

Greenhall Community Special School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124524
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	314948
Inspection date	8 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Julia Coop

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2-5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	29
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	P J O'Leary
Headteacher	Karen Milligan
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Second Avenue Holmcroft Stafford ST16 1PS
Telephone number	01785 246159
Fax number	01785 215490

Age group	2-5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Greenhall is a small nursery that caters for children with physical difficulties. Nearly all children are from a White British background and come from English speaking homes. Most children have additional, medical or more severe and complex needs. They include sensory impairments, including autistic spectrum disorders, and speech and language delay. Since the previous inspection, an increasing proportion of children have profound and multiple learning needs. As a result of these learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the children's development is significantly delayed and they do not meet the goals expected for children of their age.

Greenhall is a Key Learning Centre for the local authority. It is commissioned to play a lead role in supporting and developing the authority's inclusion policy in relation to physical disabilities. It is the key provider for conductive education within the area. The school has received an Inclusion Award for its work from the local authority.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding Nursery that enables all children to get off to a superb start to their education whatever their learning, medical or more severe complex needs. The highly specialised setting is a very caring, friendly and supportive environment that enables the children to grow in confidence. This is the product of first-rate leadership and management and the highest quality teaching and curriculum. As a result, children make extremely rapid progress in a short time, no matter what their difficulty. This is because the expertise and specialisms of the staff are harnessed very well to ensure activities are very carefully adapted to meet each child's different needs. Children delight in coming to the Nursery each day. In addition, because they receive consistent guidance and support with lots of praise and encouragement they develop their personal and social skills very rapidly.

This remarkable Nursery succeeds exceptionally well in working in partnership with a wide range of medical and educational professionals and therapists. Children join the Nursery at age two and this very early start makes a considerable contribution to their learning, and their physical and personal development. Staff expertise in the development of children's physical skills is a unique and highly successful feature. A key success of this approach is the way that the Nursery very successfully helps many children overcome their early difficulties. Other specialist approaches are equally successful. Consequently, all children achieve exceptionally well and go on to succeed in other special or mainstream schools. Almost all parents are extremely pleased with the way the school communicates with them and listens to their views. They value the way that the Nursery goes out of its way to support them and their children, typically commenting that their children have 'improved so much' and 'it's a pity it's only a nursery school.'

The Nursery is not prepared to stand still in its mission to improve the quality of life for children and their families. Very detailed monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school help the leaders to identify what is working well and what needs to improve. Established procedures effectively record, assess and monitor the progress of children in the school, but these systems are not yet fully refined in order to assess and record children's increasingly complex, individual needs.

The governors, headteacher and deputy headteacher have adapted very well to the changes imposed by falling numbers and their increased role in outreach work. They are working very hard to raise their profile within the community and local authority, so that their expertise and successful record of accomplishment continue to enhance the life chances of young children in Staffordshire. They have a very clear vision and plan for future development. The Nursery has an outstanding capacity to make continued improvement in all aspects of its work.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

As the Nursery provides only for the Foundation Stage curriculum, this is reported in the 'Overall Effectiveness' section of the report and the sub-sections below.

What the school should do to improve further

- Refine the procedures for recording and assessing the progress of children, particularly for those with particularly complex individual needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children achieve exceptionally well against their individual challenging learning targets because of the expertise and dedication of the staff. Those children who are not mobile, because of their disabilities or delayed development, develop their physical skills very rapidly. This is due to the intensive specialised Conductive Education programme, delivered extremely skilfully each day. As a result, many children become mobile and this helps them enormously in making progress in other areas of learning. Early independence skills are systematically taught, so that the children make excellent gains in their self-confidence, social and emotional skills. Very good development of early communication and mathematical skills, through practical activities, speech and signing, ensures that the more able children speak in simple sentences and recognise sounds, letters, colours, shapes and numbers. Children with more complex and profound difficulties make very rapid gains in developing their self-awareness and sensory perception, many becoming much more responsive and able to communicate their simple needs, using verbal expression, signing or Picture Exchange Symbols. Children with different disabilities and difficulties achieve equally well because the Nursery has put in place a very successful early intervention plan tailored to each child's specific needs. Consequently, in every respect, children are extremely well equipped to meet the challenges of the next stage of their education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children are extremely happy in the Nursery and attend well despite many having significant medical conditions. Their smiles, happy sounds and obvious pleasure in exploring the shells on their individual trays, moving to songs, exploring the outdoor spaces and sensory garden, or going off to work with new friends in a local playgroup, are only a few examples of the children's excellent attitudes to learning. Children's spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is excellent. Their rapidly developing personal and social skills, such as cooperating with their personal hygiene routines, eating independently, taking turns or sharing with others, make a very strong contribution to the happy family environment and sense of community. Children delight in the wealth of new experiences that help them enormously to understand very simply how to make safe and healthy choices, such as tasting new foods, choosing healthy snacks, or communicating 'no' if they do not like something. It is testament to the high quality of provision that the children behave exceptionally well and remain calm throughout an intensive working day.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers and teaching assistants have expert and highly specialised knowledge that contributes greatly to the children's exceptional academic, personal and physical progress. A key strength is the way that teachers, assistants and therapists work extremely well as a team to model activities and extend learning. All staff are fully committed to develop enjoyment and independence in learning. There is a consistent and highly effective approach to developing children's communication skills through very skilled use of signing and visual aids. In addition, a wealth of specialised resources enable all children, regardless of their learning needs or

disabilities, to use all of their senses to access learning and achieve exceptionally well. Staff have a very detailed knowledge of individual children's needs, which they use very successfully to plan a personalised learning journey. Teachers use the established assessment and recording system well, including the effective use of photographic records of achievement to capture milestones in learning. These systems are not yet sufficiently refined in order to record and more closely assess some aspects of the progress children make, particularly those with more complex needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

A significant strength of the outstanding curriculum is the very strong focus on personalised learning, built around three different learning pathways: physical, sensory and a 'Foundation Stage' approach. Children are provided with a highly individual, carefully structured but flexible curriculum that meets the diverse learning needs exceedingly well. Each learning dimension provides children with a highly focused, very carefully adapted range of activities, with options to access activities in other groups according to need. Non-ambulant children, for example, access the areas of learning through Conductive Education. This approach very successfully develops children's manipulative and coordination skills in a series of tasks that encourage individuals to develop all of their learning skills in a holistic way. Those children with a significant developmental delay are helped enormously to interact, make decisions and communicate through a sensory curriculum within the Nurture group. More able children, in contrast, follow a more traditional Foundation Stage curriculum. Their learning is enhanced very successfully through a huge range of practical activities. These include opportunities to work alongside children in a local playgroup and nursery which makes a considerable contribution to their social and community awareness. All groups benefit tremendously from additional experiences such as horse riding, hydrotherapy and visits to a range of interesting and carefully chosen places of interest. Parents are fulsome in their praise of these different approaches and the contribution they make to their children's happiness, physical well-being and all-round development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Children and their families receive an exemplary level of pastoral, medical and academic care, support and guidance. This is due to the outstanding level of commitment of the staff to work alongside parents to ensure each that child's needs are met, however complex they may be. Educational, medical and therapeutic staff work very closely together to ensure that they provide the most suitable support and help that the children require to meet their individual targets. A regular school for parents of children under two years of age is just one example of the way all of the staff and outside agencies work exceptionally well together. This group ensures that the very young physically disabled children are helped to get off to a flying start. There are meticulous arrangements in place to ensure children's safety, health and well-being. All requirements for safeguarding are fully in place. Adults always have time for the children, who are treated with the utmost respect and care. They anticipate any problems and are extremely patient in helping the children express a choice or communicate their wishes. Procedures for children to transfer to other settings are equally outstanding. A great deal of time and effort is taken to ensure that children are introduced to their new settings and to ensure that the receiving school has the very best possible advice and support. The vast majority of parents are highly complimentary about the service that the Nursery provides. This is summed

up by one parent, who commented that 'If it wasn't for the complete care, dedication and professionalism of all staff I dread to think what would have happened if my child had not attended such an excellent school.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The Nursery has gone from strength to strength since the last inspection due to the excellent vision, hard work and dedication of the headteacher, staff and governors. Their outreach support for disabled children in other schools is a model of best practice. The Nursery staff's expertise and total commitment to early intervention are testament to their dedication to ensuring children are helped to succeed whatever their difficulties. The highly successful way that the Nursery helps the children overcome their initial difficulties and disabilities and reach their individual challenging targets ensures that many go on to succeed in mainstream education. This could not be achieved without a full programme to monitor the work of the school and the means to make relevant improvements. Governors are excellent in the way that they support and work with the school. Despite financial restraints, due to falling numbers, the Nursery has succeeded in raising all of the necessary funds to significantly enhance its accommodation. The recently completed extension means that the Nursery is now in an even better position to meet the needs of the increasing number of children who start with more complex and profound needs, and recognises that its assessment and recording procedures are not sufficiently fine-tuned to fully map and demonstrate the progress these children make.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	1

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?	1
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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

9 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Greenhall Nursery, Stafford, ST16 1PS

Thank you for being so friendly when I visited you. It was lovely to meet all of you and to see how well you are doing. You go to an excellent nursery and I know that your families agree.

These are some of the very best things about your Nursery.

- You really enjoy learning and really try hard.
- You are taught extremely well and make outstanding progress, especially in moving around and learning to communicate.
- The staff make sure that you have lots of interesting and special things to do.
- Everyone takes very good care of you so you are very happy in Nursery.
- The headteacher and staff are working hard to make your school an even better place to learn.

You are very lucky to attend such a caring, happy place. There is not a lot to do to make your Nursery even better but I have asked the teachers to find even better ways to record what you have achieved and check just a little bit more on some of you who have some extra problems. I hope you go on trying hard and enjoying all of the interesting activities that help you learn.

Yours sincerely

Julia Lead inspector



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Julia
Lead inspector