

Greenfield School Community and Arts College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114305
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	338335
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Heather Richardson HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	784
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Bergg
Headteacher	Mr David Priestley
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including the school's monitoring records, improvement plans and minutes of governors' meetings, as well as questionnaires completed by pupils and staff. The inspectors also analysed 112 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the standards achieved by all groups of pupils and the rate of their progress
- the quality of teaching and its impact on raising standards and achievement
- the effectiveness of the school's leaders and managers in driving improvement.

Information about the school

Greenfield School Community and Arts College is smaller than average. It is located in an area where overall levels of deprivation are slightly higher than the national average, but there are pockets of greater deprivation. There are more girls than boys, but the proportions vary between year groups. Almost all pupils are White British and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is higher than average. Although the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is similar to the national average, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average.

The school is a specialist Arts College. It has received the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust Inclusive School Award and is a Creative Partnerships National School of Creativity. It provides a wide range of opportunities for the community and is a well-used neighbourhood facility. The school has recently developed Trust arrangements with neighbouring secondary schools and partners, primarily to strengthen provision for students aged 14 to 19 in the area.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Greenfield school's progress has been uneven since the previous inspection; it is now a satisfactory school. The school has significant strengths in the quality of care, support and guidance that it provides for its pupils. This is reflected in pupils' personal development, including their good and considerate behaviour. For the most part, pupils enjoy school. Those who completed the questionnaire and who spoke to inspectors were very positive about their experiences. Pupils benefit significantly from the school's specialist status as an arts college through the range of courses provided, the quality of provision in specialist subjects, and strong links with the community. However, although there has been some sharing of expertise, the impact of the school's specialism on the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils in other areas has been limited.

Provisional results in the 2009 external examinations show improvement, notably in the key measure of the proportion of pupils who gain five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics. Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are broadly in line with national averages, but there is variation between subjects. The school has halted a decline in standards at Key Stage 4 and has increased the proportion of pupils achieving the highest A*/A grades, but improvements have yet to be fully embedded and sustained. There is more to be done to enable pupils to make good progress in all subjects, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology. Pupils achieve well in the specialist subjects; for example, some progress to A-level art at Key Stage 4 having achieved their GCSE at the end of Year 9. The school is making good use of the curriculum to promote achievement. One example is the way in which it has worked with partners to provide appropriate courses to ensure that a small group of potentially disaffected pupils gain accreditation for their learning.

Although some teaching is of a high quality, not enough teaching is consistently good to enable pupils to make good progress. In particular, there is too much variation in the quality and use of assessment. The school has adopted several strategies to improve teaching, including opting to participate in the National Challenge initiative, sharing good practice, and observing lessons and providing feedback to teachers. However, although there is improvement, neither the sharing of good practice nor the school's monitoring is strong enough at present to ensure that all teachers adopt the effective strategies seen by inspectors in the best lessons.

Staff and parents support the view that the headteacher, senior leaders and governors promote improvement, as illustrated in the establishment of the Trust and the impact of specialist status. There is a clear focus on priorities and weaknesses are being tackled, as seen in the improving results. However, many of the school's systems for monitoring

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and evaluating its work are relatively recent. They are not always sufficiently effective to ensure accountability at all levels for the outcomes achieved by pupils or to target the next steps. Despite this, much of the school's evaluation of its performance aligned with inspectors' judgements, although some elements of the school's evaluation were too positive. Hence the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress so that standards are raised, particularly in the core subjects.
- Ensure a consistently high quality of teaching and use of assessment by:
 - raising the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school
 - sharing existing good practice regularly and routinely
 - improving teachers' use of assessment to inform the planning of pupils' work.
- Accelerate improvement by:
 - increasing the rigour of monitoring and evaluation in order to strengthen accountability all levels
 - using the outcomes of evaluation to sharpen priorities for further improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils start the school with overall standards that are broadly in line with national averages, although their literacy levels are often slightly lower. By the time they leave school they make satisfactory progress and reach standards that are broadly similar to the averages achieved nationally. However, this overall picture masks some variation. Standards and achievement in the specialist subjects such as art, drama and the performing arts are high. In contrast, there has been some underachievement in recent years in the core subjects, which the school has begun to tackle. There has been an increase of 10 percentage points between the low 2008 results and the provisional results for 2009 in the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics, principally because of a significant improvement in the results for mathematics. The school has also improved the outcomes for its most able pupils. In some lessons observed by inspectors, pupils made good progress in response to good teaching and effective assessment. However, pupils are not yet making good progress over time across all subjects because of inconsistencies in the quality of provision. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Staff are well informed about individual needs, but detailed analysis of their progress is at an early stage.

Pupils generally enjoy lessons and behave well in lessons and around school. They state that they feel safe in school and know to whom they can turn if there is a problem. They

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apply their understanding of how to stay safe well in practical lessons. Pupils show good knowledge and understanding of how to stay healthy and a high proportion participate in sporting activities and dance. Some demonstrated their knowledge of staying healthy through performing a play about obesity in the local community. This is one example of their good contribution to the school and wider community. Pupils also take advantage of the additional opportunities provided through specialist status to contribute to the community, such as the circus week. The school's specialist status is a significant factor in pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example, in enabling them to gain understanding of different cultures. Pupils respond well to opportunities to collaborate, including working in teams and providing thoughtful feedback on each other's work, as illustrated in a physical education lesson during the inspection. In a science lesson observed by an inspector, pupils showed their ability to reflect sensitively on moral and ethical issues.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Inspectors observed several lessons in which teaching was good. In some cases, this

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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was because teachers used their subject knowledge well to provide engaging activities for pupils; in others they made effective use of assessment. For example, in an art lesson observed by an inspector, the teacher made very good use of the assessment of pupils' achievements in differentiating the task and in setting individual targets, as well as in the well-matched support and challenge for each pupil as the lesson progressed. However, teachers' use of assessment across and within subjects is too variable and there is insufficient use of assessment to plan the next steps of learning. Not enough teaching is of good quality and both the school's records and inspectors' observations identified a small proportion of inadequate teaching. Pupils' behaviour deteriorated in the weakest lessons. Although pupils make good progress in some individual lessons, the inconsistency in the quality of teaching is a hindrance to their overall progress.

The school's curriculum is particularly strong at Key Stage 4 where the provision is tailored well to meet pupils' differing needs and promote their achievement. Some changes, including reviewing examination options in some subjects and replacing non-accredited courses with those in which pupils can gain awards, are relatively recent. Others, including the opportunity to study A-level art, are well established. The school's specialist status is a significant factor in the richness of the curriculum provided both in specialist lessons such as art, dance and the performing arts and in the wide range of extra-curricular activities.

The school provides good care, support and guidance for its pupils. Evidence from case studies and from discussions during the inspection showed that staff know all pupils well and aspects of their care for the most vulnerable are excellent. The school works well with other agencies to meet pupils' needs. Year 7 pupils reported that they had settled well into the school because of smooth transition arrangements. Most Year 11 pupils felt well-informed about the choices available to them when they leave school. The number of pupils who leave school and do not continue into education, employment or training has reduced markedly. The school's exclusion rates are low.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the previous inspection the senior leadership of the school has been restructured, as have aspects of the middle leadership of the school. The new leadership team has succeeded in securing staff commitment to further improvement, including developing teaching and learning. It has also been successful in sustaining the school's focus on

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high quality care and support and on developing the specialist status within the school and beyond. The commitment of the school's leaders and governors to improving further the opportunities for pupils is seen in the establishment of the Trust with other schools and partners. This is already enabling the school to develop a wider range of courses to meet pupils' needs and aspirations, particularly for older pupils. Partnership is a key strength of the school, bringing benefits in provision and outcomes for pupils. Partnership with parents includes the effective 'WE CAN' initiative. The school has promoted community cohesion well within the school and local community and with increasing links beyond the local community, but has not yet evaluated the impact of its actions. The school's promotion of equality is seen in the quality of its care and actions taken to address the underperformance of some groups of pupils. Safeguarding requirements are met, and the school is particularly attentive to the needs of the most vulnerable pupils.

The school has been less successful in ensuring continuous improvement in academic outcomes since the previous inspection. The provisional results for 2009 represent a marked improvement, but there is more still to do to minimise inconsistency in provision and ensure pupils make good progress across all curriculum areas. The school does not yet have sufficiently robust procedures to monitor and evaluate all aspects of its work and pupils' progress. Most procedures are relatively new and not sufficiently developed, embedded or utilised by senior leaders or governors to ensure rigorous accountability and challenge at all levels in the school. The school currently provides satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers who completed a questionnaire demonstrated positive and often very positive views of the school. The most common area of concern related to the way in which the school helps parents to support their child's learning. However, inspectors did find that some parents were pleased with the support provided to help with some pupils with particular learning needs. A few parents and carers, both through the questionnaire and direct contact with the inspection team, raised the issue of how the school dealt with bullying. All of the pupils to whom inspectors spoke, both in meetings and informally around the school, were confident that they knew who they could talk to and believed that the school took action when bullying was reported. The school acknowledged that a very small number of cases have not been resolved to the satisfaction of parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Greenfield School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 112 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 784 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	93	42	118	54	2	1	6	3
The school keeps my child safe	99	46	108	50	4	2	4	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	70	33	133	62	4	2	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	73	34	134	62	4	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	91	43	112	53	4	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	49	23	132	62	26	12	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	81	38	120	56	8	4	2	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	64	30	141	66	2	1	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	74	34	139	64	4	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	66	31	124	58	11	5	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	64	30	124	59	12	6	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	80	37	127	58	10	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	91	42	114	53	4	2	2	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



I am writing to thank you for the help you gave to me and the other inspectors when we visited your school recently. We were impressed by your politeness, good behaviour and your enthusiasm for so many aspects of your school. I would like especially to thank those of you that talked to us in groups, lessons or around the school and also those who completed the questionnaire. Your information was very helpful to us when reaching our judgements about the school.

There are several good things about your school. You told us that you receive good care and support from the staff and we agree. You also told us that you feel safe in school and know that there is always someone to talk to if you are worried. We also think that you have an increasingly good choice of subjects to study so that you all have a better chance of gaining qualifications. The choice of subjects and the range of activities outside lessons are particularly good because your school is an arts college. We were impressed by the quality of your work in art, and the fact that some of you achieve A-level art, as well as the opportunities you have to work with artists and hear them talk about their work. We were also impressed by the way in which you worked well together, for example, in teams in physical education and in the thoughtful way some of you considered sensitive moral issues in a science lesson we observed.

However, we have said that the school is satisfactory overall. This is mainly because, although GCSE results improved this year, we think you can do better and achieve higher standards. At present you do well in some subjects, such as art and performing arts, but not so well in some other subjects. We have asked Mr Priestley and your teachers to do three things to help the school to improve:

- To make sure that you make better progress, especially in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology
- To improve teaching so that all lessons are good or even better
- To improve the ways in which the school checks how well it is doing and its plans for further improvement.

You can contribute by continuing to work hard in lessons and supporting each other.

On behalf of the inspection team, I wish you every success in the future.

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