

Greenfields School

Independent Special School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	886/6084
Unique Reference Number	131780
Inspection number	330447
Inspection dates	25–26 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Heather Yaxley HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended.

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Greenfields is an independent primary special school, registered for up to 15 pupils with emotional and behavioural needs. Along with another school and four children's homes, Greenfields is part of a therapeutic community managed by Childhood First, a registered charity within the Peper Harrow Foundation. The school takes pupils from a nearby children's home run by the charity, and also admits pupils who live locally. Although registered to admit pupils between the ages of four and eleven years, the school has never had children young enough to be within the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are currently 12 pupils on roll between the ages of six and 11 years; 11 are in Key Stage 2 and three are girls. Eleven pupils have statements relating to their special educational needs and most pupils have had extended periods of time out of school prior to admission. Nine pupils are looked after by their local authority. The school's vision is 'to be an inclusive learning community which enables all children to feel valued and empowered and equips them with the social, emotional and academic understanding to facilitate a positive and successful future'. Founded in 1995, the school moved to the current site in 2002 and was last inspected by Ofsted in January 2005. The acting headteacher took over the running of the school in the same week as this inspection.

Evaluation of the school

Greenfields School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. Pastoral support is good and this, together with good teaching, enables pupils to make good progress in their learning. With several changes of headteacher in the last 12 months, the school has experienced a period of uncertainty. The part played by the school within its therapeutic community has not been given sufficient attention. Policies have not been kept up to date. Some do not reflect current practice and others do not give staff sufficient guidance to support the school's ethos. As a result, the school does not meet a number of regulations. This is a period of transition for the school. The current focus is on building stronger links between the residential provision and educational provision to enable the school to play a full part in the therapeutic ethos of the community as a whole. Nevertheless, pupils are very happy in school, they want to be there and they want to learn.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory. During this academic year, the curriculum has been completely reorganised around particular themes that will cover the National

Curriculum, religious education, and personal, social and health education (PSHE) over a three-year period. This is already making a positive difference to engaging pupils' interests, enabling them to apply their knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects, and also helping staff to link learning together in meaningful contexts when they plan lessons. It also allows for pupils to be taught in mixed-age classes, matching the curriculum to their particular emotional and behavioural needs as well as to their abilities and interests successfully. The new curriculum has also brought more opportunities for educational visits, much enjoyed by pupils and staff alike and encouraging greater involvement of parents and carers. A trip relating to studies of the Second World War is a good example of this. These are still early days for the new curriculum, with plans and schemes of work being formulated as it develops. There are no curriculum plans for information and communication technology (ICT). The whole-school policy and subject policies do not reflect recent changes because they have not been updated for some time. In addition, existing curriculum policies do not reflect the school's ethos.

The curriculum gives an appropriately high profile to developing pupils' basic skills. Literacy and numeracy are generally appropriately planned, but there is no systematic programme for developing reading. This means that pupils' skills in this area are not always maximised. A significant proportion of curriculum time is given to PSHE. Although the plans for individual sessions are often good and facilitate good responses from the pupils, the policy and scheme of work does not ensure sufficient attention is devoted to each component part for pupils' overall personal development. For example, it is not clear how knowledge and understanding relevant to pupils' health, safety, social development and emotional well-being are planned and taught through other subjects and activities.

The quality of teaching and assessment are good overall, with particular strengths in teaching. The positive approach to education by teachers and support staff, together with their extensive experience and expertise of special schooling, has a significant effect on the pupils' ability to focus on learning, even when the behaviour of some has the potential to disrupt others from time to time. A particularly effective feature of the teaching is that lessons progress at a good pace, holding pupils' attention and ensuring that by the end of the lesson, the objectives have been accomplished and the work is completed. A strength also lies in staff's ability to make the most of pupils' responses, extending their thinking and developing their knowledge. In general, resources are good but opportunities and equipment to enhance teaching and learning through ICT are limited. The revised approach to curriculum development is making a difference to the way that lessons are planned and delivered. With a greater focus on skills, there are more opportunities to involve pupils in what they are learning, why they are learning it and how well they are doing.

Accurate and regular teacher assessments linked to the National Curriculum and age-related tests, together with a range of baseline assessments enable the school to track pupils' attainments over time effectively. This tracking shows that, in relation to their complex emotional and learning needs, pupils generally make good progress

from their starting points. Their skills are weaker in reading and writing, but in general, the longer that pupils stay at the school, the more rapid their progress and the more likely they are to catch up with learning previously missed. This applies equally to those who are day pupils and those in who live at the house. The tracking system is not yet used to set targets for individual pupils' expected progress. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is not well developed, and not sufficiently linked to pupils' individual targets. All pupils have targets for learning and for behaviour, but these are not reviewed and changed regularly enough.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The development of pupils' personal skills is satisfactory, and this, together with good progress in their academic learning, prepares them appropriately for the next stage in their education. Sometimes pupils' behaviour is good, particularly of those who have been at the school for some time. Although their behaviour is sometimes inappropriate, over time, pupils develop a keen sense of right and wrong and of their own responsibilities when things are not going so well. All pupils know that learning is important and respond well to the support that they get to manage their behaviour and to return to class soon after any problems occur. Their enjoyment of school is shown in their keenness to get on with their work and in their lively chatter about what they are learning. They complete their class work, present it well and are pleased with it. Pupils' attendance is often good. There is respect for staff and for the learning environment, and this ensures that resources are looked after well and used appropriately. It also ensures that pupils access other activities that support the curriculum such as school visits and the use of local facilities for sports and physical education (PE). This helps to support their understanding of the lives of others, as well providing opportunities for appropriate social behaviour with the community. Aspects of pupils' health and safety are developed adequately through the curriculum, but opportunities to learn about public institutions and services are not in place. One of the most important things for the pupils is that they have friends at the school. This is evident not only in what they say about their school, but also in the way that they behave towards one another. With appropriate levels of supervision and support, pupils work and play cooperatively together. There are some opportunities for pupils to make choices and to take greater responsibility but they would like to be more involved in the work of the school and to have more opportunities to say what they think and to make suggestions.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Pastoral support to pupils is good. However, welfare, health and safety are satisfactory overall because a number of regulations are not met and some policies have not been reviewed or revised for some time. Recent changes in the leadership of the school have meant that some procedures and practices have slipped. For example, the person designated to coordinate child protection does not have the appropriate level of training, a fire risk assessment has not been undertaken for a while and there have been too few fire drills. In addition, as at the last inspection,

pupils' absences are not recorded consistently and the admissions register does not have information in alphabetical order. The health and safety policy covers a range of relevant information but there is insufficient detail to support staff in relation to first aid and medical emergencies. Other policies, such as those for PSHE and behaviour management, are not always suitably detailed to ensure a clear understanding of how the school and the residential provision will work together to ensure that the therapeutic ethos will be consistently promoted. Pupils say that they feel safe. Good risk assessments, both for individual pupils and for activities, help staff to identify and plan effectively for potential difficulties. Opportunities for pupils to develop greater awareness of healthy living and lifestyles are not always well planned through the curriculum, although attention to their emotional well-being is good. Since the last inspection, the school has established and implemented a disability and discrimination plan that covers a comprehensive range of actions to ensure improved access over time to the curriculum and the accommodation.

All pupils have a thorough, well planned induction to the school. This is valued highly by pupils, parents, carers and staff. By the end of their induction, pupils are ready to re-engage with learning, they know what is expected of them and they are confident in their relationships with staff. This makes a significant contribution to their attitudes to learning and also allows established pupils to welcome a new person to the group. Staff throughout the school model respect and unconditional kindness, enabling learning to take place within warm secure relationships between staff and pupils, and often between the pupils themselves.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has thorough processes and procedures in place to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children.

School's premises and accommodation

The school's accommodation is suitable to support the number of pupils in relation to their needs. There are three classrooms and toilet facilities on the ground floor and a library, a small kitchen area and administrative rooms on the first floor. There is a large play area with climbing equipment and a soft surface. This area is also used for PE. A local community hall and other leisure facilities are also used for PE and sport. There are no facilities for pupils who are ill.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

A suitable range of information is available for parents and carers to keep them informed about their child's progress. In addition to an annual report for all pupils, information is also shared at annual reviews and at statutory reviews for those who are looked after by a local authority. Each day-pupil has a book to exchange information between home and school on a daily basis. Telephone calls are also made as appropriate. For pupils at the house, information is shared at handover meetings at the beginning and end of each day. The family and placement support

worker also has regular contact with most families. All of the above helps staff to know their pupils very well and provides good opportunities to keep families and carers well informed. The school does not meet a number of regulations in respect of other required information. Some information in the prospectus is out of date and other required information is missing. This includes the address of the proprietors, information regarding exclusions, the range of policies available on request, and details about complaints and academic results for those who request them. As at the last inspection, the school does not routinely send details of financial income and expenditure for each pupil to their local authority.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a suitable policy and procedure for dealing with complaints. There have been no complaints registered under this procedure over the past year.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Although registered to admit children within an Early Years Foundation Stage, the school, there have been no children of this age in the school. However, suitable curriculum plans are in place in preparation for admitting young children in the future. Planning documents identify how each of the six areas of learning will be covered and taught. Suitable resources have been purchased and an outside learning area is newly established. The classroom currently designated for Key Stage 1 pupils is appropriately arranged to meet the needs of younger children and the teacher is developing the provision effectively. Procedures and practices for safeguarding and other aspects of children's welfare, health and safety are the same as those for the whole school and appropriate to the needs for this age group.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ("the Regulations"), with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- revise the school curriculum policy and schemes of work (paragraph 1(2))
- provide personal, social and health education which reflects its aims and ethos (paragraph 1(2)(f))
- improve classroom resources for ICT (paragraph 1(3)(f)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (standard 2) and must:

- provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England (paragraph 2(d)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- provide the appropriate level of training for the person designated to coordinate child protection at the school (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- establish regular risk assessments for fire and conduct regular fire drills (paragraph 3(5))
- establish and implement a written policy on first aid (paragraph 3(6))
- revise the procedures for maintaining an appropriate admission register and suitable attendance registers (paragraph 3(9)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill (paragraph 5(l)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide the address and telephone number of the proprietor's principal office (paragraph 6(2)(b))
- provide particulars of the school's policy on exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e))
- ensure that parents and carers are aware that they can request particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 6(2)(h))
- ensure that parents and carers are aware that they can request particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(i))
- ensure that parents and carers are aware that they can request details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j))
- provide each relevant local authority with an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of each pupil (paragraph 6(7)).

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development			✓	
The behaviour of pupils			✓	

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			✓	
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School details

Name of school	Greenfields School		
DCSF number	886/6084		
Unique reference number	131780		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1995		
Age range of pupils	4–11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 9	Girls: 3	Total: 12
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 7	Girls: 3	Total: 10
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 6	Girls: 3	Total: 9
Annual fees (day pupils)	£39,604		
Address of school	Tenterden Road Biddenden Ashford Kent TN27 8BE		
Telephone number	01580 292523		
Fax number	01580 292354		
Email address	greenfields@childhoodfirst.org.uk		
Acting Headteacher	Mrs Jacqui Ward		
Proprietor	Childhood First Children's Charity		
Reporting inspector	Heather Yaxley HMI		
Dates of inspection	25–26 February 2009		