

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Greenside School

Shephall Green, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG2 9XS

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Inspection dates:

11 and 12 February 2025

## **Outcome**

Greenside School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy coming to Greenside School. They appreciate the warm welcome they receive from staff when they arrive in the morning. This helps pupils to quickly settle into class. Staff are attentive to pupils' specific needs. They have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. This helps pupils to be ready to learn.

Pupils value making new friends. They enjoy talking about books on the way to visit the library in a local secondary school. Lunchtime is a positive time of the day. Some pupils chat while sitting together to eat their lunch. Others eagerly look forward to playing their favourite card games with staff. All of this builds the positive relationships that exist here.

Pupils build their confidence through the school's well-considered personal, social, health and economic curriculum. Integral to much of this is the individualised swimming sessions all pupils receive. This is a highlight of the week for many pupils. These life skills are further enhanced through the opportunities pupils have when visiting the local community. Residential trips or catching the bus to the supermarket helps to teach pupils important social skills. This prepares pupils well for life after school.

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

The school has set out what it expects pupils to learn across the different curriculum pathways they follow. The school provides staff with worthwhile training, so they understand how to teach the curriculum. This helps staff to match the planned curriculum to pupils' specific needs, such as set out in their education, health and care (EHC) plan. Typically, staff have the subject knowledge they need to tailor the curriculum to pupils' needs. For example, staff use well-chosen resources to enable pupils to secure important mathematical knowledge, such as the value of money or how to tell the time. This helps

pupils to achieve well. However, there are some inconsistencies in the subject knowledge of staff. Sometimes, the support that staff provide does not closely align with what pupils need, to secure their understanding. When this happens, pupils do not build on their learning as well as the school wants them to.

Communication is the bedrock of the curriculum. From the moment children join in the Reception Year there is a sharp focus on pupils learning to communicate. This focus continues successfully throughout the school. Staff help pupils to communicate in a range of ways. Some pupils use pictures and symbols. Others use specifically chosen technology. This helps pupils to interact with adults and with each other well.

Reading is a central part of all pathways. Pupils enjoy listening to stories. Pupils benefit from carefully chosen sensory activities such as squelching through the mud when listening to a favourite book. This helps to make reading and story times a special part of the school day. Pupils who are ready to learn more formal strategies to read independently do so well. These pupils delight in reading their book to someone else.

Staff understand how to help pupils to manage their feelings and emotions. They teach pupils useful ways to regulate their own behaviours. This helps pupils to feel calm when they need to. The newly expanded wellbeing and behaviour team provide additional, effective support for staff should they require it. Staff especially appreciate it when members of these teams check on their wellbeing. This helps staff to offer the support pupils require.

The school has clear ways checking on the attendance of pupils. Attendance is a high priority. The school works collaboratively with families to help to break down the barriers that pupils may face about attending school regularly. It has success with much of this work.

Pupils are well equipped for their futures. Preparation for adulthood is well aligned to individual pupils needs. Older pupils have opportunities to carry out work experience. They delight in running the school shop at 'The Hyde'. Work experience is closely linked to what pupils want to achieve in their next stages of life. Pupils learn in the community through well considered visits to local shops and farms. The school carefully considers how to support pupils to transition to their next stages. This prepares pupils well for their future.

There have been some changes to staffing recently. These include changes to both governors and leaders. The school is beginning to develop a clearer understanding of where to prioritise future school improvement priorities. Governors are building their understanding of the effectiveness of leaders' actions to improve the school. This includes the impact of leaders work to support staff in their roles. Staff appreciate many of the improvements leaders have made. However, some of the school's monitoring is underdeveloped. There is not a clear understanding at the school, including by governors, about the impact of some of the school's work on the quality of education on offer.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### What does the school need to do to improve?

#### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, the school does not ensure that staff have enough expertise or understanding of how to teach the curriculum. Consequently, there are some inconsistencies in the pedagogy and subject knowledge of staff. This leads to instances where teaching does not effectively support pupils' needs. When this happens pupils do not build on what they already know and can do as well as they could. The school should ensure all staff have the expertise they need to match the support they offer more precisely to pupils' needs.
- There is a lack of clarity in how leaders, including governors, monitor the impact of some aspects of the school's work. This means the school does not have a full enough understanding of what is working well and what is not. This limits the school's ability to shape its priorities about future school improvement. Leaders, including governors, should ensure they have effective ways to check on the school's work. This is so they can better identify where to make improvements in the quality of education on offer.

## Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good overall effectiveness in January 2020.

## 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.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117690
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10366649
<b>Type of school</b>	Special school
<b>School category</b>	Maintained special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	190
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	25
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Claire Streets
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alex Tomkins
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.greenside.herts.sch.uk">www.greenside.herts.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	29 and 30 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Greenside School is registered to admit children from the age of two-years-old. There are currently no two- or three-year-old children on roll.
- The school has class bases at two other sites. There are two classes at The Hyde, Shephall, Stevenage, SG2 9SE. There are also two classes in the grounds of Barnwell Middle School, Shephall, Stevenage, SG2 9XR.
- There have been significant changes to leadership recently. The headteacher joined the school in January 2024. Two deputy headteachers and an assistant headteacher took up post in January 2025. Another assistant headteacher was appointed in September 2024. The chair of governors was appointed in January 2025.
- All pupils have an EHC plan. Pupils have a range of learning needs. Most pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and/or complex autism.

- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## **Information about this inspection**

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons across all three sites, spoke to pupils and looked at evidence of pupils' learning.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, a range of senior and middle leaders, staff and governors. The lead inspector also met with a representative of the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including behaviour logs, bullying records, attendance records, pupil records, minutes of governing body meetings, records of local authority monitoring visits, school development plans and school policies.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and the Ofsted online staff survey.

## **Inspection team**

Michael Williams, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Catherine Wilson

Ofsted Inspector

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