

Greenfields School and Sports College

Prentice Court, Lings Way, Northampton, NN3 8XS

Inspection dates 6–7 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The senior leadership team has a strong vision for the future of the school that is shared by all staff.
- All students make at least good progress from their different starting points.
- Teaching captures students' imagination so that they are keen to join in and really try their best. Students enjoy their learning in lessons and are helped to communicate effectively by skilled staff.
- Behaviour is good and relationships are excellent. Staff keep students safe, and they care for them extremely well.
- The sixth form is good. Students are prepared very effectively for life after school.
- The learning environment is bright and encouraging. It helps students to focus and celebrates their achievements.
- Governors know the school well. They have worked closely with the headteacher and local authority to make many recent improvements.
- Parents appreciate the education and care provided by the school. One wrote, 'We not only feel that her care and education has been exceptional, we have been supported as a family.'

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although the vast majority of teaching is good, not enough lessons are outstanding.
- Staff do not consistently use assessment information, marking and discussions with students to help them understand how to improve their learning and to make the best progress they can.
- Staff do not always give students sufficient time to respond to questions or to complete tasks and work things out for themselves.
- School self-assessment and improvement planning does not always focus sufficiently on students' learning and progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 16 lessons. Nine of these lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with students, the lead person for the Augmentative and Alternative Communication Service (AAC Service), a representative of the local authority, governors and the leadership team.
- The team considered the school’s recent parental survey (34 responses) and the 10 responses to the online Parent View survey.
- Inspectors looked at students’ work in lessons, together with a range of documents. These included information on keeping students safe, school improvement and self-evaluation documentation, and data on students’ progress.

Inspection team

Rosemary Mackenzie, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kate Robertston	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Greenfields School and Sports College educates secondary-age students with profound, severe and complex learning needs. Many students have additional medical needs.
- Most students are White British. There are a few students from minority ethnic groups.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of students receiving pupil premium is low. The pupil premium is additional funding for students who are looked after by the local authority or who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school does not use any form of alternative provision. Through consortium arrangements, sixth form students access learning across a group of Northamptonshire special schools. Options including catering, horticulture, business studies, and hair and beauty.
- The school provides Augmentative and Alternative Communication advice and support for children on behalf of the local authority.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in 2012 after a short period of being the acting senior leadership team.
- The school has consulted stakeholders with a view to becoming an academy during the next school year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportions of good and outstanding teaching by ensuring that:
 - students have clear information about how they are doing and what they need to learn next
 - staff use assessment information to guide their marking and discussions with students about their work so that students make the best progress they can
 - staff allow students enough time to think about and complete what they are doing, including making links to previous learning so that their critical thinking and problem-solving skills are more consistently developed.
- Ensure that the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning have clear success measures related to students' learning and progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All groups of students make good progress over time given their low starting points and additional learning needs. This is because the leadership team and staff have high expectations and have worked effectively together to enable all students to access learning.
- Students make good progress in lessons. Staff successfully capture students' interest, and help them to communicate effectively and behave appropriately in lessons. As a result, students' good progress is underpinned by their very positive attitudes to learning and enjoyment of lessons.
- Students achieve well in English and mathematics and have many opportunities to practise these skills in lessons throughout the school day.
- Year 7 'catch-up' funding is used effectively to provide additional classroom support. This has helped to increase students' progress through individual tuition and being taught in small groups.
- The pupil premium funding is used well to address individual students' learning needs. For example, it has been used for specialist equipment and additional assessments to help staff to understand and address students' specific difficulties. Progress for this group is at least in line with that of the other students. Because the number of eligible students in each year group is small, it is not possible to comment on their attainment without risk of identifying individual students.
- Students who speak English as an additional language make good progress. A high priority is given in lessons to visual communication and the provision of appropriate support. There is no discrimination and the school is very successful at promoting equality of opportunity for all individuals.
- The most-able students achieve well. The school provides a range of courses leading to additional qualifications.
- Students in the sixth form make particularly good progress in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. They are well prepared for the next stage in their lives through working alongside students from other special schools. They achieve a wide range of accreditations and workplace skills.
- Occasionally, students' progress in lessons slows when they are not given enough time to think about teachers' questions or instructions so that they can apply what they already know to solving a problem and work out answers or what to do for themselves.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations. They plan and prepare a wide range of interesting lessons that successfully engage students. In the best lessons, the resources and adaptations, alongside symbols and communication systems, enable students to participate enthusiastically and make good progress in their learning.
- As a result of good teaching, most groups of students, including those with complex needs,

make good progress and achieve well over time. Lessons help students to deepen their knowledge and understanding and enable them to develop their skills in a range of situations.

- In one lesson, students were enthusiastically making cakes. They were encouraged to mix and spoon the ingredients into cake cases themselves with the minimum of adult help; progress in learning and thinking was outstanding, as students successfully overcame the problems they met.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. The consortium arrangement with other local special schools provides a wide range of accreditation and learning environments. These enable students to develop the skills they need to move successfully into the next stage in their lives. Students appreciate the opportunity to work alongside their peers from other schools.
- Relationships are very good and staff are very skilled at managing difficult behaviour. As a result, learning is rarely interrupted.
- Communication is taught particularly well in classes and individually. Reading is taught well throughout the school, so that students love stories and books and develop their skills well from their starting points. Staff have secure subject knowledge and lessons are guided by their knowledge and understanding of how students with complex needs learn.
- Teaching assistants are skilled and play a valuable role in supporting learning. Where they are provided with detailed information about how to help students develop their critical thinking skills, they make outstanding contributions to learning. However, such best practice is inconsistent and, when they step in too soon, this slows students' ability to work things out for themselves and develop their investigative skills.
- Staff do not consistently make it clear to students how they are doing and what they can do to achieve even more. In some lessons they are too quick to provide an answer or to help students finish a task. At such times the learning requires improvement as students have not had enough time to think about what they are being asked to do and so do not make the connections with what they already know as much as they could.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. There is a calm, purposeful atmosphere in lessons and around the school.
- Students enjoy their lessons and behave well. Their positive attitudes to learning help them to make good progress in lessons.
- Where students are distressed, anxious or less engaged, they are managed with a professional, caring and skilled approach to help them return quickly to their learning tasks.
- Students' attendance is good and there are no exclusions. They are supported by very good care systems to attend and learn in school. Where there are attendance issues, these are dealt with in a supportive manner, quickly and effectively.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Parents and students agree that they are safe and well cared for. Students are confident in turning to adults for help if they feel worried or intimidated by the behaviour of others. They particularly appreciate the 'caring hand' - students can choose with whom they would prefer to talk, guided by photographs of staff

displayed on the fingers of the hand.

- Students arrive and leave school in a calm and orderly atmosphere, with staff ensuring that they are safe.
- Arrangements for students' safeguarding meet current national requirements.
- Behaviour and safety are good in the sixth form, where additional opportunities are provided to enable students to manage risk and learn safely in different environments. For example, they have lockers in school to help them learn to manage their own belongings.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has improved rapidly following a period of instability in the leadership team. The headteacher and senior leadership team have identified appropriate priorities for the school, providing challenge to ensure that students make good progress. Other leaders are involved in appointing new staff, induction and training. They are developing their roles well in their individual areas of responsibility.
- The school works well with other schools and organisations. Their work with parents is a particular strength, with parents reporting that they are supported very well to educate and care for their children.
- The learning environment is bright and focuses on celebrating learning, together with developing the social, moral and cultural aspects of the school. It reflects the high expectations of the leadership team and the strong learning culture of the school. Students much appreciate the way in which their work is displayed and valued.
- The school provides students with a strong and relevant range of learning experiences. There is a good emphasis on English and mathematics throughout the school and other subjects are brought together by being taught through 'topics', which make the work interesting for the students.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good. The sixth form curriculum is particularly good and relevant to students' needs. Students' attitudes to learning are consequently very positive.
- The independent advice and guidance, alongside careful preparation for moving to the next stage in the students' lives, are strengths of this school. The consortium arrangement with other special schools gives students a wide range of opportunities to develop their social, team skills and learn how to conduct themselves as they leave school.
- The school makes extremely good provision for the spiritual, moral and social education of the students, with residential visits within Britain and to other countries. The students learn about other faiths and have recently been to a Buddhist Centre and churches. This aspect of the curriculum is given a high priority in this school and its impact on students' development is carefully tracked and evaluated.
- The local authority provides knowledgeable, appropriate challenge and support.
- The school's self-analysis and improvement plans for strengthening teaching and further improving students' learning and progress do not include sufficiently well-focused success measures.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have a thorough understanding of the school and have led it well through the period of instability over its leadership. They visit regularly and work closely with the headteacher, the staff and the local authority, providing challenge and support. They have high expectations of the staff and work hard to ensure that all students have a good-quality education.
- The governors are skilled, professional and competent. They have a clear vision for the future of the school and are able to hold it to account. They use the school's data to guide school improvement and to check that the pupil premium and Year 7 'catch-up' funding are wisely spent.
- The governors have sound systems for performance management. They ensure that the school meets all current requirements and carefully check that teachers' pay is related to performance.
- Governors have carefully consulted all stakeholders and had considered discussions about the benefits of becoming an academy.

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	122163
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	431176

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	85
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	26
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Brand
Headteacher	Lisa Atack
Date of previous school inspection	8 June 2011
Telephone number	01604 741960
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