

Inspection of Greenbank School

Greenbank Lane, Hartford, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 1LD

Inspection dates:	21 and 22 January 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils behave exceptionally well and display impeccable manners. They greet each other with a 'good morning' each day. They chat warmly to staff and are polite and friendly to visitors in school. They understand that all the pupils in school are unique. They accept each other's commonalities and differences. Pupils display kindness and empathy and look after each other. The school's happy and supportive ethos shines through.

The school has high expectations for all pupils. Pupils rise to these and achieve well. Pupils enjoy learning. The adults around them offer encouragement and support as well as challenge for pupils to aim high. Pupils value the reward points that they earn during the week. They enjoy choosing a reward activity on Friday afternoons.

Pupils enjoy time with their friends. They particularly enjoy breaktimes to play football, use the fitness equipment or have a chat. Pupils develop strong positive relationships with staff. They feel that staff always look at the positives and help pupils to do the same.

Pupils' personal development is well considered. Pupils have opportunities to develop their organisation and leadership skills. For example, whole-school events are organised by students in the sixth form. Pupils benefit from events to celebrate different cultures and religions. For instance, pupils and their families joined with members of the local community and former pupils to enjoy music, food and dancing at the school's recent diversity festival.

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

The school aims to recognise and celebrate the personal and academic achievements of pupils. Since the previous inspection, the school has taken steps to raise the ambition of the curriculum so that pupils develop academically and personally. However, despite improvements to the design of the curriculum, pupils in key stage 4, do not study a sufficiently broad range of subjects. For example, these pupils do not have lessons in the performing arts or music. This limits the choices that pupils can make at their next steps.

For the most part, the curriculum is well designed and allows pupils to build on their prior knowledge and skills. Teachers carefully consider the special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of pupils. They are skilled in choosing the right materials and resources that will hook pupils in and engage them in their learning. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to revisit and practise key concepts. They check on pupils' learning to confirm that pupils understand what they have learned and to shape future teaching.

Reading is a high priority across the school. Staff have the expert knowledge that they need to provide effective support to pupils with their reading. Pupils read widely and often. Staff choose age-appropriate texts that they know pupils will enjoy. Alongside their reading knowledge, pupils develop their broader literacy skills. Staff ensure that pupils who have fallen behind in their reading quickly gain the knowledge and skills that they need. This helps these pupils to become confident and fluent readers.

Pupils live up to the school's high standards for their behaviour. They respond exceptionally well to the school's well established and consistent approach to managing behaviour. Staff model the behaviours that they want pupils to develop in a quiet, respectful way. They help pupils to reflect honestly upon their own behaviours to help them to better manage their emotions. Pupils understand and respect the needs of other pupils in the school.

On joining the school, pupils quickly adopt the 'Greenbank way'. They develop resilience and become proficient in solving problems. They learn how to listen to others and articulate their own views and opinions. Pupils feel that they belong in this school and want to contribute to the school's improvement. However, a number of pupils feel that the school does not listen to their views sufficiently well.

Pupils learn about the fundamental British values. For example, pupils asked a number of challenging questions to a member of the House of Lords. This deepened pupils' knowledge around democracy and the role of parliament.

Careers education starts in Year 7 and runs successfully through all year groups. When pupils move into the sixth form they learn to apply their knowledge. For example, sixth-form students take part in work experience. Pupils discuss the personal qualities that different careers will demand. They also visit a number of colleges and learn about internships and work options. This work ensures that pupils can make informed decisions about their next stage in education, employment or training.

Leaders and those responsible for governance are conscious of staff's workload and well-being. They take positive steps to support these through a range of initiatives that are welcomed by staff. This includes providing staff with access to external health support and 'hot chocolate Monday'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In key stage 4, pupils do not study a sufficiently broad and rich curriculum. This limits pupils' options for their next steps. The school should provide a wide range of subjects that equip pupils with the skills and knowledge that they need for the future.
- A number of pupils do not have opportunities to share their views about the school. This means that these pupils feel that their opinions are not considered when leaders and staff make decisions. The school should enable pupils to share their views about different aspects of school life.

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

Unique reference number	111503
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10377943
Type of school	Secondary special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	121
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	25
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Philip Hopwood
Headteacher	Michael McCann
Website	www.greenbankschool.org
Dates of previous inspection	28 February and 2 March 2023, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provisions.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. The school caters for pupils with autism, speech, language and communication needs and moderate learning difficulties.
- 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 apprenticeship.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and

management) and for any relevant provision judgement (sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior school leaders and subject leaders. Inspectors spoke to members of the governing body, including the chair. An inspector also spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, English, including early reading, and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 reviewed a range of documents, including policies and analysis of pupils’ behaviour and attitudes.
- Inspectors spoke to some pupils and staff about the school. They also observed pupils’ behaviour during lunch and breaktimes.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s online surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors also considered the views of parents and carers expressed through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

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