



Green Park School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104415
Local Authority Wolverhampton
Inspection number 286935
Inspection date 11 October 2006
Reporting inspector Steven Parker

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Green Park Avenue
School category	Community		Stowlawn
Age range of pupils	5-19		Bilston WV14 6EH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01902 556429
Number on roll (school)	79	Fax number	01902 408076
Number on roll (6th form)	21		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Barry Bond
		Headteacher	Lorraine Dawney
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Green Park is an all-age day special school for pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties. The character of the school has changed since the last inspection. There are now more pupils with profound and complex difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) (each accounting for about a quarter of the school's population) and more pupils coming from ethnic minority backgrounds (now approaching half the school's roll). English is an additional language for about half of the latter group. Many of the pupils come from socially deprived backgrounds.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Green Park is a good school with some notable strengths. It provides a very caring environment, where a range of professionals work well together to give high quality support to pupils whose complex difficulties make it difficult for them to access the good learning opportunities on offer. This gives pupils the confidence and ability to learn successfully and it ensures their good personal development. Standards across the school are significantly below average because of pupils' severe learning difficulties, but they nonetheless make good progress and achieve well in their learning because of the good teaching they receive from the Foundation Stage through to the time they leave. Behaviour is good because it is well managed. When pupils do occasionally lose control, they are sensitively and effectively helped to get back onto an even keel. As a result, many pupils can work happily alongside their mainstream peers in integrated activities and, over the last couple of years, many have made such good progress that they have been able to transfer to schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. All pupils and their parents are justifiably proud of these successes. One parent spoke for many when she said that her daughter's progress had 'exceeded her greatest expectations'.

The school continues to face significant difficulties with its less-than-ideal accommodation, but it has done much since the last inspection to improve its facilities. Careful management of a tight budget has also resulted in notable improvements to learning resources. As a result, the school is bright and welcoming and provides a motivating setting for its pupils. The whole-school community looks forward to moving into shared new buildings, which are planned as part of a campus-wide development over the next three years. The curriculum is good and provides many exciting opportunities for pupils to learn outside school in the wider community. Activities and class groupings within school are imaginatively matched to meet the specific needs of pupils, whilst there is a commitment to ensuring that all pupils share experiences throughout the week, to ensure that they have a sense of belonging to the wider school community. Teachers work in effective teams, with up to three very able assistants, to provide the right sort of support and challenge to enable pupils to learn. Although the quality of teaching is mainly good, there is room for further improvement, particularly in encouraging pupils' independence and creativity, including the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Methods of assessment do not always provide an accurate picture of pupils' progress.

The headteacher is respected as a very good leader by her colleagues, including members of the very supportive governing body, and her vision for the school's future has been the driving force behind its continuing improvement, for example, in the quality of teaching and learning. She works in effective partnership with her able senior leadership team and is in the process of developing and encouraging shared leadership responsibilities with all teachers. Although these arrangements are not yet fully embedded, leadership and management are good. The school has a clear view of what it does well and what it needs to do to improve.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Provision in the post-16 department has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good. Pupils follow relevant courses within the school or in a local college that give them a range of skills that they can use when they leave, and which accredit their learning with certificates. They appreciate the relevant work-related learning opportunities provided for them, although the school is constantly challenged to arrange suitable work experience placements.

What the school should do to improve further

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- Plan specifically for more opportunities for independent learning and discovery, including the better use of ICT for learning across the curriculum.
- Improve the accuracy of ways of measuring learning outcomes for all pupils.
- Strengthen the quality of wider leadership, particularly the work of subject leaders in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Standards are significantly below average, although pupils make good progress and achieve well. Teaching is well matched to pupils' individual needs, ensuring that all achieve equally well, no matter what their difficulties or ethnic backgrounds are. Pupils with ASD make particularly good progress, because of the structured support they receive. Whilst priority is given to helping all pupils to develop their communication and social skills, they progress well across all subjects. There are particular strengths in mathematics and personal, social and health education (PSHE). By the time they leave school, pupils have developed well in their basic skills and have achieved good results in a range of courses, so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their lives.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The overall personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Pupils love going to school and parents say that their children eagerly await the transport that takes them there. Attendance is good overall, particularly when considering the impact of some of the serious medical needs that some pupils have. Pupils show delight and enjoyment for all aspects of school life. They value praise and rewards when they have tried hard. A very well-focused approach to creating an atmosphere of trust, where pupils understand what is expected of them, so that they do not get frustrated,

confused or anxious, ensures that they cope well with the challenge of learning new things. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school rightly concentrates on developing pupils' social and personal skills, and the very good quality of the relationships that pupils have with each other and all staff is an impressive result of this approach. There is a strong moral code and staff are very clear and consistent in expressing their expectations about how pupils should conduct themselves. As a result, behaviour is good. The rich diversity of cultures in the school and wider community is experienced and celebrated. As pupils go through the school they build up their self-confidence so that they can cope with new experiences, such as residential trips. The strong ethos of caring support in the school can sometimes limit the development of pupils' independence, but staff are aware of and try to avoid this danger. Members of the school council represent the hopes and wishes of their peers very effectively. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles because of the good range of physical and sporting activities and the emphasis on healthy living.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are good, because teachers use assessment information well to plan individualised learning for pupils, so that they can make good progress. However, assessment does not always provide enough information about the progress of pupils with profound and complex needs. There is very good teamwork between teachers and their assistants to support learning and manage any difficult behaviour. Well-presented materials and the lively, flexible pace of lessons keep pupils interested and engaged, although, sometimes, too much talk from staff confuses pupils and makes it difficult for them to understand exactly what is required of them. Signs, symbols, communication aids and, where appropriate, visual timetables are used effectively to help pupils understand and participate successfully in activities. Whilst the headteacher has encouraged all staff to be reflective about the way they do their work, there are occasions when teaching styles could be more varied to provide pupils with increased opportunities to learn through experiment and discovery, including the use of ICT.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school's curriculum is good. Classes are organised so that pupils with similar difficulties are taught together, ensuring that staff expertise is used to best effect. In particular, the large number of pupils with profound and complex needs benefit from sensory experiences that stimulate them to respond productively. By the same token, pupils with ASD are secure in their learning within a highly structured framework that

provides the security and predictability that they require to learn effectively. Lessons are interesting and pupils have the opportunity to learn the full range of subjects and engage in a wide range of additional sporting and other exciting out-of-school activities. The school rightly focuses on developing pupils' communication and basic skills, which are important to secure their future economic well-being. Recent developments of good quality sensory and drama facilities are valuable additions to the school's provision, although the remaining inadequacies of the building still limit pupils' learning opportunities. There is a well-planned programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education that plays an important part in helping pupils to understand their own and others' needs, rights and responsibilities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The good quality of the school's pastoral provision is a significant contributor to its success. There is a strong emphasis on the care and support of individual pupils and on celebrating their achievements. The practical commitment of staff to pupils' health, safety and well-being is very high and the partnerships nurtured with parents and carers contribute importantly to pupils' confidence and sense of security. This aspect is much appreciated by parents. Arrangements for reviewing pupils' social and academic progress and providing highly focused guidance are thorough and motivating to pupils and staff but the reporting of academic progress is not yet fully effective. Very good collaboration with other services and agencies provide very well co-ordinated provision to meet pupils' wide-ranging needs and, as a result, they are helped to overcome significant difficulties, such as sensory impairments. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and their families receive very well-focused support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's very good leadership reflects her child-centred approach and professional commitment to high standards. She has encouraged a strong sense of teamwork and is, consequently, ably supported by her senior colleagues and the whole-staff team in managing the school's provision. Recent developments in the role of subject leaders, requiring them to become more involved in monitoring and influencing the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects, are not yet fully effective. The school has a clear, though sometimes modest, picture of its overall effectiveness and uses the information it gathers about the effect of its work well to plan necessary improvements, for instance, in pupils' achievements and the quality of curriculum provision. The governors continue to be very involved in the school, influencing its future development through their advocacy of the school's needs with the local authority, being very proactive in successful management of the

tight budget, supporting all staff empathetically and challenging its managers to explain and justify their decisions whenever necessary.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	2
The behaviour of learners	2	2
The attendance of learners	2	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

12 October 2006

Dear Pupils

Green Park School, Green Park Avenue, Stowlawn, Wolverhampton WV14 6EH

We really enjoyed our recent visit to your school, because you made us feel so welcome. Thank you for talking to us and telling us how much you enjoy going to school. A special thank you must go to the members of the school council, who were especially helpful.

There were lots of things we liked about your school:

- You work very hard and learn about all sorts of things.
- You behave very well and are kind to each other.
- All the staff do their very best to care for you and help you to learn, no matter what your difficulties are.
- Your very good headteacher runs the school well because she makes sure that she knows about you and your work and helps everyone in the school to work well together.
- Your parents are right to think that you go to a good school and you have good reason to be proud of it.

We thought your school could be even better if:

- It makes better arrangements to help you to be more independent, learn by experimenting with things and using computers more.
- Teachers find out more about how they can work with you and how they can do it even better.

Yours sincerely

Steven Parker Lead Inspector