

Green Lane Community Special School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111495
Local Authority	Warrington
Inspection number	337690
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Saleem Hussain

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 of pupils on the school roll	123
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tony Cosgrove
Headteacher	Mr Paul King
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2007
School address	Green Lane Padgate Warrington WA1 4JL
Telephone number	01925 480128
Fax number	01925 480126
Email address	greenlaneschool_head@warrington.gov.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils including the school council. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including the school's self-evaluation; its plans for improvement; records related to safeguarding; the school's data on pupils' progress. The inspectors received 55 parental questionnaires and also read questionnaire responses from pupils and from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the extent to which pupils' gain external accreditations
- the learning and progress of different groups of pupils
- the quality of teaching and use of assessment information
- the impact of the outdoor provision on learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about 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. Around half of the pupils have complex communication difficulties, including autistic spectrum disorders. Nearly all pupils are White British. Boys outnumber girls by about three to one. The school serves an area with a wide range of socio-economic characteristics. Around a third of all pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage consisting of a Reception class, which currently has a very small number of children. The school has gained the Sports Mark, Artsmark and the National Healthy Schools award. It has also gained the Basic Skills Agency Primary and Secondary Quality Marks, Becta Information Communications Technology (ICT) Mark and Financial Management Standard in Schools.

The school's premises are currently being extended to provide more classroom, office and toileting facilities.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is a wonderful school. The result of its excellent provision is outstanding progress, learning and personal development. There is a very strong commitment, shown by leaders and shared by staff at all levels, towards raising pupils' achievement and sense of well-being. The school was judged as outstanding in almost all areas of its work at the last inspection with the curriculum being judged as good. The curriculum is now outstanding, for example, much more opportunity to gain external accreditation ensures that pupils are gaining significantly more qualifications. Attendance has improved from good to outstanding because of the school's excellent rewards system. This track record of improvement illustrates well the ambition and drive that senior leaders provide. Self-evaluation is rigorous, insightful and very effective. The school is fully aware of its strengths and areas for development and plans very carefully to address these issues. These factors illustrate the outstanding capacity that the school has to improve further.

Pupils enjoy their work very much. They feel safe and secure in school and say that they are able to approach any member of staff with any worries. Inspectors are very impressed with pupils' maturity, self-discipline and the way in which they persevere with their work. Behaviour is exemplary. Any issues are managed extremely well by staff. The outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is making an excellent contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils leave the school as very well-rounded young people ready to take their place in the world. They are extremely well prepared for their future economic well-being.

The quality of teaching is outstanding. Excellent planning and assessment also ensure that pupils make at least good progress and the majority make outstanding progress based on their starting points. Teachers and their assistants work very effectively together to ensure that pupils are fully engaged and learn as well as they can. Much attention to setting appropriate targets in lessons ensures that pupils develop a very good understanding of their own learning and the ability to evaluate their own performance.

The school recognises that, although it has good Early Years Foundation Stage provision, the outdoor learning opportunities are not as stimulating as those indoors. This reduces the amount of progress that children make in the outdoor area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide more stimulating outdoor learning opportunities in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:

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- increasing the range and quality of learning resources
- improving the overall quality of the outdoor environment.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Although pupils' special educational needs and/or learning disabilities mean that they are unable to reach the levels of attainment reached by pupils of a similar age nationally, the majority make outstanding progress from their starting points. Achievement in literacy, numeracy, science, and information and communication technology (ICT) is excellent overall. All pupils achieve equally well, regardless of their special educational needs and/or disabilities, ethnicity or gender. This is because staff use their knowledge of pupils' needs extremely well and adjust activities to meet those needs. Pupils with the most complex difficulties, for example, move forward in very small steps. Their achievements are just as good as those with other learning disabilities who might make quicker progress.

Communication and language development is often a strong focus in learning and so pupils make excellent progress in this area. Where necessary, the spoken word is accompanied by the use of pictures, symbols and aids that enable pupils to understand and be understood. Pupils are entered for qualifications which are very well matched to their needs and, as a result, pass rates are excellent for all groups of pupils.

Pupils are very keen to learn and soak up the chances in lessons to acquire new knowledge and improve their understanding. They concentrate very hard, often working at a rapid pace and wanting even more work to do. They take pride in their work and their presentation. These factors make a significant contribution to pupils' progress.

Remarkable personal development makes an excellent contribution to learning. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of healthy lifestyles as a result of the very good support and teaching they receive in this area. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community. Older pupils often help younger ones, for example by encouraging them to try their hardest in lessons or by sitting with them at lunchtimes. Relationships between pupils are outstanding. The school council makes an excellent contribution to school improvement and all pupils are keen to support fund-raising for good causes. Pupils have a very good understanding of diversity and equality. They show great respect for everyone and the harmony between different groups in school, including minority ethnic groups, is excellent. These factors also show the impact of the school's outstanding work to promote community cohesion.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are taught extremely well. Staff use resources very effectively, for example, to illustrate teaching points and also involve pupils in demonstrating their skills. Teachers and their assistants know how to motivate pupils and get the best out of them. They provide excellent support for different groups of pupils including the most able and this helps pupils to achieve as well as they can. The pace of learning is good and so pupils get through plenty of work in lessons. Relationships between adults and pupils are very strong and this ensures that pupils feel confident and secure as they learn. Assessment procedures are very thorough. Records about attainment and progress are very clear. The information collected is used very effectively by teachers to plan future lessons.

Pupils are excited by the vast array of learning opportunities on offer. They love the many chances to gain experiences and learn through practical work. Lunchtime and after-school activities, school and residential trips locally and abroad, provide sparkling additions to the curriculum. The balance of opportunities between academic and personal skills development is very effective. The outstanding range of accreditations on offer includes basic skills in literacy, numeracy, ICT, independence, life and enterprise skills. All pupils gain a variety of certificates by the time they leave. Inspectors are very impressed by the good number of pupils who recently achieved excellent grades in relation to their abilities at GCSE level, especially in art and mathematics.

Pupils are treated with the utmost respect and treasured as individuals. As a result of the outstanding care, guidance and support, all pupils, including the most vulnerable, feel there are many people they can turn to, should they need help. Careful

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assessments of pupils' personal and social needs are used to provide specialist and carefully targeted support. Parents value very highly the availability of a full-time school nurse on site and also the therapists who provide support frequently. Very good care is taken to ensure that the school provides a safe environment. This is assisted by very clear procedures to manage behaviour which are understood by the pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Being judged as an outstanding school at the last inspection motivated leaders to not only maintain that position, but work even harder in the best interests of pupils. Inclusion remains at the heart of the school's work. The effectiveness of leadership and management can be seen in the quality of provision and outcomes achieved. Governors are very knowledgeable about the work of the school, highly involved in setting priorities and use their expertise very well in financial, premises and curriculum matters. Leaders are very effective in communicating high expectations. The determination to constantly review the work of the school and improve is shared by all staff. Pupils' progress is monitored frequently and any underachievement is quickly identified with additional support put in place where required. Leaders know exactly what the school needs to do to improve the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, an outstanding example of the quality of self-evaluation.

At the time of the inspection, safeguarding procedures were found to be excellent. The procedures are very well understood by staff and implemented with great care. Staff are well trained in safeguarding and child protection and meticulous attention is paid to the recruitment of suitable staff.

A very effective strategy is implemented to ensure community cohesion. One result of this is that pupils are prepared to challenge injustice where they see it, insisting on fair treatment, equality and respect for diverse groups in the local, national and global community. Engagement with parents and external agencies makes an excellent contribution to the pupils' outcomes. The school takes excellent actions to engage parents effectively in their children's learning. Family learning workshops are organised regularly, as are focus groups to help parents to cope with or overcome their children's learning disabilities at home. Outstanding partnerships with a wide variety of agencies ensure the well-being of pupils. Links with other schools are very well developed and, as a result, transition to and from other schools is very smooth. The management of

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resources is highly effective. A good example of the school's shrewd management of financial resources can be seen in the carefully managed budget to extend the accommodation. The school provides outstanding value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The impact of effective leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage can be seen in the good outcomes. Children join the Reception class with skills well below those expected for their age in all areas of learning. Their progress is generally good. It is best in communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development. Effective arrangements exist to ensure children's health and safety. Children take part in everything enthusiastically, for example in examining foods as they learnt about harvest time. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader evaluates its success well. The school has clear plans in place to improve the strong provision, especially the outdoor learning area, which currently has a limited range of resources and provides less stimulation for children than they experience indoors.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A good proportion of parents returned questionnaires. The inspection supports parents' overwhelmingly positive views of the school. Representative views from parents include, 'this is a fabulous, very caring school with a set of very dedicated staff'. Parents were keen to express their appreciation of the quality of teaching, leadership and management and the fact that the school keeps their children safe. They feel listened to and valued as partners in promoting their children's learning and development.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Green Lane Community Special School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 55 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 123 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	71	15	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	78	12	22	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	38	69	16	29	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	64	18	33	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	75	13	24	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	56	23	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	53	25	45	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	31	56	22	40	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	75	13	24	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	62	19	35	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	55	23	42	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	37	67	18	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	78	12	22	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Green Lane Community Special School, Warrington, WA1 4JL

It was a real pleasure to visit your school. Thank you for making the other inspectors and me so welcome during our recent inspection. We enjoyed meeting you and you were all very helpful. This letter is to tell you some of the things we found out about Green Lane School.

Your school is outstanding. This is because the teachers and other adults make sure you are happy. The care, guidance and support you receive are excellent. You all have lots of very exciting things to do each day and this helps you to achieve very well. It also helps to make sure you are ready to leave school when the time comes. It is great to see that you all get a good number of certificates for your work. You know what you need to do to be healthy and safe. Your behaviour is outstanding and you are extremely good, young citizens. I was very impressed with the work of the school council and their suggestions to make the school even better. I was also very impressed with the monitors and pupils who help others at lunchtimes.

The headteacher, staff and governors all work very hard indeed to make sure you all keep learning as well as you can. You have excellent teachers and this is why you all learn such a lot. I have asked the school to improve the outdoor learning area for the youngest children so that their outdoor learning environment is just as good as indoors.

I know that everyone is very proud of your achievements. Keep up all your hard work! I send my very best wishes to each and every one of you.

Yours sincerely

Mr Saleem Hussain

Lead inspector

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