

Greenacre Academy

157 Walderslade Road, Walderslade, Chatham, Kent ME5 0LP

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has a strong vision for the future of the school. She ensures that learning provides pupils with the skills they need for future employment.
- Leaders set high expectations for behaviour and academic progress. As a result, the school is a calm and purposeful learning environment.
- Leaders check learning frequently to ensure that pupils make good progress. Teachers value the support from leaders to improve their teaching further.
- Leaders recognise that some pupils do not make as much progress as they could, particularly in science and some other subjects. The most able pupils do not always receive enough challenge.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They carry out their duties diligently, especially in ensuring that pupils are safe. Governors effectively challenge leaders to improve pupil outcomes.
- Leaders have not used information about pupils' progress and personal development effectively to target aspects of teaching and other areas of the school's work which need to improve, and to check the impact of actions taken.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are well supported and make strong progress. Additional adults are used effectively to support pupils to improve their learning.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced with a strong focus on 'skills for life'. As a result, pupils are confident speakers who interact well with adults. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. They show respect and tolerance towards others.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. The number of exclusions has been too high but leaders are working effectively to reduce these. Leaders are taking suitable action to improve the attendance of those pupils who frequently miss school. Attendance is improving. Both areas remain priorities for the school.
- Pupils make strong and rapid progress from their low starting points with reading. Their subject vocabulary is growing, leading to a deeper understanding of their work.
- Students in the sixth form value the range of courses available. They make particularly strong progress in vocational subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress by sustaining the work to:
 - ensure that all pupils attend well, including those who are frequently absent
 - further reduce the number of pupils who are excluded from school.
- Improve leaders' impact by using information about pupils' progress and/or their personal development more sharply to:
 - identify what needs to improve
 - set out the actions needed to tackle the weaker areas
 - measure the impact of the work done.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has made a strong impact on improving learning since taking up her position. She has a clear vision for pupils to be successful in their future career pathways. The school's focus on employability skills permeates through all aspects of its work. The acronym of 'EMPLOYME' stresses the importance of pupils developing a wide range of skills to help them secure future employment.
- Subject-specialist teachers know the school's priorities well and understand their role in improving pupils' progress further. Leaders provide effective support for teachers through a good programme of professional development. Teachers value the support they receive from leaders to improve the quality of their teaching. Newly qualified and trainee teachers speak highly of the support provided by the school.
- Effective links with other good and outstanding schools have enabled teachers to share good practice and moderate the quality of pupils' work. As a result, they are able to apply more effective approaches to improve pupils' learning and achieve better outcomes. In addition, the school works well with the primary schools in the trust to provide support for those pupils who need to develop their phonics further.
- The headteacher successfully supports the well-being of staff. Consequently, previously high staff turnover has been reduced. A more stable staff team is leading to greater consistency in the quality of teaching.
- Leaders have set a culture of high expectations for behaviour and academic progress. Consequently, the school provides a calm and orderly environment for learning. Leaders identified that the number of pupils receiving fixed-term exclusions has been too high in the past and have rightly focused on reducing it.
- Leaders recognise that some pupils do not attend school regularly enough, particularly disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have put in place new strategies to improve attendance. Overall attendance is improving.
- Leaders check the quality of learning effectively. They are able to judge accurately the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning. As a result, they are able to challenge and support teachers well to improve pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have not always been precise enough in pulling together all the information they have about the quality and impact of the school's work. They do not use measurable targets as well as they could. They do not find out quickly enough if the actions taken are working.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. The 'skills for life' programme ensures that pupils develop a broad range of transferable skills with a strong focus on literacy. Pupils are able to take a wide range of GCSE courses, with suitable pathways to the next stage of their education.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. They discuss a wide range of topics and current affairs, such as recent knife crime in London. Pupils understand the

concepts of tolerance and individual liberty and know what it means to live in a democratic society.

- Extra-curricular provision is particularly strong in sports and performing arts. The subject intervention classes are valued by pupils, leading to them improving their academic studies further.
- Pupils join the school with below-average literacy levels. Leaders have ensured that catch-up funding is used well. As a result, pupils who started Year 7 with standards below those expected for their age in English and mathematics make rapid progress in improving their reading.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) provides strong leadership, tracks pupils' progress precisely, and rightly identifies how best to use the funding available to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The SENCo gives clear guidance and support to teachers to ensure that those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress over time. Strategies to reduce the number of exclusions of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are beginning to show a positive impact.
- Parents and carers are largely positive about the school, especially in relation to the support their children receive from teachers. For example, one parent said, 'I think the teachers go the extra mile at this school.'

Governance of the school

- Governors and trustees are clear on their direction for the school. They receive comprehensive information about the school from leaders. As a result, governors are able to challenge leaders well and hold them to account.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the school. They know its strengths and weaknesses, and appropriately challenge leaders about pupils' progress. However, the lack of measurable targets in some areas of the school's planning hinders the governors in holding leaders comprehensively to account.
- Governors manage the school finances well, and the budget remains in balance. They are ambitious to improve the opportunities and facilities for pupils in the school.
- Governors monitor all aspects of pupil safety. Their monitoring is robust and effective. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively and have undertaken relevant training to ensure that pupils are safe.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders are thorough and diligent in making sure that all staff and volunteers are safe to work with pupils. The school's policy on safeguarding and staff training is comprehensive and fully up to date.
- All staff understand their role in keeping pupils safe. Leaders are proactive and rigorous in working with external agencies, seeking additional support when needed to ensure that pupils' specific needs are met.

- Pupils know what to do, and who to approach, should they have any concerns about their safety. They are taught well about aspects of safeguarding, for example e-safety and the risks of gangs. Pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. They are very positive about the care and support provided by staff.
- The school site is secure, and sixth-form students are monitored carefully when moving between sites.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers are ambitious for pupils' success. Teaching is particularly effective in English, mathematics, geography, history, art, and design technology.
- Pupils learn most effectively when teaching is planned well with a clear focus on what they should learn. Pupils are excited and engaged when tasks are well matched to their needs and abilities. As a result, pupils make strong progress in most subjects and year groups.
- The school's priority to develop pupils' literacy skills from their low starting points is a strong focus across many subjects. Consequently, pupils make effective use of subject vocabulary across all ability groups, which leads to good improvement in their understanding of their work.
- Pupils are provided with numerous opportunities to improve their speaking skills in a wide range of subjects. As a result, pupils become confident speakers, which leads, in turn, to them answering questions thoughtfully.
- Teaching is particularly strong in English, especially in encouraging pupils to answer questions orally. The standard of pupils' written work does not always match their spoken responses or show them fully developing their ideas. This is also the case in subjects other than English. As a result, the most able pupils do not develop a deep understanding of the work required to attain the highest standards at GCSE.
- Teachers' skilful questioning of pupils challenges them to deepen their knowledge and understanding of topics. Most teachers use effective and intelligent questioning of pupils. However, in science the quality of questioning is not as well developed. Consequently, pupils' progress remains weaker than in other subjects.
- A history of weaker teaching over time has led to slower progress in science and languages. Current teaching is much stronger and is leading to improvements, especially in key stage 3.
- In mathematics, the teaching is strong, including for the most able pupils. Teaching successfully provides progressive challenge for pupils. Additional adults, particularly in mathematics, have a positive impact on supporting pupils' learning. Adult support helps pupils to learn well by providing clear guidance and explanation, especially for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The majority of teachers give pupils helpful feedback in line with the school's policy. Pupils respond well to the feedback and make the necessary improvements to their work. For example, in mathematics, pupils both consolidate their knowledge and develop their problem-solving abilities.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are confident, show resilience in their learning, and speak enthusiastically about their work. Pupils who are 'learning ambassadors' were particularly confident in talking to inspectors, and they provide strong role models for other pupils.
- Pupils were courteous to inspectors during the inspection. They spoke confidently about their work and their school. Pupils take pride in their appearance and they look smart.
- The 'skills for life' programme is effective in developing a broad range of skills for pupils. The programme focuses on pupils' health and well-being, relationships and life in the wider world. The programme is valued by pupils and prepares them well for life beyond school.
- Pupils know how to make healthy choices about personal health and how to keep themselves safe, including online. They value the care and support provided by staff. Pupils are able to identify an adult in school who they would approach if they had any worries or concerns.
- Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire were positive about the school's work, especially in relation to keeping pupils safe and how well the pupils are looked after. Also, they value the information they receive from the school. However, a small minority expressed concerns about bullying. Pupils overall say that bullying is infrequent and that teachers are quick to respond to and resolve any bullying concerns, including dealing with any homophobic language.
- The small number of pupils who attend alternative courses one day a week are making good progress, and their attendance and behaviour are now good. Weekly communication with the school ensures that their progress is tightly monitored.

Behaviour

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are attentive in lessons and keen to learn. Effective work by leaders has led to improved behaviour around the school. As a result, exclusions are reducing, especially for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Pupils are punctual to school and to lessons. They move around the school in a calm and orderly manner. They respect and care for their school environment, with little litter being evident around the school site.
- Leaders' actions are improving pupils' attendance. Overall attendance, for disadvantaged pupils and for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, is rising. Positive work by the school to improve attendance includes effective targeting by the home-school support worker of those pupils who are persistently absent.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress, as shown by overall GCSE results in 2017 and current pupils' progress as seen in books, lessons and assessment information. Current pupils' workbooks suggest that overall rates of progress for disadvantaged pupils are improving and are similar to those of all pupils across a wide range of subjects. This is because leaders continue to make effective use of the pupil premium funding to remove barriers to learning.
- Current pupils make stronger progress in English, following a dip in GCSE results in 2017. They are now given more challenging work to do. Pupils rise to the challenge willingly, well supported by teachers' skilful questioning. Most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, are appropriately stretched in English, and are now making better progress from their starting points. The challenge for the most able is more variable, especially in their opportunities to develop and deepen their analyses of texts.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is broadly average. At GCSE, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, made much better progress than all other pupils nationally in the 'open' element of the curriculum, where pupils can select subjects.
- The 2017 GCSE results showed pupils' progress in the subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate was well below that of other pupils nationally, particularly in science. Leaders have acted with energy to eliminate weaknesses in teaching, so that progress in these subjects has improved and pupils are now making good overall progress.
- Pupils' progress in languages is improving, notably in key stage 3, because of more effective and challenging teaching. In geography and history, pupils are making stronger progress across both key stages. Pupils' progress in science is accelerating, but leaders know this is an area requiring continued focus.
- In spite of these improvements, and pupils' good overall progress, those with higher prior attainment do not routinely make good enough progress from their starting points. Consequently, too few of the most able pupils achieve high grades at GCSE when they reach Year 11.
- Pupils who have low levels of literacy on entry to the school make rapid progress because of effective support and the whole-school drive to improve literacy. As a result, pupils are able to speak with more confidence and have developed a broader vocabulary.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and those who are particularly vulnerable, benefit from highly effective teaching and care. As a result, they make very rapid progress from their starting points because of effective strategies to help them to access their learning better.
- Pupils are provided with highly effective careers education and guidance to enable them to make sensible and well-informed choices for their GCSEs and beyond. Pupils value the opportunities to hear outside speakers from a range of professions and be introduced to the world of work through work experience and business mentors.

Furthermore, learning in the various subjects has been linked effectively to future career pathways.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Outcomes for students in the sixth form are similar to those seen nationally. Students do particularly well in vocational subjects, and many make strong progress from their starting points. Those students who retake GCSEs in English and mathematics achieve above-average outcomes.
- Students are able to take a good range of subjects because of the partnership with Walderslade Girls' School. In particular, students are able to take a broader range of A-level courses. The sixth form is highly inclusive, and leaders spoke of 'opening doors not closing them'. Students speak positively about the sixth form and value the range of subjects on offer.
- Leaders review the curriculum frequently to ensure that it continues to meet students' needs. Consequently, the number of vocational courses has increased. However, the number of students in some groups remains low, which creates a financial challenge to leaders. The retention of students on courses from Year 12 to Year 13 is high.
- Teaching is typically effective. Teachers ensure that students receive appropriate levels of challenge. For example, students in an A-level art class were engrossed in developing their individual pieces that demonstrated the wide range of techniques they have been taught. Teaching is particularly strong in English literature, business studies, construction and ICT.
- Leaders have high expectations of students and set them challenging targets. Students are encouraged to work independently, but are also well supported with personal mentors should they fall behind in their work. As a result, students make strong progress.
- Students behave well. They are good role models for younger pupils in the school. Most students attend well, especially in Year 12. Students' attendance in Year 13 is not as high as it should be, and the school is taking action to ensure that the few students who frequently miss school attend more regularly.
- Leaders have developed strong curriculum links with business and industry through talks and work experience. For example, students have the opportunity to hear external speakers offering independent careers advice. Consequently, students understand the wide range of employment and further educational opportunities available to them.

School details

Unique reference number	138046
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10041464

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

Type of school	Secondary Modern (non-selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	888
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	138
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mrs Susan Butler
Headteacher	Mrs Shelly Bridger
Telephone number	01634 861 593
Website	www.greenacre.medway.sch.uk/
Email address	office@greenacre.medway.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 February 2014

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average-sized secondary school with a sixth form.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is broadly in line with the national average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Currently, two pupils attend off-site provision at Love2Learn, Chatham.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 45 lessons, including a number of short visits to tutor rooms and a Year 11 revision lesson in the main hall. Several lessons were visited jointly with senior leaders. During visits to classes, inspectors looked at pupils' and students' work in books.
- Inspectors also examined a selection of pupils' work from key stages 3 and 4.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and staff, including newly qualified teachers and academic senior and middle leaders. Inspectors took account of 55 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. Inspectors also met governors, including the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the Greenacre Trust and the chair of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors took account of 36 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as written comments submitted by 28 parents.
- Pupils' views were gathered from meetings with groups from Years 7, 9 and 11, and the sixth form, and from responses to Ofsted's student questionnaire. Informal conversations with pupils took place around the school site.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of school documentation. This included leaders' evaluations of the school's performance, the self-evaluation document, the school improvement plan, information about standards and pupils' progress, the school's website, records of attendance, governors' minutes, and a range of policies and information, including those relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Christopher Lee, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jennifer Bray	Ofsted Inspector
Jon Whitcombe	Ofsted Inspector
Harry Ingham	Her Majesty's Inspector

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Manchester
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