

Inspection of an outstanding school: Green Lane Community Special School

Woolston Learning Village, Holes Lane, Woolston, Warrington, Cheshire WA1 4LS

Inspection dates:

19–20 November 2019

Outcome

Green Lane Community Special School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff at Green Lane are happy, friendly and supportive of each other. There is a fabulous team spirit. Pupils are safe, polite and helpful. They are respectful towards staff and visitors. Pupils use good manners such as holding doors open, listening to others during discussions and sharing toys and equipment.

All staff have high hopes and aspirations for pupils. Staff work hard to help every pupil be the best they can be. They plan lots of fun and exciting activities to help pupils communicate and become more independent. Pupils enjoy learning and would not change a thing about their school.

The school is a calm place for pupils to learn. Pupils' behaviour is very good. Staff plan activities across the day to help pupils manage their behaviour. Pupils learn to understand their emotions and feelings. They also learn how to express these in a positive way and to ask for help, if needed. Pupils are confident that bullying is not an issue here. They know staff would step in to sort out any problems.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy the wide range of activities planned outside the classroom. These include weekly educational visits into the local community. Pupils also enjoy working in the 'forest school', taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, work experience and different sporting activities.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have created an aspirational curriculum which is very well organised. This routinely meets the learning, sensory, physical, medical and social needs of pupils and sixth-form students. It allows pupils to build on what they already know and can do. Staff have a clear understanding of what pupils need to learn. As a result, pupils achieve exceptionally well.

The curriculum is broad and offers pupils a varied range of subjects. Pupils develop a wide range of knowledge and skills in subjects such as Spanish, computing, art and design, drama and music. Staff know each pupil well. They plan activities which interest pupils and are well matched to pupils' abilities. For example, in mathematics, pupils used their measuring, cutting, sticking and teamwork skills to create 3D shapes from straws. Staff provide lots of different opportunities for pupils to develop their independence. They are experts in providing just the right amount of support for pupils. Learning is not disrupted by poor behaviour.

Children in the early years thrive. The classroom and outdoor area are welcoming and well resourced. Routines are put in place so that children quickly become independent. Children's interests in cars, trains, different cartoon characters and sensory materials are used to motivate children to complete tasks with an adult. Children successfully establish early reading, writing and mathematics skills. These are a firm foundation on which future learning is built.

Reading is a priority across the school. Teachers use their expert knowledge of how pupils learn to teach reading well. Reading is regarded as the basis of learning in all other subjects. Phonics and reading are taught consistently well across the school. Activities are well matched to individual pupils. Symbols and photographs are used expertly to support reading. Staff have created their own reading books for pupils. This ensures that all pupils can access reading very successfully.

Many pupils find it difficult to learn new things and to remember information. Staff expertly weave regular opportunities to revisit new learning into the timetable. Pupils are given time to practise and strengthen new skills. Staff find ways for pupils to use these new skills in everyday life. Some pupils enjoy the responsibility of being a class monitor. They successfully complete different tasks such as giving out books and resources. They also make toast and drinks for snack time, take telephone calls from office staff and take the register to the office.

Pupils in key stage 4 have high aspirations. They have already visited local colleges to find out about the range of different courses on offer.

Students in the sixth form are exceptionally well prepared for their next stage in education or employment. They achieve a range of academic and work-related qualifications which are well matched to their learning needs. Leaders and staff place high priority on preparing students for adulthood. Staff plan a wide range of opportunities for students to further develop their independent living, social and communication skills.

Preparation for the world of work is also an important focus for students. Leaders have developed positive relationships in the local business and care communities. Staff manage a successful supported-internship programme. This leads to a number of students gaining employment in a range of businesses and organisations.

Pupils are proud to be members of the school council. They talk about the things they have introduced. This includes the track around the school field, playtime buddies and the new introduction of red ties for key stage 4 pupils.

Staff feel valued and work well as a team. They expressed no concerns about bullying or harassment. Staff appreciate senior leaders' investment in their ongoing training and the consideration that they give to their work–life balance. In return, staff work hard to ensure that all pupils and students achieve their best.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Leaders and staff give priority to the safety and welfare of all pupils and respond quickly to any concerns. Staff know and understand policies and procedures. They follow these carefully to keep all pupils safe.

Staff have a clear understanding of the ways in which pupils are vulnerable. They take their responsibilities very seriously. Staff have received additional training so they can effectively support pupils who have additional medical needs. Parents are confident that their children are safe in school. Family support officers give great support to families and work closely with other agencies and services.

Background

When we have judged a special school to be outstanding we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Green Lane Community Special School to be outstanding in May 2015.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	111495
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10087707
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	187
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	24
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr Alan Lee
Headteacher	Mr Paul King
Website	http://greenlaneschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 May 2015

Information about this school

- Green Lane Community Special School provides education for pupils aged four to 19 with moderate and severe learning difficulties. There are some pupils with physical disabilities, autistic spectrum disorders and complex health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The needs of pupils on roll have become increasingly complex in recent years.
- The school has a 40-place sixth-form department, known as Woolston Sixth Form. Students with the most complex needs attend here along with students from Foxwood School.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, we spoke with pupils about their work and school life. We spoke with members of the governing body, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and members of staff. We also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- We reviewed a range of documentation including information about school development, safeguarding and checks undertaken for the appointment of new staff.
- We considered 13 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 29 responses to the online staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- We focused on reading, mathematics, modern foreign languages and preparation for adulthood. This entailed discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, looking at examples of pupils' work, discussions with teachers and discussions with pupils.

Inspection team

Michelle Beard, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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