

Greenacre School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133394
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	341383
Inspection dates	5–6 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Liz Godman

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	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	44
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr W Denton
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Hayter
Date of previous school inspection	7 September 2006
School address	Keresforth Hill Road Barnsley South Yorkshire S70 6RG
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 25 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of documentation including school improvement plans, records of pupils' progress and minutes of governors' meetings. Inspectors analysed 64 questionnaires from parents and carers, 95 questionnaires from staff and 116 questionnaires completed by pupils.

- how lessons are planned to enable pupils with different special educational needs and/or disabilities to make progress
- how effectively the curriculum and partnerships with other schools, colleges and agencies meet pupils' individual needs
- the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation
- how effectively the school promotes pupils' understanding of different cultures
- the steps taken to maintain the high quality of the work of the sixth form since the last inspection.

Information about the school

Greenacre School is a large special school which serves the whole of the Barnsley local authority. Some pupils from neighbouring authorities also attend. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Pupils have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties and many also have additional special educational needs and/or disabilities, including physical and sensory impairments or difficulties on the autistic spectrum. The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion entitled to free school meals is high. Children in the Reception Year are taught in a class specifically for the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are currently no Nursery-aged children at the school. Students aged between 16 and 19 years attend the school's sixth form, Greenacre College, which is housed in the same building as the main part of the school. There are plans for a substantial rebuild and refurbishment of the school with work due to start in January 2010. The school gained specialist status for cognition and learning in September 2009.

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

Greenacre is a good school, which provides outstanding care, guidance and support and makes excellent provision, with outstanding outcomes, for students in its sixth form, Greenacre College. Its specialist status makes a good contribution to students' learning and progress and to the partnerships the school has with other schools and colleges in the area.

Students' learning and progress in lessons is good overall, in line with the good quality of teaching, although teaching and progress vary from satisfactory to outstanding. As the school's own evaluations note, students' progress in lessons across the school is uneven and dips to a satisfactory rate in some year groups. This is where the quality of teaching is also satisfactory, particularly in relation to the degree of challenge for some students, such as those who are higher attaining and where there are fewer opportunities for students to assess how well they are doing. Students' achievement over time is good and for some students, including some with profound and complex needs, it is outstanding by the end of Year 11. For example, in 2009 at least half of Year 11 students gained external qualifications at entry level and a small number gained a qualification at level 1. For the last four years all students in Year 11 have completed an externally accredited course, including unit awards, across a good range of academic, vocational and personal skills, often from very low starting points. Overall, students develop good skills for the workplace or the next stage in their lives.

Almost all students say that they feel safe at school. Their parents and carers agree that the school ensures that this is so. Arrangements for safeguarding students are of the highest quality. The school is extremely successful in drawing together the resources of different agencies to secure a coordinated approach to meeting individual students' needs. Some students exhibit challenging behaviour owing to their particular special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, in the main, this is managed extremely well so that difficulties are pre-empted. Students have an excellent understanding of a healthy lifestyle and make an outstanding contribution to the community, through the school council for example. Some have confidently presented their versions of Shakespeare's plays, most recently *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in theatres and venues across the country. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and they are thoughtful and keen to help others.

The school's good curriculum has a clear and effective emphasis on meeting individual needs and enables students to make good progress. Provision is adapted well to meet the full range of students' special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff, at all levels and in partnership with other agencies, provide outstanding care and support to promote students' learning, personal and social development.

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The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Attention to welfare is good and staff take good care of the children. However, the activities planned both indoors and outside are less effective in securing children's progress in all the areas of learning and limited use is made of the outdoor area. Accurate observations are made, but are not always used effectively in planning the next steps for individuals or for the group.

Students in the sixth form make exceptional progress in all aspects of their learning and development, as a result of the outstanding provision which is made for them. A particular strength of this provision lies in the excellent curriculum which provides a very well-balanced programme incorporating vocational, academic and personal skills. Close attention is given to ensuring students' safety and well-being within and outside of the college. The sixth form is exceptionally well led and its teaching is consistently good or outstanding.

Senior staff and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have identified accurately how provision might be improved. They have dealt effectively with some difficult financial and staffing matters. The leadership and management of teaching and learning has ensured that teaching is good overall and that some of it is outstanding. However, there is scope to share further the examples of outstanding practice, so that these are adopted more widely by all staff. Leaders and managers have proved highly effective in raising the quality of care, guidance and support to outstanding since the last inspection. These factors give the school good capacity for further sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage to better meet children's needs by:
 - planning activities, both indoors and outside, which increase children's access to, and progress in, all the areas of learning
 - increasing the use of the outdoor area
 - using the findings from the observations of children's learning to inform the next steps in planning for individuals and for the group.
- Enhance students' progress through school by:
 - improving the consistency of the quality of teaching, particularly in relation to the degree of challenge for some students, particularly those who are higher attaining
 - increasing the opportunities for students to assess how well they are doing
 - sharing the existing examples of outstanding practice, so that these are adopted more widely by all staff.

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Students' achievement is good overall. In the lessons where learning is outstanding all students take a full part in the activities, become highly involved and behave very well. This enables them to make very good progress in developing communication and literacy skills, for example. The inclusion of students with profound and multiple learning difficulties in such lessons is excellent, because highly skilled teaching assistants challenge them to make choices and to express their views using symbols, gesture and simple communication aids. In these lessons also, the higher-attaining students achieve very well and record their learning using photographs and text. Occasionally in lessons, the pace of learning is lost and opportunities for students to be challenged or to show their independence are missed and so the rate of progress slows a little, particularly for higher-attaining students.

Students develop a good understanding of personal safety in different situations, because of explicit teaching, for example about road safety or safe use of the internet. Occasionally, challenging behaviour interrupts learning or results in other students feeling slightly unsafe. However, many students, including some with behavioural difficulties, show considerable care for their peers or for the adults who are working with them. Students actively choose healthy options at lunchtimes. They enjoy physical activity and are keen advocates in suggesting improvements to assist in this, such as climbing bars or an astroturf games pitch. Students are very proud of their school and promote it very well. They are very keen to take on responsibilities, for example by making a very strong contribution to the designs for the new school building. Students are well equipped with personal and vocational skills, although occasionally there are missed opportunities for them to take the initiative or to show their independence. Attendance, in comparison with other special schools, is slightly above average overall. Where there are significant absences, these are mainly for medical reasons. Through the social and emotional aspects of learning programme and special weeks, such as the 'friendship week', students gain a strong understanding of others and of cultures different from their own.

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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	*
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good overall, with examples of both satisfactory and outstanding teaching. Relationships between staff and students are consistently good. Most staff know their students very well and are effective in conveying clearly what they expect from each student. Some students with potentially very challenging behaviour are managed well. Where this is best, staff know exactly when to give students time before they are expected to engage in the lesson's activities. Where teaching is outstanding, lessons are very carefully planned to secure the involvement of every student in the class and exciting activities are very closely matched to each student's needs. In these lessons teaching assistants are highly effective in making the learning accessible to students with profound and multiple learning difficulties, so that they participate alongside their peers in understanding the story of *Oliver Twist* or in learning about how to take care of their feet, for example. In these lessons also, higher-attaining students are challenged, so that their language and literacy skills are extended. Generally, resources are very well matched to the purpose of the lesson and enable students to communicate using speech, picture, object, sign or symbol, although staff's use of information and communication technology (ICT) as a teaching tool is less well developed. Staff make good use of their accurate assessments of students' learning to plan the next steps, but opportunities for students to evaluate for themselves how well they are doing are less well developed. In lessons where teaching is satisfactory students are not challenged to attain more highly or opportunities are missed for higher-attaining students to show independently what they can do. Staff identify accurately the need to continue to evaluate and modify the curriculum.

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They also recognise there is more to do to secure greater consistency in the approaches to some subjects or areas of learning, such as literacy, across the school. The curriculum is particularly effective in promoting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their enjoyment of learning. It is enhanced by a good range of opportunities for learning out of school, including residential visits, sports and arts activities.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. First-class support from therapy services ensures that staff understand students' communication, medical and positioning needs, allowing them to take these into account when planning activities to maximise students' participation. Students receive excellent information about the choices open to them with regards to the curriculum and to their personal well-being and health. They are actively encouraged to exercise these choices and to express their thoughts and preferences in regular individual reviews and annual reviews of their statement of special educational needs. Agencies such as Connexions make a strong contribution to the reviews for older students.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

At the time of the inspection, the government's requirements for safeguarding students were met to an exceptionally high standard. Rigorous attention is given to ensuring that all the required checks are made and the school's work in all aspects of this area is exemplary. Governors successfully fulfil their statutory responsibilities for this and other aspects of the school's work. The school promotes community cohesion to good effect. It knows its students well and provides good opportunities for them to gain understanding of different cultures, both nationally and internationally, but recognises that this work is not yet captured fully in a written plan. Work remains for leaders and managers to share and embed the features of the most effective teaching in all lessons, in order to secure consistently good or outstanding progress for students throughout the school. The school is highly effective in tackling social discrimination in relation to disability, gender and ethnicity. It promotes equality of opportunity well and this is seen in students' good progress overall. The school takes good steps to secure the engagement of parents and carers, through home–school books, meetings and events. Almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire feel well informed about their children's progress. However, despite everyone's best efforts, not all parents

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and carers are fully engaged in supporting their children's learning. Highly effective partnerships with other schools, colleges and a variety of different agencies are very successful in promoting students' learning, well-being and cultural and social development. The school's good outcomes mean that it provides good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory as a result of the satisfactory provision made for them. Staff get to know the children very quickly and make good use of links with other agencies, such as speech and language therapists, to meet their needs. As a result, they settle quickly and engage happily with the different activities on offer. They make satisfactory progress in all the areas of learning. Accurate observations are made and recorded in children's 'learning journeys'. However, assessment of each child's progress in each area is not used to best effect to plan the next steps in the child's learning. As a result, activities are not planned systematically to promote learning in all the areas, either indoors or outside. This leads to some limitations in the provision which is made. There are insufficient opportunities for learning and play using the outside area. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory and secures children's welfare well. However, staff recognise that there is more to do to develop the provision to reflect fully the requirements of the curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Sixth form

The curriculum in Greenacre College enables high achievement in the functional skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT, supported by a very wide variety of vocational options, which enable students to gain external entry level qualifications at levels 1, 2 or 3. Students choose these options themselves, sometimes gradually building up their skills in a particular subject and sometimes extending their experience across different subject areas. As well as the opportunities for work-related learning provided by horticulture, woodwork, catering, and hair and beauty, the subjects offered also develop skills useful in helping students to live independently when they leave school. For example, students are taught to handle money, which they bank in college, enabling them to budget wisely and to make independent choices about participation in visits and other activities. Similarly, a coherent programme of sex and relationship education, carefully tailored to meet their individual needs, helps to affirm students' confidence about their rights and responsibilities. Where teaching is outstanding, students take responsibility for planning and evaluating their own learning and provide excellent support to one another in developing and celebrating their achievements. Senior leaders have a very clear understanding of students' needs and very high expectations of students. As a result, senior leaders are constantly reviewing and evaluating extremely effectively the work of the sixth form. This means they are active in seeking out the right accreditation to meet all students' needs and they are powerful advocates in supporting students' transition to the next stage in their lives when they leave the sixth form.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

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

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The parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school. Most feel that their children enjoy school and are making good progress, because of the good teaching. A very small minority who responded to the questionnaire feel that the school does not take their concerns or suggestions into account. However, inspectors found no evidence to support this view and noted that during the inspection a number of parents and carers attended to contribute their views to their children's annual review.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Greenacre 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 64 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 178 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	75	15	23	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	59	24	38	1	2	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	36	56	26	41	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	50	30	47	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	36	56	27	42	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	48	28	44	2	3	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	47	30	47	0	0	1	2
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)	34	53	23	36	0	0	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	55	26	41	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	53	25	39	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	39	34	53	4	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	28	44	32	50	3	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	67	21	33	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 Greenacre School, Barnsley, S70 6RG

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed meeting you and finding out about the things you do.

Greenacre is a good school. It helps you to learn well, because the teaching is good and you are given some exciting and good things to do. Some things about your school are excellent or outstanding. This includes the way in which you are all very keen to follow a healthy lifestyle, whether by healthy eating or taking part in sports. We also found that you have an excellent understanding of how you can help the school to be even better through your school council. We were impressed by the way in which you have helped to design the new school building. We also found that you look after one another very well and are learning a great deal about other cultures. We are sure that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the West Yorkshire Playhouse went very well and admire your confidence in acting in such a big theatre. We also found that the staff take excellent care of you and work hard to make sure that you are all safe and happy. We think that Greenacre College for the oldest students is outstanding. This is because you can choose courses which are exciting, enjoyable and useful and help to prepare you very well for when you have to leave school. I know that some of you would like to stay at Greenacre for ever because the college is so good.

To make the school even better for all of you, we have asked the staff to:

- improve the activities for the very youngest children both indoors and outside
- make sure that you have opportunities to learn as quickly in all your lessons as you do in the very best ones.

You can help by working hard and continuing to enjoy school. On behalf of the inspection team, I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Ms Elizabeth Godman

Lead Inspector

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