

# Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Green Lane Community Special School

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

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Inspection dates:

11 and 12 February 2025

## **Outcome**

Green Lane Community Special School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils love to come to this welcoming school. They are greeted each morning by enthusiastic staff with open arms and beaming smiles.

Pupils benefit enormously from kind, compassionate and highly skilled staff. They know that staff care for them deeply and that there is always an adult there for them when needed. Pupils feel happy and know that they are in safe hands.

Staff have the highest of ambitions for every pupil. From the youngest to the oldest, there are no limits to their possible achievements. Staff have a thorough understanding of pupils' unique and complex needs. The curriculum is aspirational. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps in education.

The school skilfully helps pupils to manage their own behaviour and their emotions. Staff are experts at picking up when pupils are anxious or unsettled. They respond quickly and sensitively.

Pupils' personal development is woven through everything the school does. Pupils enjoy the many experiences they are offered. This includes the numerous trips and visits and the varied lunchtime clubs. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about enterprise activities where they manage a budget as well as design and make products to sell.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has continued to go from strength to strength.

The school has designed a highly effective and ambitious curriculum. The curriculum is exceptionally well considered to ensure that pupils receive the highest quality of education. The school is determined that every pupil will succeed and be well prepared for adulthood and life in modern Britain.

All staff receive regular, high-quality professional development. Many become experts in their field and share best practice with others. This includes working with both mainstream and special schools across the local authority.

Staff have a thorough subject knowledge, present information clearly and check pupils' understanding systematically. They have a detailed understanding of each pupil. They skilfully adapt the delivery of the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils accurately.

Communication sits at the heart of the school's work. Their approach in this aspect of the curriculum is delivered with expertise and based on a thorough understanding of the wide range of pupils' communication, language and social interaction needs. For example, adults are adept at finding ways for non-verbal pupils to make their needs known and helping them to express their likes and dislikes. The school's skilful focus on supporting the development of communication skills helps to prepare pupils for adulthood, independent living and toward taking their next steps when they leave school.

Reading is prioritised in school. Pupils enjoy learning the foundations for reading, for example, through listening and responding to sounds. For those who are ready to learn phonics, they are expertly taught to develop early reading skills. Staff are relentless in seeking ways to engage pupils in a love of reading. To this end, pupils of all ages and abilities have regular access to a wealth of books. They consistently enjoy sharing stories, songs, rhymes, poems, and novels with staff and with each other.

Pupils are highly motivated and take pride in their learning. From the early years, children are taught to follow routines, build sustained attention and to take turns. As pupils get older, they are increasingly able to self-regulate. This helps them build friendships, socialise, and participate in all that the school has to offer. They become valuable members of the school community. For example, older pupils love to help younger ones, or those that are less physically able than themselves. Pupils are keen to attend school. The school checks absence thoroughly. Where pupils struggle with this, the school works tenaciously with them and their families to ensure that they come to school as regularly as possible.

The school expertly promotes the extensive personal development of all pupils. This prepares pupils well for an enjoyable and successful life beyond school. This begins from the moment pupils start at the school. Pupils grow in confidence, independence, and resilience, through the many experiences they are offered. For example, they benefit from

opportunities to learn life skills such as using a washing machine or using money to buy food at the local supermarket to then cook and serve in the school's café.

Comprehensive careers education, information, advice, and guidance is available to pupils. Older pupils and sixth-form students develop their aspirations through the huge range of professions they experience during their time at the school. Pupils are offered regular and meaningful opportunities to immerse themselves in the world of work and to have taster experiences at local colleges. This reinforces the school's belief that there are no limits to what pupils can achieve.

Governors share the school's passion for providing the best for pupils. Staff value the support that they receive for their well-being and workload. They appreciate the time the school gives them to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Staff are very proud to work at the school.

Parents and carers are effusive in their praise for the school. They typically say that staff 'go above and beyond' in all they do for their children and their families.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **Background**

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour, or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

## Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>                    | 111495   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                            | Warrington   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                          | 10348081   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                             | Special  |
| <b>School category</b>                            | Community special  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                        | 4 to 19  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                           | Mixed  |
| <b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>        | 235  |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b> | 26   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                      | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>                    | Andrea Machin  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                                | Joanne Mullineux   |
| <b>Website</b>                                    | <a href="http://www.greenlaneschool.co.uk">www.greenlaneschool.co.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                | 19 to 20 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005        |

## Information about this school

- Green Lane Community Special School caters for pupils with a range of, often complex, needs including those with autism, severe learning difficulties, and moderate learning difficulties. All pupils at the school have an education, health, and care (EHC) plan.
- The school has a sixth-form department, known as Woolston Sixth Form. It is part of the Woolston Learning Village and situated on the same site as the main school. Students with the most complex needs attend the college along with students from Foxwood School.
- Since the school's previous inspection in November 2019, there have been several changes within the leadership team. This includes the new headteacher, who took up her role in September 2021.

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.

## **Information about this inspection**

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Where appropriate, the inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in evaluating the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and other senior leaders and staff in the school, including those responsible for behaviour, the sixth form, safeguarding and pastoral care.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff, which focused on their own workload and well-being.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including documents relating to school improvement.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey for pupils as well as speaking with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.

## **Inspection team**

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jen Ashworth

Ofsted Inspector

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