

Green Lane Community Special School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111495
Local Authority	Warrington
Inspection number	288973
Inspection dates	2–3 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael McDowell

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	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	128
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Patricia Chapman
Headteacher	Mr Paul King
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2001
School address	Green Lane Padgate Warrington Cheshire WA1 4JL
Telephone number	01925 480128
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Age group	4–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Green Lane is a community special school. All of the pupils have statements of special educational need because they have moderate or severe learning difficulties. An increasing proportion have complex communication difficulties, including autistic spectrum disorders. Almost all of the pupils are White British and all come from English speaking backgrounds. Most join the school in the Foundation Stage but a very small minority come to Green Lane from mainstream schools at around age 11.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Overall, the school is outstandingly effective. While because of acknowledged special educational needs, pupils' standards are well below average, their achievement is exceptional. Irrespective of the age at which they start, pupils swiftly respond to the supportive ethos of the school. Their confidence as learners is boosted and they begin to make significant progress. Children in the Foundation Stage reach the challenging targets set for them as they move towards their learning goals. Across the age range, the great majority meet or exceed the targets set for them in each subject. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are very successful in gaining external accreditation for their work. These successes are largely due to the high quality of teaching. Teachers have very good understanding of how to help their pupils overcome their learning difficulties. The teaching of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders is of the highest quality. The curriculum is good and is continuing to improve. There is a broadening range of opportunities for older pupils to have their work accredited and receive due recognition for their learning. Many opportunities are also provided for pupils to learn outside of the classroom and beyond the school day. Excellent care, guidance, and support are given. The school takes rigorous steps to safeguard health and safety and ensure that pupils are protected. It tracks pupils' progress thoroughly and gives them clear guidance about what they should do in order to improve. The school liaises effectively with parents, who are overwhelmingly supportive of its work. It is mindful of the particular needs of its most vulnerable pupils and acts with other agencies to ensure that these are acknowledged and met.

The personal development of pupils is excellent. They thoroughly enjoy being at Green Lane and attend well. Over their time in school they become personable, happy and increasingly independent young people who are aware of the needs of others and keen to be helpful. Those who are sufficiently mature are fully aware of the importance of diet and exercise in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Pupils understand and keep the rules that make the school a safe and pleasant place. They are not fearful about bullying and they know that there are adults to whom they can turn at need. They view the school as their own community and are spontaneous in praising and supporting one another.

Leadership and management are outstanding. In successfully coping with significant change in the nature of the learning difficulties and disabilities of pupils referred to it, the school has developed very effective provision for those with autistic spectrum disorders. It has also improved the quality of its provision for pupils with more general learning difficulties. Monitoring procedures are good and the school has recently gathered sufficient information about pupils' progress to enable it to compare their achievement with that of similar pupils in other schools. Currently this is not done, so opportunities for the school to gain further helpful information about its performance are lost. Governance is highly effective. The school has made very significant improvement since the last inspection and is excellently placed to continue to improve. It provides outstanding value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further develop understanding of the school's performance in comparison to other, similar, schools.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding. In the Foundation Stage class, children rapidly develop their communication skills. Signing and picture exchange communication are used very effectively. Children make very good progress towards challenging individual targets and broader learning goals. Beyond the Foundation Stage and across the age range, the rate of learning of most pupils remains very high. An outstanding feature of the progress made by all pupils, whatever their starting points, is that it is sustained and continuous. It is also consistent across all areas of learning. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the already very good performance in literacy and communication has recently been boosted by the introduction of a reading scheme that is very well matched to pupils' understanding and interests. Pupils in Key Stage 3 benefit from well resourced subject specialist teaching. All pupils make gains and a significant majority reach or exceed what is expected of them in all subjects year on year. In Key Stage 4, pupils follow accredited courses with outstanding success. In 2006, all those who left at the end of Year 11 were awarded the Associated Schools Direct Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Silver or Silver Challenge award, and all gained a grade in the GCSE art examination in the range C to E. Pupils currently in Years 10 and 11 are on course to repeat this success and to add to it. About half the pupils in Year 10 are studying for the GCSE examination in physical education at a local high school. In addition, all in Year 11 are entered for GCSE art and for the Entry Level examinations in mathematics, information and communication technology, science and English. Given their very low starting points, it is remarkable that pupils are following accredited courses at this level with every prospect of success.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of the pupils is outstanding. It is clear from their excellent behaviour and from the affectionate and positive manner in which they relate to one another that they are very happy to be in school. This is confirmed by their good attendance. When they talk about school they dwell on the many things that they like rather than on any difficulties. The school council is an articulate and cheery group. They understand they are representatives. They are sure that their voice is heard by the school and acted upon. They are proud to have brought about helpful changes. Pupils understand that a proper diet and sufficient exercise are very important to their well-being and they choose carefully from the varied and balanced meals the school provides. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. They have great consideration for the needs and feelings of others. Older or more able pupils assist the younger and less able without being told. The good work of classmates is greeted with cheers and applause. Within the community of the school, and beyond it, pupils are eager to help where they can. Personal independence is encouraged and grows very well. Older pupils move very confidently towards the next stage of their lives beyond school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants alike have excellent understanding of pupils' capabilities. They use their knowledge and experience very effectively to enable their pupils to learn. They keep track of their progress and set them challenging targets. There is always an adult on hand to help pupils with difficulties and to point out the next step. The needs of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders are very well met by meticulous individual planning and skilful classroom organisation. There is excellent use of alternative and augmented communication. For example, the picture exchange communication system is effectively used to inform and respond to pupils who are without speech. This enables them to feel secure and much more aware of what is expected of them. Teachers use sign language consistently to make the meaning of what they say clear. Because of these exceptionally good arrangements pupils are calm and strongly focused on learning. Teachers have good specialist subject knowledge and manage behaviour gently and effectively. Lessons are happy and enjoyable, and pupils are pleased with what they achieve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of individual learners well. It caters very well for the development of communication skills among younger pupils and those with more complex communication difficulties. The full range of subjects required by the National Curriculum, and religious education, is taught to all pupils at levels that match their capabilities. The school is in the process of developing a secondary school approach, with specialist subject teaching, for pupils in Years 7 to 9. Recently, further externally accredited courses have been introduced for pupils in Years 10 and 11. These pupils are now entered for two GCSE examinations and four Entry Level examinations as well as for the ASDAN awards. The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. There are many opportunities for pupils to make visits, including residential visits in England and abroad. It maintains its sense of community through whole-school assemblies and the thoroughly enjoyable weekly sing-along sessions. There are strong links with neighbouring mainstream schools and colleges in which older pupils have some of their lessons. Pupils are prepared well for life after school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding and contribute to pupils' excellent personal development. The school is highly committed to the welfare of its pupils. It monitors all aspects of their development and ensures that they make as much progress as possible. Policies and procedures to keep pupils safe and healthy are in place and frequently reviewed. Assessments of risks to pupils involved in the extensive programme of out-of-school activities are extremely detailed and lead to staff who are involved being confident and thoroughly prepared for their roles. Pupils are greatly encouraged to lead healthy lives. They are also helped to develop their independence, for example through learning to travel unsupervised to school and helping to shape the school's development through the school council. The school provides pupils with the opportunity to learn alongside others of similar age in mainstream schools and colleges. It makes effective use of outside agencies, for example to offer pupils good careers advice and

work-related learning opportunities. Links with external agencies, including social services, are very effective. Excellent care is taken to ensure that the needs of especially vulnerable pupils and their families are recognised and met.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school has outstanding leadership and excellent management. The headteacher is very experienced and hugely enthusiastic about the successes of the school. He is, however, realistic about the improvements that still need to be made. His leadership is exceptional. The deputy headteacher and others in the senior leadership team share his pride in the school. All are agreed that pupils' personal development and academic achievement are of equal importance. This ideal is strongly promoted by the extensive inclusion arrangements that have been developed with neighbouring schools. Management is very efficient and effective. Planning for improvement is well focused on essential matters such as curriculum development or making the best provision for older pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. The school has successfully carried out plans to develop the playground to better suit the needs of pupils of different ages and with different difficulties, and to broaden the range of accredited courses it offers. The issues for improvement from the last inspection have all been addressed. The school evaluates its performance well. It measures the progress of its pupils against appropriate scales and uses this data to set challenging individual targets. However, it does not use it to compare the progress of its pupils with that of pupils in other schools who have similar starting points. Governance is much improved. Governors are very well informed about the school and are regular visitors. They challenge the school well, for example by setting appropriate targets for the headteacher. The school liaises very well with parents, who have the highest regard for its work.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for your friendliness and kindness when I visited your school last week. Lots of you took the time to talk to me and to help me when I was in the playground or the dining hall. It made my job of inspecting your school a real pleasure and I will always remember your cheerfulness and good manners.

From talking to you I learned that you enjoy coming to school and like, very much, Green Lane and all the adults who work with you. You told me that you feel safe at school and always have someone to whom you can turn if you need help or advice. When we talked about school dinners it was clear that you knew which foods were good for you and tried to choose your meal carefully. Lots of you were very pleased with the new equipment in the playground and quite keen for me to watch as you showed how well you can balance or jump.

From talking to Mr King and the staff, and through seeing your work and being in your lessons, I am happy to say that your school is excellent. You do extremely well in your lessons because teaching is outstanding and teachers are careful to make sure that the things they give you to do are interesting - and that you are able to do them! You are cared for and looked after very well. You are confident and friendly and extremely well behaved. You think of others and try to help whenever you can. Mr King and all of the staff work very hard to make sure that your school always does the best for you. Green Lane is excellently led and managed.

To help make the school even better, I have asked Mr King to try to find a way to compare what you achieve with the achievements of similar girls and boys who go to other schools.

Thank you once again for your help,