

# Greenside School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117690
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	339050
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alan Dobbins

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	110
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	20
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Colin Colvin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dave Victor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Shephall Green Stevenage Hertfordshire
<b>Telephone number</b>	01438 315356
<b>Fax number</b>	01438 748034
<b>Email address</b>	head@greenside.herts.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by 3 additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, pupils and three parents. They looked at policies and evidence of pupils' work and analysed 31 responses to the parents' questionnaire.

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

- how well pupils do in their learning
- how well teaching meets the needs of all pupils
- the impact of the accommodation on the achievement, and the range of learning experiences, of pupils in key stages 3 and 4 and students in the sixth form
- how effectively leaders and governors are raising achievement, and how is gaining Change School and Specialists School status helping in this.

## Information about the school

Greenside School is a special school for pupils with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties. Pupils attend from Stevenage and north Hertfordshire. The school building was originally designed to cater for 60 pupils and there has been no significant increase in space since then. As a result, there are issues relating to the accommodation and the last three Ofsted inspections judged the building to be inadequate. Plans to re-structure the provision using the Building Schools for the Future programme are well advanced. The secondary department will co-locate with a neighbouring secondary school and the current accommodation will be remodelled to cater for primary pupils only. Work is due to begin in 2012. Greenside became a Change School through Creative Partnerships in April 2009 and gained specialist school status in Cognition and Learning in September 2009. The school also holds Sportsmark, Healthy, Eco and ICT accreditation.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. Some things about it are outstanding. Senior leaders are doing outstandingly well in developing the school; children make an outstanding start in the Early Years Foundation Stage; and over all the years pupils are looked after exceptionally well. Pupils make good progress against their targets for learning and are prepared well for the opportunities and challenges they will experience in their life after school.

The severity of their special educational needs and/or disabilities means that pupils attain at levels well below those expected for their age. However, against the expectations of the emerging national database for equivalent pupils they show good progress. Over the period 2007 to 2009, at the end of each key stage more than half the pupils exceeded the targets predicted for them in each of the core subjects. Most of the others achieved their targets and only a very small number did not reach them. Pupils did well in subjects such as information and communication technology. They did especially well in physical education both as individuals and when they applied their skills and knowledge in sporting competition against pupils from other equivalent schools in Hertfordshire. Overall, teaching is good and the school's evaluation of teaching since the last inspection shows an increasing proportion of outstanding lessons. Many lessons are joyous events for pupils and staff alike. In these lessons planning ensures that learning is relevant to each pupil and all pupils make equivalent progress, irrespective of the nature or severity of their special educational needs and/or disability. In a few lessons, especially in the foundation subjects, planning does not always engage pupils well enough because too little regard is given to what pupils know and can do. Also, in some of these subjects the work of the subject leaders is not strong enough to have a positive effect on raising achievement over time.

In a safe 'family' environment, pupils are outstandingly well looked-after. They attend well and become increasingly self-confident and independent as they move through the school. They behave well. They show by the great effort they make to do their best that they fully accept the routines and disciplines for learning. They gain a good understanding of right and wrong, which they show as best they can when they have difficult choices to make, including those to do with staying safe and keeping healthy. Parents say they are thrilled with the way their children are progressing in their learning and in the way they are developing as young people. They report favourably on the many skills that transfer into home life. One parent said: 'Thank you for having the vision; for pushing us in the right direction; for all the fantastic opportunities; for all the fun and laughter.'

Senior leaders and governors know the school well. The school is a thriving and dynamic

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place and the successful bid for Change and Specialist School status has gained increased resources that leaders are using well in matching school life to their vision. They confidently embrace change and show this through the development of meaningful partnerships with many other local schools and community groups and through taking part in European initiatives. Staff morale is high and the school is a happy place to work and to learn. Governors and leaders are working hard to ensure that the plans for the new co-location will eliminate the effect of deficiencies in the current accommodation and provide even more opportunities for inclusive practice. Since the last inspection leaders have driven improvement in many aspects of the school, especially in the quality of teaching and in the range and quality of pupils' learning experiences. The capacity for sustained improvement is good.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise achievement by:
  - making more effective use of assessment information for planning for learning, for recording and for reporting progress
  - having subject leaders play a more visible and effective role in leading in their subjects.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

In the lessons, pupils generally make good progress. By their good behaviour, the strenuous efforts they make to work hard, and the pleasure they gain from celebrating their successes with their teachers and assistants they show they enjoy their learning. An important contributor to the good progress all pupils make is the good level of communication they have with their adults. For many pupils this is not through speech and involves the expert use of strategies such as picture exchanges, the use of signs and symbols, or electronic speech aids such as switches and voice simulators.

The outstandingly safe and supportive environment helps pupils make great strides toward becoming as independent as is possible. The extensive partnerships programme with other local schools aids in this by providing regular and very effective opportunities for pupils to extend their personal and social skills by spending time with mainstream pupils. They gain good awareness of the needs of the wider world through residential visits in this country and in Europe. Their awareness is also developed through the work of the overseas teaching assistants, currently from colleges in Germany and Spain, who spend one term of their teacher training programme at the school. Pupils have good opportunities to know the importance of staying healthy. A good range of healthy food available at lunch times and they enjoy many opportunities to be physically active through the curriculum and by joining the lunch time and after school clubs.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

In more lessons than at the time of the last inspection, pupils make outstanding progress. In these lessons tasks are often creative and imaginative and match very well with the specific sensory, physical and emotional needs of each pupil. This is because teachers make very effective use of their knowledge of what their children know and can do when planning tasks. In other lessons pupils make less progress because planning does not ensure that lesson tasks match well enough with pupils learning needs. Sometimes, the expectations of the staff team are not always sufficient to drive progress. Well established routines benefit learning. They help pupils feel comfortable as learners and guide them in knowing what they have to do. For example, younger pupils are regularly taught through song and rhyme and, very often, more than one sense is stimulated during learning. Older pupils gain independence from the many planned opportunities that allow them to choose, and to find out, for themselves

The curriculum is especially successful in helping lead pupils toward independence by focusing on promoting gains in communication skills and in personal, social and physical development. By gaining Change and Specialist School status leaders have extended and enriched pupils' learning experiences, and are raising expectations for achievement, through the use of specialist practitioners, such as artists, actors, poets, sports coaches and for promoting progress in reading and numeracy. The curriculum for the pupils who

<sup>1</sup> 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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make the smallest steps in their learning is adapted and provides teachers with good guidance on planning lessons that take account of pupils' strength, needs and interests. Good opportunities for pupils to visit other local schools and places provide meaningful ways to reinforce personal and social skills and to gain awareness of other cultures. The Commenius links with Europe offer a first hand experience of living with those from different cultures.

Systems to ensure well-being and welfare meet all the requirements for dealing with pupils' wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. Through the expert work of speech therapists, nurses, therapy assistants, educational and clinical psychologists and the liaison social worker, pupils are able to thrive as learners and as growing young people. Most parents attend the annual review and the increasing use of video and power point technology is allowing pupils to make a greater contribution to their own futures. Parents praise the school as 'a welcoming, safe and happy place' and 'a good place for my child to be.' They say they feel very well informed about how their children are doing in school, through frequent telephone contacts, home-school books and regular meetings to discuss specific issues or to form new targets for learning. They are especially appreciative of the advice and support they gain on diverse matters, including parenting, benefits, entitlements, access to social networks and to respite care.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Senior leaders have a clear ambition to provide outstanding provision for their pupils. Their commitment to this is seen in numerous developments since the last inspection. Pupils are making better progress because the programme for monitoring and evaluating teaching has been effective in improving teaching. They are gaining a wider range of relevant learning experiences and the chance to be taught by specialists because leaders have done particularly well in achieving Change School and Specialist School status.

Leaders and governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. Staff morale is high and the school is a happy place to learn and to work. In some subjects, especially English and mathematics, subject leaders work very effectively in promoting progress. This is not the case for other subjects where more effective leadership is needed to improve achievement. Governors are right in recognising that raising pupils' achievement from good to outstanding requires the setting of more ambitious targets

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for learning and the better use of the tracking system in recognising whether pupils are on track to meet their targets. They are also right in wanting to judge the quality of the provision against appropriate benchmarks and leaders are beginning to make good use of national information

Leaders are proud that all pupils have equal access to all the school offers. The partnerships programme makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' achievement and to their personal and social development by providing a wide range of enriched learning experiences that would not be otherwise available. Parents report the school to be a cohesive community. Inspectors see this through the pride pupils and staff have in their school and in the outstanding level of care offered to all the pupils. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and reviewed regularly.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with a very wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. Over the time they are there all do outstandingly well against their targets for learning.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is a happy place in which children settle quickly and very well. They are exceptionally well looked after. Detailed records show the small steps children make in their learning and reflect the very wide range of relevant experiences they gain over each of the areas of learning. Staff are expert in using strategies to communicate with children that helps their learning and develops very strong and trusting relationships. As they move through the Early Years Foundation



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Stage they become increasingly self confident and show this through their sense of fun and through their developing personalities. Parents are delighted that their children settle so quickly, attend regularly and enjoy going to school. They are very pleased with the information they receive on how well their children have done each day and, especially, pleased with the help and advice from staff on wide-ranging matters to do with their children.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

**Sixth form**

Good quality teaching planned from good assessment information presents a relevant range of learning experiences. Students attend regularly. They make good progress in their learning and outstanding progress in their development as rounded young people who are well prepared to live as independent a life as is realistically possible after school. They show the extent of their learning over a wide range of appropriate nationally accredited awards, some of which they gain while attending a local college, and on measures of independence such as travel training. Transition to after-school life is supported very well through Connexions. Most of the students move to places that are best suited to their interests and aspirations. They behave well in school, in college, and especially when they take part in residential visits in this country and in Europe. They show good maturity when they make a contribution to the local community in activities, such as tending the allotment, supporting senior citizens in a local residential home and when they care for animals at a specialist farm. The good outcomes show that leaders are successful in minimising the disadvantage of the inadequate accommodation primarily by making good use of off site facilities, such as the local college.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

**Views of parents and carers**

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Parents who responded to the questionnaire were uniform in their praise for the school. They are especially pleased that their children are enjoying school, that their children feel safe at the school and that they are making good progress, because they see the teaching as good. The school's regular procedures for gaining the thoughts of parents show that they are especially appreciative of the empathy and understanding of staff and the way in which they can always gain advice on matters to do with their children.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Greenside 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 31 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 112 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	84	5	16	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	87	4	13	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	77	7	23	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	71	9	29	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	87	4	13	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	68	9	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	68	8	26	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)	14	45	12	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	71	9	29	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	48	12	39	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	58	11	35	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	74	8	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	84	5	16	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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



17 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Greenside School, Stevenage, SG2 9XS

It was lovely for me and my colleagues to meet and talk with you when we inspected your school. Thank you for making us so welcome. We found the school to be providing you with a good education, but some parts of your school were outstandingly good. We especially liked:

- how safe you are in school and the outstanding way in which the adults look after you
- the outstanding start the youngest children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the big effort you make to do your best in lessons and the way you are developing as young people
- the good progress you make in your learning because of the expert way adults communicate with you
- the way in which your leaders provide exciting learning opportunities in other schools and in other places.

There are two things that I have asked staff to improve. I would like lessons to be made up of tasks that will always help you in your learning and I would like the leaders of some of the subjects to be better in helping you know about their subjects.

What can you do? You can help by continuing to always make the great effort to do your best that my colleagues and I saw from you when we visited your lessons.

Thank you for being so welcoming and I will always have pleasant memories of my time with you.

Yours sincerely

Alan Dobbins

Lead inspector

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