

The Greneway School

Garden Walk, Royston, SG8 7JF

Inspection dates 8–9 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2	
Quality of teaching	Good	2	
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1	
Leadership and management	Good	2	

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students achieve well. They make good progress and standards of attainment at the end of Year 8 are above the expected levels for their age.
- Teaching is good overall, with some outstanding practice. Teachers have high expectations of students and develop good working relationships in the classroom.
- Students feel safe. They behave very well and work well together.
- Senior leaders and governors are working successfully to drive improvements in teaching and learning, and standards are rising.
- The school values each individual and offers a wide range of subjects and activities that appeal to all students' interests and ambitions.
- Students who are supported by the pupil premium make good progress. Gaps are closing between the achievement of these students and their peers.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes students' progress slows because they are not given enough opportunities to learn without the help of the teacher.
- The best practice in developing students' writing is not fully shared across the school, with the result that the progress students make varies.
- Teachers do not consistently provide opportunities to explore ideas with students through marking and questioning, and so students do not make as much progress as they could.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 38 lessons in 12 different subject areas. Four of these observations were carried out jointly with members of the school’s leadership team.
- Meetings were held with staff, groups of students, a representative of the local authority, two representatives from the Academy Trust and ten members of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the 152 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Responses to questionnaires completed by 34 staff were also analysed and considered.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including national published assessment data and the school’s own data, the school’s self-evaluation, improvement plans, safeguarding policies, behaviour policies and records and documents relating to setting targets for teachers to improve their work.
- Inspectors listened to students read and evaluated the quality of their work in lessons and books.
- Inspectors considered the school’s arrangements for making the best use of the pupil premium which provides additional funding for students eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority and also the use of Year 7 catch up premium which supports students who did not reach expected levels of attainment in mathematics or English at Key stage 2.
- Inspectors also considered how the school is making decisions about how to use the sport premium which is made available to help the school improve provision for sports and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Inspection team

Matthew Spoons, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Susan Tabberer	Additional Inspector
Roisin Chambers	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Greneway School converted to become an academy school on 1 November 2011. When its predecessor school, The Greneway School, was last inspected by Ofsted, in 2010, it was judged to be good.
- Greneway School is larger than the average-sized middle school.
- The great majority of students are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students receiving extra support through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is below average. This is additional support for looked-after children and students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for secondary schools, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- One student is taught jointly in alternative provision away from the school site at the North Hertfordshire Education Support Centre, Letchworth Garden City. This provision was established the day prior to the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the strengths of teaching, so that more is outstanding, by:
 - broadening the range of strategies to promote students' active and independent learning
 - ensuring that more opportunities are provided for students to have a dialogue with teachers about their learning through questioning
 - improving the consistency of teaching to improve literacy across the curriculum by sharing the best practice more widely across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- From their starting points at Key stage 1, students make less than expected progress by the end of Year 6 in English and Mathematics. However when they join the school, students' standards of attainment are broadly average. From the time that the academy was formed, the attainment of students has been above expected levels when they leave. This represents good progress.
- Pupil premium funding is spent effectively on extra staffing, educational resources and carefully targeted support. As a result students who attract this funding make at least as much progress as other students in the school and since 2012 the previous learning gap of 1 year in mathematics, between their attainment and of their peers is closing. In English there is no gap in attainment between students who attract pupil premium and their peers.
- The small numbers of disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they receive a range of extra support. For example, they use computer technologies and software to develop reading and writing skills, within the broad and balanced range of subjects and activities which the school provides. These opportunities draw out students' love of learning and develop resilience which supports their progress across all aspects of school life.
- All students work hard in lessons and their positive attitudes to learning mean that they engage well with the wide range of subjects they encounter. Increasing numbers participate in the activities on offer outside of the classroom, such as the theatre workshops, environmental studies and sport.
- The school has used the additional sport premium funding which supports sport and healthy lifestyles education to employ a sports coordinator. This has allowed a greater number of students to participate in and enjoy sporting activities in and beyond the school day.
- Year 7 students eligible for additional support in reading from the government's catch-up premium are being well supported through targeted provision, including one-to-one tuition. As a result, they are making good progress in improving their reading skills.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding because there are inconsistencies in rates of progress across year groups and too few students who make more than expected progress, particularly the highest attainers. Senior leaders are taking effective action to improve achievement, for example through targeted extra support for students using extra staffing in English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is rarely less than good and, at times, it is outstanding. Lesson observations, the school's robust monitoring data and scrutiny of students' work show that teaching is improving. Teaching enables students to achieve well over time.
- There is some outstanding practice in a wide range of subjects and students make good progress because lessons are well planned to meet their needs; but this not being shared widely enough across the school to raise the overall quality of teaching still further.
- Students are enthusiastic and enjoy participating in their lessons. They want to do well and their attitudes to learning are generally very positive. Occasionally students are restrained from expressing their curiosity and taking control of their learning because teachers sometime over

structure and control the lessons.

- In the better lessons teachers not only provide interesting topics for study, but also give the students opportunities to work on their own or in small groups and teachers ask questions and challenge students to think for themselves. In some lessons questions are too simple and more challenging work is introduced too late, so that more-able students are not challenged enough to ensure that learning happens at a quick pace.
- The quality of marking is good. Teachers' marking enables students to make corrections and understand the next steps in learning.
- Teachers are aware of the needs of all students and starting points. In good lessons this information is used to create work which challenges, excites and enables them to make good progress. In the few weaker lessons students do not always make the progress they are capable of because the work is not matched closely enough to their specific needs.
- Positive and supportive relationships between staff and students are well established so that most students develop into confident learners. In a high-quality Year 6 physical education lesson, for example, students progressed exceptionally well in both developing their skills of gymnastics, and explaining why and how the techniques were important in the context of a gymnastic floor sequence.
- The schools' recent training for support staff and teaching assistants has been very successful in improving the support given to students. Where teaching assistants provide support, they demonstrate a good awareness of the focus for the lesson and use a range of strategies and skilful questioning to make a very positive contribution to the learning of the individual students with whom they work.
- Leaders have taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching through a rigorous system for evaluating standards and a well-structured and targeted programme of professional development and training for teachers and support staff. This should be extended to ensure that all subject areas and teachers take part in developing techniques and resources to improve students' literacy and share best practice, so ensuring the quality of teaching and progress is equally strong across all year groups and subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The school is calm and well ordered. Staff and students exemplify the highest standards of conduct at all times. Students are very positive about the school and their learning. Their attitudes to learning demonstrate a developing love of learning.
- They support each other well and there are few reported incidents of racial, homophobic or cyber-bullying. Students and parents report that any incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively. The schools' 'active listeners' initiative has had a significant impact in developing students' social and moral awareness and in maintaining the low number of incidents of poor behaviour and bullying.
- Students say they feel safe at school and this is supported by the views of parents. Students are taught how to keep themselves and others safe and are confident to approach staff if they need to. Support staff and supervisors state that they are treated with respect and courtesy.
- In most lessons, good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning have a big impact on learning, with students working together and actively seeking out ways to explore ideas. They

demonstrate an enthusiasm for answering questions, sharing ideas and being creative. In a very few lessons where teaching is less effective students lack opportunities to make the contributions they are capable of and they become restless.

- The school's discipline policy is effective and consistently implemented by all staff. This contributes to good relationships and the number of incidents requiring sanctions is falling. The rewards system is well liked by students and makes a positive contribution to the life of the school.
- The embedded pastoral structure, linked to the house system, which all staff including governors are a part, gives the life of the school a vibrant framework in which students are cared for and achievements of all kinds are celebrated.
- Students attend regularly and on time. Attendance is broadly average compared to other middle schools and the number of fixed term exclusions is decreasing rapidly.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher knows her school well and has brought about improvements since the school became an academy. School improvement planning is rigorous and linked to effective action planning and subject to accurate and regular checks by governors and senior leaders.
- Leaders at all levels evaluate the performance of their area of responsibility and have clear and effective plans for improvement. The vision and culture of the school is shared by all staff and governors and policies and procedures consistently applied throughout the school.
- Arrangements for the management of teachers' performance are well organised. There are effective links between pay and progression through the salary levels. Teachers are held accountable for the progress of their students.
- There is a commitment to training and professional development for teachers and this is linked to the school's quality assurance systems and improvement planning. Teachers are given a high degree of personal responsibility to develop their own practice. The school is now in a strong position to spread the best practice in teaching more widely across departments.
- The range of subjects taught is broad and balanced and meets students' needs in all year groups. There are also a number of activities on offer outside of timetabled lessons such as the choir, orchestra, street-dance and the 'Young Sports Leaders' programme which encourage greater student engagement.
- The school provides a wide range of opportunities for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development within subjects like religious education and science and also through other activities such as a 'cross phase day' about forgiveness and themed days covering topics such as relationships, drugs awareness and careers. The school also encourages an understanding of other cultures through trips abroad and the sponsorship of a young man in India.
- The school promotes healthy lifestyles through a range of activities which are offered to students. These include afterschool and lunchtime sports clubs for basketball, badminton and gymnastics and rugby. The school canteen provides and promotes healthy choices and the majority of students understand what food would provide the healthiest meals.
- The school has procedures and practice that make sure staff and students are safe. The levels of

care and support for all students are key strengths of the school's practice. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.

- Safeguarding and child protection procedures are secure and meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority provides a light-touch level of support to this good school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

The governing body has strong commitment to the school and since the school became a member of the multi-academy trust, shares that drive for improvement across all schools in the trust through the membership of the Chair and Vice Chair on the trust board. They share the vision of the headteacher and believe in the strategic direction in which she is moving the school. They work closely with parents, local business and the community to maintain and raise the school's profile and status.

- The governing body is rigorously holding the school to account and has a good understanding of students' attainment and progress. Governors know about the quality of teaching and how the school rewards good teaching and tackles any underperformance.
- Governors make sure that legal requirements are fully met, including for ensuring students' safeguarding. They make regular visits to the school, monitor the school's work and track the impact of new initiatives. The governing body ensures that the use of additional funds from the pupil premium improves the achievement of the students entitled to it.
- Governors are able to assess the impact of their work and use this information to guide their future activity. They most recently supported the development of a new attendance policy for schools across the trust, which is having a positive impact of reducing absence at the school.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137658
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	429775

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	444
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Denise Graham
Headteacher	Mrs Laura Rawlings
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2010
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