

Greenvale School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	100765
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	376449
Inspection dates	28–29 February 2012
Lead inspector	Stuart Charlton

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Henri Webb
Headteacher	Lynne Haines
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 January 2009
School address	Waters Road London SE6 1UF
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Age group	11–19
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Introduction

Inspection team

Stuart Charlton

Additional inspector

Joanna Jones

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. One inspector spent two days in the school and the other one day. Nineteen lessons were visited and all eighteen teachers seen, amounting to over nine hours of classroom observation. The majority of these lessons were joint observations undertaken with senior staff. Meetings were held with groups of students, governors and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the work of the school and looked at documentation such as the school improvement plan, assessment information, students' records and work, statements and annual reviews, as well as school policies. Sixteen questionnaires from parents and carers were scrutinised and also those from all of the students and ten from staff.

Information about the school

Greenvale is an average-sized special school providing education for students who have a statement of special educational needs, generally related to severe learning difficulties and/or profound and multiple learning difficulties. The complexity of students' needs is increasing with a significant number who have additional needs identified on the autistic spectrum, some with challenging behaviours and others with additional physical disabilities and complex medical conditions. Most students come from the local area. About one third of the students are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is high. A small number of students enter at other than the normal time and the overwhelming majority stay on into the sixth form. A few students enter the sixth form from other local schools. Since the previous inspection there have been significant senior management changes and a new headteacher was appointed in September 2011. The school holds a School Achievement Award, the Healthy Schools Award and a Sportsmark.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Greenvale is a good school. Systematic school improvement has been sustained despite the considerable changes in the students' needs and changes in staffing. It is not outstanding because of some weaknesses in teaching and in the use of data. The sixth form is good, with provision ensuring that students are well prepared for life after school.
- Students of different ages, backgrounds and abilities make good progress and achieve well. They achieve particularly well in the development of their skills in communication and in mathematics.
- In the vast majority of lessons, teachers provide students with activities that engage their interest and they use information and communication technology (ICT) well to enhance learning. They assess students' work regularly and accurately and ensure that students know what they need to do to improve. Occasionally, teachers do not use a sufficiently wide range of approaches to ensure each student's learning is of the highest quality.
- The overwhelming majority of students make exceptional improvements in learning to manage their own behaviours and bullying of any kind is almost non-existent. Students are confident that staff will listen to them whatever their concerns and they feel extremely safe and secure in school at all times. Students enjoy school, they support each other extremely well and attendance levels are well above average.
- The school is well led and teachers' performance is managed effectively. The strong leadership team ensures there is a sustained focus on improving classroom practice and outcomes for students. The highly effective way in which the school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a key factor in its success. Data are not used to best advantage to check that the school is performing as well as it possibly can against national benchmarks.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching always uses a wide range of approaches that fully meet

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- individual needs so that each student's learning is of the very highest quality.
- Use the data about students' progress to best effect so that the school is certain that it is doing as well as it possibly can in relation to the national picture.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Almost all students make good progress in developing their understanding, knowledge and skills, although attainment remains low. Different groups achieve equally well. Students respond positively to the challenging targets set for them and they achieve well irrespective of their disabilities and special educational needs.

Students apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well across different subject areas. In Year 7, students learn to recognise the letters of the alphabet and the sounds they make. They learn to recognise numbers and understand basic number concepts. Across the school, students, including those at the early stages of learning English, make particularly good progress in developing their skills in communication and they learn to express their views effectively, often using signs and symbols. By the time students move into Key Stage 4, many have the confidence to attempt to read and write for a wide range of purposes using different support systems and prompts. They enjoy working with ICT and use it successfully in a range of different contexts, as seen in a number of lessons where they demonstrated how well they had achieved in the lesson. Students' developing skills in numeracy, including using multiplication and recognising number patterns for higher achieving students, are used to advantage in different contexts in lessons. Their good progress is continued when students enter the sixth form, where their developing skills in communication and numeracy are put to effective use in more vocational and work-related activities. By the time they leave the school, all students gain a good range of national accreditations including Functional Skills, Skills for Life and Entry Level and, as a result, all move on successfully to the next stage of their education. Parents and carers report that they are very pleased with the progress their children make and their view is consistent with the inspection findings that students make good progress. In the students' words, 'the teachers help you and you learn a lot'.

Quality of teaching

Teachers carefully assess students' needs when they join the school. They quickly build a detailed picture of their students' abilities and this is used effectively to plan lessons. Linked to the good curriculum plans for different levels of learning, this ensures that activities are, mostly, effectively matched to students' needs. All staff have good subject knowledge and relationships between students and staff are excellent. The work of support staff across the school is integral to the success students achieve. Staff use praise and rewards very effectively to build students' self-esteem and to give them the confidence to try new things, contributing extremely

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well to the promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers are successful in improving students' communication skills by their effective use of signing and pictorial strategies. The outstanding work of the learning support base in helping students, staff and parents and carers to understand and meet the needs of students with the most complex learning difficulties has a highly beneficial effect on improving these students' achievements.

Records of students' progress, including observations and photographs of students' achievements, demonstrate good teaching and learning over time. Students are given clear guidance both orally and in written form about how they can improve their work. In lessons where teaching is not of the highest quality, the range of teaching strategies does not take full account of individual needs to enable all students to reach their full potential.

Across the school there are examples of outstanding teaching where staff set the highest expectation for every student and use very imaginative teaching activities to ensure excellent outcomes for all. In a Key Stage 4 mathematics lesson, the teacher seized every opportunity to develop students' skills and deepen their understanding by moving very adeptly from one activity to another and keeping a clear focus on practical activities. Students' learning was exceptionally well supported by the use of pictures, signs and symbols. Teaching of this quality, however, is not yet sufficiently consistent in all lessons.

Parents and carers feel their children are well taught, in line with inspection findings. Their views are typified by comments such as, 'Teachers and staff are brilliant' and, 'This school is the best and I have no concerns'.

Behaviour and safety of students

Parents and carers, staff and students all confirm the substantial improvements that the school makes in the lives of students at school and at home, through enabling them to manage their own behaviour and through developing extremely positive attitudes to learning. Students are polite, friendly and respectful to adults and each other, so that there is a very calm and harmonious working atmosphere throughout the school. Staff are very adept in enabling students to quickly address any difficulties they have with their own behaviour. The extremely close liaison between the school staff, the educational psychologist and the multi-disciplinary team, is a crucial factor in the school's success in this area. Equally important is the communication support base which provides exemplary support for students. Consequently, improvement in behaviour is often rapid and students learn to recognise when they need to help each other. In the dining room and during breaks, where students make use of the excellent playground facilities, behaviour is exemplary. Records confirm the high quality of behaviour over time.

Staff are particularly good at ensuring students settle in quickly and adapt to the very clear expectations that are set. Parents and carers and students indicate that any type of bullying is extremely rare. Students are very keen to support each other

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and are proud of their school and their work. All staff have received extensive training in behaviour management techniques and use the behaviour management system very effectively. They respect students as individuals and use praise and rewards to best effect to reinforce improvements in behaviour. As a result, exclusions are almost non-existent. Staff devote a great deal of time to helping students to listen carefully to instructions and respond to each other's feelings. Parents and carers and students have similar views that confirm the high quality of behaviour and safety. Students say they feel extremely safe. They understand the basic principles of how to keep themselves safe, for example regarding the internet.

Leadership and management

The newly appointed headteacher has a very clear view about how provision should develop. She is well supported by a strong leadership team and between them they make a significant impact on the work of the school. The policies and strategies that they have introduced are having an immediate impact on improving students' performance. They ensure that staff work as a cohesive team and communicate high expectations and ambition. The ways in which they support and develop the staff ensure a cycle of improvement in classroom practice and an enthusiasm from staff about wanting to improve to meet students' changing needs. Lessons are observed by the senior team and strengths and areas for improvement are accurately identified. These staff lead by example and demonstrate teaching practice of the highest quality. Through the implementation of the learning support and communication support bases, changes to the curriculum, and the revisions to the roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team, the school has improved the outcomes for students. This record of improvement, together with the significant improvements the school, makes to students' behaviour and its success in meeting the changing needs of its intake, show that the school has good capacity to improve further.

The good curriculum ensures systematic development of students' basic skills. Increasing use of therapies and sensory experiences demonstrate that the curriculum is adapting well to meet the increasing range and complexity of students' needs. The phased introduction of specialist provision across Key Stages 3 and 4 is working well in providing opportunities for students to use their communication and numeracy skills in other subjects. In the sixth form the focus on communication, literacy and numeracy, linked to the range of vocational and work-related opportunities available, ensures that all students gain a good foundation for life when they leave school. The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, for example through the very wide range of extra-curricular opportunities provided. The principles of equality of opportunity are at the heart of everything the school does as it successfully works to meet the changing individual needs of its intake. The school provides exceptionally well for those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

Leaders at all levels are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and show clear commitment to future improvement. However, the present system of data

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analysis makes it difficult for all to gauge how well Greenvale is performing in relation to other schools. The governing body challenges the school well and ensures that the policies to promote equality, tackle discrimination and ensure safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements, are of the highest quality and have a positive impact on school life. For example, risk assessments are exemplary and ensure that students, particularly those with severe medical conditions, are given the protection they need so they can play a full part in the everyday school life. Strong partnerships with other schools, including the partner primary school, those with other agencies and also with parents and carers provide extremely high levels of support, particularly to students' personal development.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.

The school will translate this into widget format to make it accessible to students.



2 March 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Greenvale School, London SE6 1UF

Thank you for all the help and support you gave us when we came to inspect Greenvale School. We were particularly pleased to be able to talk with so many of you.

We judge Greenvale to be a good school where teaching is good and all staff go out of their way to help you and to ensure that you achieve well. Some of you told us, and we could see, that everyone helps you to make great improvements in managing your own behaviour. The learning support base and the communication base are extremely effective in helping you to develop communication, literacy and numeracy skills which you can use in other subjects. The school provides a very safe and secure environment and you help and support each other extremely well.

To make Greenvale even better we have asked teachers to ensure that in all lessons they use the widest range of teaching approaches so that each of you achieves as well as you can. We also want them to use the information about the progress you make to show everyone that Greenvale is, as you say, a 'two thumbs up' school.

You told us how much you enjoy coming to school and so we know you will continue to do your best at all times.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Charlton
Lead inspector

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