



Greenacre School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 133394
Local Authority Barnsley
Inspection number 294084
Inspection dates 27–28 September 2006
Reporting inspector Kath Halifax

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special	School address	Keresforth Hill Road
School category	Community special		Barnsley
Age range of pupils	3–19		South Yorkshire S70 6RG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01226 287165
Number on roll (school)	119	Fax number	01226 295328
Number on roll (6th form)	42		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr W Denton
		Headteacher	Mrs Susan Hayter
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–19	27–28 September 2006	294084

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Greenacre is the only special school in Barnsley. Pupils are those for whom mainstream schools are not currently able to meet their educational or behavioural needs. Whilst pupils are described as having severe or profound learning difficulties, many have additional needs associated with autism or sensory impairment. Of the pupils on roll, the great majority are of White British heritage. Very few pupils do not speak English as their main language, though their main need is communication. A very small number of pupils are looked after by the local authority. The few pupils currently in the Foundation Stage work in a class with Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. As a result of their learning difficulties, attainment on entry to the school for all pupils is well below expectations for pupils of their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The leadership team has been cautious in its self-evaluation. This is a good school with an outstanding sixth form known as Greenacre College. It provides good value for money. The school has made considerable improvement in the past two years under the excellent leadership of the visionary headteacher. Though initially apprehensive, parents, staff and governors are united in their praise commenting that, 'she has gone through this school like a dose of salts' and 'pulled it up by its bootstraps'.

In her time in post, the headteacher has drawn on the considerable skills of the assistant heads and formed a very effective team. Through restructuring the staff and reorganising classes so that pupils with autism and those with profound needs are educated with pupils of their age, all abilities are now achieving well. Overall, achievement is good because of effective teaching and a good curriculum. However, this is not consistently the case in all parts of school. Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in some classes in Years 7 to 10 affect the learning and rate of progress of a small number of pupils. This is particularly so when lessons are too easy or too hard. Foundation Stage pupils are provided for successfully in lessons with Years 1 and 2. The achievement of students in the college is outstanding because of the excellent provision.

Pupils make rapid gains in their personal development because of the good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance is satisfactory with absence mainly due to illness, though the headteacher has worked hard with families to clamp down on holidays in term time. Conscious that the school has an almost all White British population, care is taken to ensure pupils are aware of, and appreciate, different cultures.

Pupils receive good care, guidance and support. Procedures for keeping all pupils, including the most vulnerable, safe and healthy are in place and known to staff. Though parents expressed a concern about the small amount of therapy some pupils receive directly from therapists, therapists do work closely with teachers planning suitable and effective programmes, which are implemented by staff in the classrooms. This contributes significantly to pupils' well-being. Pupils with additional needs receive equally good support but a lack of aides to help them move around the school limits opportunities for the visually impaired and wheelchair users to be independent.

Leadership and management are good. The reorganisation of middle management is underway, but is too new to have had a significant impact. The considerable skills of the assistant heads and vision of the headteacher have been instrumental in encouraging staff to undertake new initiatives. For example, though less than a month into a joint curriculum innovation with the local secondary school, the 'Cool Project' is already reaping dividends especially in pupils' personal development. Managers know what the school does well and what needs to be improved. Though very few children enter the foundation department, the satisfactory provision is being reviewed and improved. The enthusiasm, commitment, skill and knowledge of the leadership team are the key to the school's good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

Greenacre College offers students outstanding opportunities to gain credible and relevant qualifications. It is exceptionally well managed and provides a far-reaching curriculum that prepares students extremely well for life after school. Students build successfully on their previous learning, following a wide range of nationally recognised awards leading, for example, to Duke of Edinburgh and City and Guilds awards. The college extends and refines students' life skills and effectively bridges the gap between education and the next step in their adult lives. Students mature into confident young adults with a realistic option of open employment. Furthermore, residential experiences at an outdoor centre test and bond students in activities that allow them to experience extreme physical and mental challenges. Students respond wonderfully to the opportunities provided and recognise they are prepared exceptionally well for their future lives. They are especially proud as they talk with enthusiasm how, with the help of family and the wider community, they prepared and participated in the glamorous social event, the Greenacre College Prom.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve consistency in the good quality of teaching in Years 7 to 10 so all pupils achieve well.
- Provide aides to enable pupils with visual impairment and wheelchair users to be more independent.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Though achievement is good, data show that last year, a small but significant number of pupils in Years 7 to 10 did not make the progress expected. While this has been partially remedied, inconsistencies in teaching still limit the progress of some pupils. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good gains, particularly in communication and numeracy. The achievement of pupils in Year 11 is very good with almost half attaining Level 1 Entry Level Certificates in at least one subject, and a significant number having four passes, including science, at Level 3. This lays a good foundation for students in the college who add vocational awards, City and Guilds Adult Numeracy and Literacy and certification in information and communication technology (ICT). In all age groups, pupils with an interest in sport and the creative arts are helped to develop their talents well. All are provided with a very wide range of sporting activities including athletics, dance and swimming and have won medals at national gatherings. Similarly, drama and music are fostered effectively through individual music lessons, workshops and productions. As a result, by the time students leave school, they have achieved awards such as Level 1 in performing arts from the National College of Further Education (NCFE).

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Pupils of all ages grow in confidence and self-esteem. They are thoughtful about each other and thrilled to bits at each other's and their own successes. Contributions by the school council are warmly received and listened to, and because pupils know they have an impact, for example, in improving the playground, they are prepared to make further suggestions. Pupils know the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They are aware of the difference between healthy and unhealthy foods and have a suitable understanding of how to keep safe. Behaviour is good and the focus on pupils' advocacy and access to counselling, gives pupils confidence that there is always someone to go to if they have worries. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Commemorating Holocaust Memorial Day, learning about different countries in Friendship Week, and celebrating Eid, lead to a broadening of pupils' understanding of different cultures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Teaching and learning are good overall because teachers and support staff work together as a team. Relationships with pupils are good, and praise is used effectively to raise pupils' confidence. Staff manage pupils with challenging behaviour well, resulting in a calm, orderly school where disruptions to learning are minimal. Assessment is used consistently to track progress and identify gaps in learning. Whilst teachers have many skills, on occasions in Years 7 to 10, some staff experience difficulties in planning consistently for the different abilities of pupils. Occasionally, those with the most profound or complex needs are not catered for sufficiently, especially where staff do not sign or use real objects. Conversely, some outstanding teachers ensure pupils learn at a remarkable rate, for example, with pupils confidently using the Internet, books and catalogues in making decisions and choices about how to spend large amounts of money.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum is contributing to improved standards, especially in ICT. Since the last inspection, the upgrading of resources and improvement in curriculum planning have improved particularly well in the secondary department. The innovative 'Cool Project' covers humanities and the creative arts, but its greatest contribution is to pupils'

personal development. Pupils' help choose some topics for learning such as diverse work on 'people we admire' and the desperate plight of Ugandans needing water. This is good practice. Children in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 have formed a very useful link with a nearby nursery which helps them extend their learning of new skills and contributes well to their social development.

Adaptations to the building have resulted in high quality accommodation, but a lack of, for example, automatic door openers and tactile points of reference mean wheelchair users and the visually impaired have difficulties moving around the school by themselves.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils' individual needs are supported well, especially through the weekly meeting of teachers and health professionals. Sensitive issues on relationships, and healthy and hygienic lifestyles are explored delicately to enable pupils to make an informed choice. Assessment of potential risks to health and safety is thorough. The family support worker provides highly effective support for pupils and their parents. Good links with outside agencies, such as the Connexions adviser, ensure that school draws on outside expertise to guide pupils' personal and academic decisions. Pupils know they matter. Their participation in the highly successful 'Have A Say' day alongside teachers, governors, and all who work with the school has resulted in improved school meals and better communication.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The leadership team is very successful. Under the guidance of the headteacher, they are not afraid to make tough decisions because they want the best for the pupils. The assistant heads, advanced skills and a lead teacher work at national level on assessment and curriculum development, and have brought initiatives to the school which are raising achievement. Staff, governors and parents now have a shared commitment to high standards, including becoming a specialist centre for communication and interaction. Though not all posts of responsibility are filled, the work of lead teachers for communication and language already contributes well to improved teaching and learning. The inception of 'Learning Walks' is enabling teachers, non-teaching staff and pupils to see what happens in other classes and, although in its early days, is already providing food for thought for staff as to how they can improve their practice. The creation of a technician post for ICT and the appointment of a business manager is taking considerable administrative work off teachers and leaders and enabling them to improve quality of teaching and learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	2
The behaviour of learners	2	1
The attendance of learners	3	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	1

The quality of provision

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

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	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

I know many of you find reading difficult so I have asked Mrs Hayter and your teachers to read this letter to you.

Mrs Mothersdale and I had a lovely time at your school. Thank you for helping us with our work and talking to us. We were pleased to see how well behaved you are and how much you enjoy your lessons.

WOW - isn't your college just something special. You have some wonderful opportunities and, alongside some of Year 11, achieve really hard qualifications. We were excited by your horticulture department, your work at Victoria Road, and thought your cakes in the Galaxy caf, were yummy (especially the chocolate muffins).

We think the staff work hard and prepare some really interesting work for you, especially as part of the 'Cool Project', though I know class S4 were a little disappointed that the œ1,000,000 was not real! Most teachers are successful in providing work for the different groups of pupils in each class, but sometimes this is not quite so good in the secondary department. So we have asked that activities be matched to the capabilities of all pupils, especially those of you with more complex and profound needs.

Your teachers work closely with the nurse and other health workers to make sure you are safe and well cared for. We really enjoyed the healthy food at lunchtime and think you are fortunate to have such a wonderful building. However, we noticed that some of you who have problems seeing and those who use wheelchairs have difficulty getting around by yourselves. So we have asked Mrs Hayter to put in some special switches and other things to make your life easier.

We really enjoyed our short time with you and wish you well for the future.