspection of Greenholm School

95 Brighton Road, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5SJ

Inspection dates: 15 to 17 November 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is a safe place. Pupils are happy and well cared for here. They have strong and trusting professional relationships with staff. When any bullying happens, adults deal with it swiftly. Pupils attend school regularly.

Pupils know that leaders expect them to do their best. Pupils work hard to live up to the school's ambitions to aspire and thrive. Leaders ensure that all pupils benefit from a broad curriculum. This stimulates pupils' interests and matches their individual needs. Pupils leave school, including the sixth form, with the qualifications that they need.

Pupils behave well. This helps them to learn successfully. Pupils settle into work quickly, which contributes to the school's calm and purposeful atmosphere. Staff expect pupils to do well. Their high expectations support pupils' strong knowledge across many subjects.

Leaders ensure that pupils' education goes beyond academic subjects. Pupils develop personally and socially through the many experiences provided by staff. They enjoy programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Pupils support local community projects, visit local attractions, and raise money for local charities. They understand the importance of respecting differences that people have.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The headteacher, senior leaders and the proprietor body ensure that the curriculum is ambitious. Leaders' curricular thinking builds pupils' knowledge in a logical order. Leaders provide a broad range of subjects that prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education and future careers. This includes opportunities for further study or work experience beyond Years 10 and 11, and the sixth form. Teachers mostly have strong subject knowledge. They benefit from regular training.

Across most subjects, pupils achieve well. Teachers check that pupils understand and remember what they have been taught. In a minority of subjects, the curriculum is not as well organised. Pupils do not build their knowledge as securely as they could. This is because the content that pupils learn is not sequenced in as suitable an order. In these subjects, teaching does not typically support pupils sufficiently well to remember more over time.

Leaders are determined to help pupils to develop their personal, social, emotional and academic knowledge. Staff encourage pupils to gain the skills needed to live happy and productive lives. Leaders have established effective procedures for assessing pupils' skills and abilities. These early assessments help teachers to develop ambitious programmes of learning for each pupil. However, leaders' systems are not as precise as they could be in identifying pupils' phonic knowledge. Leaders

are working to improve how they assess pupils' phonics to reflect the school's new phonics programme.

Leaders ensure that pupils read widely and often. They provide pupils with opportunities to read during lessons and at other times in the school day. Pupils typically learn to read confidently. Teachers check skilfully that pupils understand what they are reading.

Teachers encourage pupils to go into further education after leaving school. Pupils attain GCSEs in various subjects and study vocational qualifications. This has led to some pupils to gaining entrance to universities. Pupils acquire the skills, knowledge and confidence needed for independent living.

Staff use well-structured programmes of study which build on pupils' different skills and knowledge. For pupils who find it difficult to retain information, teachers provide effective support to embed key content. Teachers provide pupils with regular practice in mathematics, for example. This helps to improve pupils' accurate calculation strategies to solve problems well.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work are excellent. Staff ensure that pupils' attendance is high. They encourage pupils to do their very best to succeed. Teachers and teaching assistants have a deep knowledge and understanding of pupils' individual needs. This enables them to plan appropriate activities in many subjects. For example, in science, staff helped pupils to investigate the characteristics of light using well-selected resources.

Leaders provide a diverse range of opportunities for pupils to develop their learning beyond their academic subjects. They take part in a range of clubs and projects in the community. Pupils are encouraged to understand and appreciate the culturally diverse nature of British society. They are taught about different types of relationships and family structures. Pupils are helped to understand the principles of democracy. They elect school council members, set meeting agendas and post meeting resolutions on the school's notice board. Pupils are taught to treat others fairly. Staff help pupils to access a substantial range of careers information and independent advice.

Most parents and carers are very positive about the school. They were especially complimentary about the positive impact of the school on their children. Staff enjoy working at the school and felt well supported. Leaders consider staff's workload carefully. The school's accessibility plan complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Members of the proprietor body have worked closely with the headteacher to strengthen lines of communication, support and accountability. These arrangements help to ensure that the school meets all the independent school standards. The proprietor body's work to meet other requirements, such as the health, safety and welfare of pupils, is comprehensive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Senior leaders and the proprietor body do all they can to minimise any potential risks or harm to pupils. The school has a comprehensive safeguarding policy available to parents and published on its website. It takes account of the latest statutory guidance. Leaders work closely with external agencies to support vulnerable pupils.

All members of staff are vigilant in adhering to the school's safeguarding procedures. They have a deep insight into pupils' vulnerabilities and are expert at spotting any signs of neglect and abuse. Pupils are taught about the risks of working online and using social media.

What does the school need to improve

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In a very small number of subjects, the content and delivery of the curriculum are not as well organised as they could be. As a result, pupils do not learn as well as they should over time in these subjects. Leaders should continue their work to organise the sequencing and delivery of these subjects more coherently, so that pupils learn and remember important knowledge across the whole curriculum.
- Leaders do not identify pupils' phonics knowledge as accurately as they could. This means that pupils do not receive all the targeted support they need to help develop reading fluency. Leaders should ensure that they use precise assessment information of pupils' phonics ability that reflects the new phonics programme.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	135801
DfE registration number	319/6074
Local authority	Sutton
Inspection number	10242740
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	117
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	39
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Witherslack Group Limited
Chair	Steve Bacon
Headteacher	Francesca Arocas
Annual fees (day pupils)	£50,543 to £96,814
Telephone number	020 86611419
Website	www.witherslackgroup.co.uk
Email address	admin@witherslackgroup.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 to 5 July 2018

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, Witherslack Group Limited has become the new proprietor body. It was appointed on 4 January 2022. A new chair of the proprietor body was appointed on 1 September 2022.
- Most pupils start school with large gaps in their learning. The school caters for pupils with autism and additional needs such as ADHD, speech and language difficulties, sensory issues and associated behavioural difficulties. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities and have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, and personal, social and health education. This involved discussions with leaders and teachers, visits to classrooms, looking at examples of pupils' work and discussions with pupils.
- Inspectors also considered other subjects as part of the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, representatives of the proprietor body, the operations manager and the regional director. They also spoke with members of the senior leadership team, including the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, school self-evaluation and assessment information, and scrutinised documentary information to check on the statutory requirements of the independent school standards.
- Inspectors considered written responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, responses to the online survey for staff and responses to the online pupil survey. Inspectors spoke with pupils and staff throughout the course of the inspection to gather their views.

Inspection team

Phil Garnham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lascelles Haughton

His Majesty's Inspector

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