

Inspection of Greenholm School

95 Brighton Road, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5SJ

Inspection dates: 15 to 17 July 2025

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?

This school prioritises preparing pupils for their futures. All staff understand the role they play in helping pupils to identify and achieve their ambitions. They have high aspirations for what pupils can accomplish academically, socially and personally. As a result, pupils typically achieve well and are ready for their next steps.

Staff make it their business to understand each pupil's strengths, interests and behavioural needs. This helps them swiftly identify when changes in behaviour may be out of the ordinary for their pupils. Staff use this knowledge exceptionally well to provide pupils with personalised support to manage their emotions. As a result, pupils settle quickly and feel safe. Furthermore, for many pupils, incidents of behaviour reduce over time. Consequently, the school is a calm and settled environment.

Pupils are provided with a plethora of opportunities and experiences that prepare them well for adulthood. They learn about important life skills such as travel training, budgeting and first aid. Pupils hear from a broad range of guest speakers on topics such as careers and the dangers of knife crime. Students in the sixth form attend an extensive offer of work experience placements, for example at local sports teams, with charities or in site maintenance.

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

Since the previous inspection, there have been some changes to leadership across the school. This includes senior, middle and curriculum leaders. Leaders have identified and strengthened several aspects of the school's work. They have put in place intelligent actions, which have improved outcomes for pupils, for example the sequencing and progression of curriculum knowledge and skills. This supports pupils to build and deepen their understanding of subjects securely over time. However, there is some variability in the oversight of the quality of provision. This means that sometimes the school does not have a secure understanding of the effectiveness of some aspects of the curriculum.

In lessons, pupils mostly practise and recall what they have learned before. Teachers use questions well to check on pupils' understanding. This means that pupils are mostly ready to move on to new and more complex learning because they have the foundations to build upon. However, occasionally, adaptations to pupils' work or resources to support learning are not sharply tailored to pupils' individual needs. This means that sometimes pupils do not have the right support needed to practise, strengthen and develop their knowledge and skills.

The school has strengthened its curriculum for reading by putting in place a new phonics programme. This is helping pupils to make progress in learning the skills of early reading. Teachers routinely check how well pupils are developing the phonics skills and knowledge they need. Pupils who fall behind benefit from the extremely

prompt support they receive. They read books that match the sounds they are learning. Consequently, they become increasingly confident and fluent readers.

Students in the sixth form follow personalised pathways that prepare them for adulthood and their next steps in education, employment or training. This includes gaining the necessary qualifications or accreditations for further education. The school develops students' personal independence and preparedness for employment well. It achieves this through weekly discussions about mental health and support with job applications and practice interviews.

The school provides an extensive range of activities that help develop pupils' interests, resilience, confidence and independence. These include sporting competitions, performing Shakespeare and running school enterprises. Pupils and students in the sixth form attend weekly learning in the community. For example, they regularly visit the local high street, restaurants and supermarkets. They practise what they have learned in real-life situations.

Pupils' development is further enriched through a comprehensive range of opportunities such as visits to museums, the theatre and learning to play musical instruments. They have the chance to take on roles and responsibilities in the school, for example as members of the school council and eco-committee. All these opportunities further develop pupils' character and self-esteem and prepare them extremely well for life in modern Britain.

Staff value the in-depth training they receive in relation to behaviour management. This provides staff with the knowledge and expertise needed to support pupils' behaviour and well-being strongly. The multi-agency team of clinical, pastoral and teaching staff work alongside each other to personalise behaviour strategies. These help pupils to manage their frustrations or worries very effectively. As a result, learning in classrooms takes place with minimal interruption, and pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning.

Pupils attend school regularly. The school has robust procedures in place to improve pupils' attendance, where falling attendance rates raise concerns about frequent absence. For example, individualised attendance plans help pupils by identifying and putting in place tailored support that helps pupils to attend school. These plans include support from the school's on-site team of health professionals. As a result, the attendance of many pupils improves over time.

The proprietor, school-based leaders and executive leaders carefully ensure that the independent school standards (the standards) are consistently met. Leaders ensure that there are mechanisms in place to check the well-being and feelings of staff about their workload. They put actions in place to address staff concerns. This has a positive impact on staff's well-being and workload. Leaders have ensured that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- On a few occasions, adaptations to the work set for pupils and the resources to support learning lack precision. This means that some pupils do not have the right support to practise, strengthen and develop new knowledge and skills. The school should ensure that teaching is adapted successfully so that all pupils are well supported in their learning.
- Some aspects of the school's work lack strategic oversight. This means that on occasion, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of provision. The school should ensure that it strengthens oversight of its work.

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	10391749
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 20
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	119
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	31
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Witherslack Group
Chair	Steve Bacon
Headteacher	Christopher Pitts
Annual fees (day pupils)	£83,163 to £123,621
Telephone number	020 8661 1419
Website	www.witherslackgroup.co.uk/our-locations/our-schools/greenholm-school/
Email address	greenholm@witherslackgroup.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 to 17 November 2022

Information about this school

- This is an independent special school for pupils with autism. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The head teacher took up their post in September 2023.
- Pupils are placed and funded by a wide range of local authorities
- The proprietor, Witherslack Group, runs 36 other schools.
- The school operates across two sites. Greenholm School is based at 95 Brighton Road, Sutton, Surrey, SM2 5SJ. There is also a sixth-form provision located at Strawberry Lodge Campus, Carshalton, Sutton, SM5 2NQ.
- The school makes use of one unregistered 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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

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

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the proprietor body, the headteacher and other school leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum documentation, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss special educational needs and/or disabilities, assessment, pupils' behaviour and provision for pupils' wider development.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including that relating to the standards, leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and documents relating to pupils' attendance.
- As part of their checks on the standards, inspectors made a tour of the school

premises, accompanied by leaders.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of the school, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and honest culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at lunchtime. They spoke with some pupils about their experiences of school life. The lead inspector considered responses to the online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View, and Ofsted's survey for pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.

Inspection team

Kieran Bird, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Christian Hicks

His Majesty's Inspector

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