

The Greneway School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117542
Local Authority	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
Inspection number	312648
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2008
Reporting inspector	David Jones HMI

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	465
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jeff Gill
Headteacher	Mrs Susanne Kennedy
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2004
School address	Garden Walk Royston Hertfordshire SG8 7JF
Telephone number	01763243650
Fax number	01763241499

Age group	9–13
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized middle school is part of the three phase system that serves north east Hertfordshire. Cohort numbers and the ratio of girls and boys vary annually. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and of those who are learning English as an additional language is low. The area displays a standard range of social and economic characteristics. Attainment on entry is above average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average; however, the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has been awarded: Arts Mark Gold, NAACE accreditation, ICT (information communication technology) Mark, and most recently re-accreditation of Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The quality of education is satisfactory with a number of good and some outstanding features. Leadership and management have brought about steady improvement effectively in recent years. The school's capacity to improve is good.

Self-evaluation is generally accurate; senior managers have taken positive action to enhance key areas in need of development. Senior staff were invited to observe teaching with HMI; the views they expressed were, in general, a little more positive than the judgements given by inspectors. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. A significant number of lessons could have achieved a more positive grade if questioning had provided greater conceptual challenge; more needs to be done through monitoring and support to develop the quality of learning and the use of assessment information to enhance achievement. The need to identify and challenge the more able will be vital if the proposed Key Stage 3 curriculum changes are to be successful. The quality of some of the marking remains an area for further development.

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. The validated results of the 2007 Key Stage 2 national tests were above the national average, continuing a trend of steady improvement. Evidence from the school's sound assessment database, the scrutiny of the pupils' work and lesson observations confirm that achievement is at least satisfactory in all year groups. The school is working with other secondary schools locally to assume responsibility for the national tests at Key Stage 3.

Although girls are generally more successful than boys, there is no discernable difference between the progress made by those from different ethnic backgrounds, individuals with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their peers.

The pupils' personal development is outstanding and their behaviour is excellent. The pupils' very positive attitudes to learning were in evidence during an excellent Civil War historical enactment provided by the inspirational staff of 'Past Alive'. Care and pastoral support are very strong, although academic guidance and marking are more variable; overall, the quality of care, welfare and guidance is good.

Efforts to secure the pupils' future economic well-being have been enhanced by outstanding curriculum development; the range of extra-curricular opportunities provided is excellent.

The pupils are guided well towards healthy lifestyles by effective physical education provision and access to good quality school meals. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status, Sports Mark Gold and Active Mark Gold. Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. The overwhelmingly positive responses to the inspection questionnaire were encapsulated by one parent's comment: 'A beautifully run school, where my child is extremely happy.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Complete the refinement of the school's assessment data base to better inform teaching and learning.
- Raise standards of achievement by providing greater challenge.
- Ensure that teachers consistently apply the school's marking assessment policy.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The outcomes of the 2007 national tests for pupils age 11 were above the national average in English and mathematics; they were average in science. Achievement was satisfactory. The school has carried out extensive analysis of these results and has taken steps to address the variation in pupils' progress across these core subjects. The trend in results and achievement over time has improved since 2005.

Standards and achievement in Key Stage 3 are satisfactory but variation is evident. The results of the non-statutory Year 8 tests are stronger in mathematics than in English, where the school has identified that pupils' progress in writing is noticeably stronger than in reading.

Overall, pupils with learning difficulties/and or disabilities make satisfactory and often good progress. There are few pupils from an ethnic minority background but as individuals, they make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their school and consequently attendance is above average. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils are polite, helpful and friendly. They are keen to do well and work hard. A recent visitor to the school commented that the pupils 'displayed maturity far beyond their age'.

Pupils understand how to lead healthy lives. All participate in at least one extra-curricular sporting activity and they make healthy food choices. They demonstrate a very good understanding of health and safety issues and remember well their experience with 'Crucial Crew'.

Pupils willingly take on an extensive range of responsibilities. They compete to train as 'Active Listeners', this role is effective and much appreciated by their peers. Pupils are cooperative and very supportive of each other. They comment that bullying is rare, noting that it is dealt with quickly and effectively if it happens. School council members take their responsibilities seriously and influence what happens in school. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and use their initiative to plan and run very successful charity fund-raising events. Confidence and teamwork are developed effectively through music, drama and residential visits. Such high quality personal development ensures that pupils are very well prepared for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Approximately half of lessons are good or better with one in ten lessons are of the highest quality, almost all staff who were seen teach. Teachers are knowledgeable and their enthusiasm motivates pupils to learn. Staff-pupil relationships are very good and pupils enjoy their work.

The content of lessons is planned in detail but the use of assessment information is inconsistent; more needs to be done to fully engage pupils with different abilities. In some lessons, the matching of the task to the pupils' learning needs is inconsistent; as a result, able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Digital whiteboards are available in all rooms and greatly enhance learning; however, their full potential is utilised inconsistently. The majority of pupils' books display regular marking although teachers do not always provide comments that ensure pupils know what to do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and has some innovative features, French is taught in Year 5 and significant emphasis is given to physical education. Personal, social and health education and citizenship are delivered through other subjects and special day-long activities. The curriculum is reviewed annually; the time available is above average and well organised. As a result, the time devoted to English and mathematics activities in Years 5 and 6 has been increased and is above average without compromising the time available for foundation subjects. Access to ICT facilities and the use of digital whiteboards is very good. There is a strong emphasis on inclusion. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported effectively and provided with extra classes to help them make better progress.

An appropriate range of courses is provided in Years 7 and 8 and setting by ability in English, mathematics and science improves learning. The school is participating in a programme aimed to complete the requirements for Key Stage 3 in English, mathematics, science and ICT before they leave middle school. The impressive range of enrichment activities, which includes many sports and musical opportunities, is outstanding and enjoyed by significant numbers of pupils, all pupils attend at least one club. Pupils are involved in many competitions and grow well in confidence during their time in the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall, with some outstanding areas. Very effective transition procedures ensure Year 5 pupils quickly settle into the school and that Year 8 pupils are confident about transfer. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are secure. Staff are very supportive, pupils and parents appreciate their help. Vulnerable pupils receive excellent guidance and support. Pupils feel safe and note there is always someone to turn to if they need help. Good use is made of external support agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual education plans are well written and regularly reviewed. As a result, many achieve well. Systems for monitoring students' academic progress are in place, although data is held in many forms. Further refinements to this system are required to inform teaching and learning. Pupils have noticed inconsistencies in the quality of marking. They comment that the best tells them how well they are doing and gives them advice on how to improve. Pupils have learning targets but feel they are not updated promptly enough to be really helpful. Pupils enjoy assessing themselves, but not all teachers make best use of these strategies.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and her senior leadership team have succeeded in raising standards and in providing a supportive environment for all learners that promotes high quality care; as a result the pupils' personal development is outstanding. The curriculum provided is outstanding because of the time available for subjects and the range of extra-curricular opportunities available is particularly impressive.

The school sets challenging targets and is refining its extensive assessment data base into a more manageable format; however, more can be done with this information to raise attainment.

The school's self-evaluation is generally accurate; however, it is a little modest in its analysis of the curriculum and a little over positive in its assessment of teaching and learning. Equality of opportunity is promoted effectively and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can. Resources are deployed effectively and efficiently and the school provides satisfactory value for money. The minutes of the governing body's meetings provide a clear picture of their support for the school; governance is good.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

18 January 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Greneway Middle School, Royston, SG8 7JF

It was a great pleasure to visit your school recently and meet so many of you. The inspection team were impressed by the very good manners you displayed and the positive personal relationships we saw around the school.

The care and personal support available for you are very good but we agree with you that targets could be updated more quickly and marking could be more consistent to provide you with better academic guidance so you understand clearly how to improve. The school has a good range of assessment data from your tests but this could be used more often to provide you with greater challenge. Mrs Kennedy will explain how this is to develop.

The school has improved steadily in recent years and the variety of subjects you can study is outstanding. There is a wonderful range of extra-curricular opportunities and inspectors were pleased to see how many of you are involved.

Many of your parents took the time to write to me about your school, please give them my thanks. Their overwhelmingly positive letters were summed up by one parent's comment: 'A beautifully run school, where my child is extremely happy.'

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to Greneway and wish all of you success in the future.

David Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector