

Inspection of Greenfields School

Tenterden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent TN27 8BE

Inspection dates: 12 to 14 October 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils demonstrate the school's success in nurturing their personal and emotional development. They are thoughtful, kind and considerate towards others. Pupils speak honestly and openly about their thoughts, views and ambitions. For example, during the inspection, one explained that he would like to be a police officer, saying, 'I'd like to help some of the most vulnerable people, like people on the streets. The world's given me so much and I want to give something back.'

Pupils are happy to be in school and proudly show off their work to visitors. They arrive in school in the mornings looking very smart in their school uniform and are warmly greeted by adults. Pupils have fun during breaktimes. They enjoy playing games, such as football, with friends and members of staff, and do so sensibly. Adults want the best for pupils. They expect them to work hard and behave well. Pupils want this too, although their emotional and social needs make it difficult for them to act as they would wish all of the time. The school's effective work to support pupils' personal development has led to some notable improvements in behaviour. The considerable care and attention adults give to individual pupils is clear. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' well-being. Pupils feel secure and valued. There are no concerns about bullying.

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

Leaders have secured notable improvements in the school's curriculum since the previous inspection. Curriculum plans in English and mathematics are particularly well developed. They provide a strong framework for teaching and learning and are securely embedded. This means that teachers are clear about what they need to teach. A few aspects of the curriculum are less well developed. For example, the computing curriculum is currently being developed to ensure progression in knowledge and skills. The recently appointed computing lead has given careful thought to priorities for improvement in this subject and has sensible plans for development.

The school gives reading a high priority. Disrupted education in the past means that pupils' reading skills vary widely when they join the school. Teachers know where pupils have gaps in their reading knowledge. They use a wide range of approaches, including effective phonics teaching, to help pupils to develop secure reading skills. The school's books are chosen with care to capture pupils' interest. Pupils enjoy books. During the inspection, for instance, some of the younger pupils happily took turns to read 'Room on a Broom' with their teacher, delighting in the rhythm and humour of the text.

The school meets the needs of its pupils very well. Teachers plan work thoughtfully, paying close attention to pupils' needs. They continuously evaluate pupils' responses during lessons, making changes to the work set accordingly. Regular opportunities to revisit previous learning help to reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding.

The school's broad and rich curriculum contributes well to pupils' personal development. Activities such as swimming and cooking help to build pupils' confidence, as well as equipping pupils with important life skills. For example, during the inspection, pupils thoroughly enjoyed cooking risotto. Special events, such as Harvest Festival, the Greenfields school festival and Christmas shows, provide valuable opportunities for pupils to engage with the wider community. Assemblies are used to teach pupils about different religions and beliefs, as well as fundamental British values. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The school's curriculum includes attention given to careers guidance. However, leaders have rightly identified elements of this aspect of its work which need improvement. They have suitable plans in place to strengthen careers advice.

The school's therapeutic approach to supporting pupils works very well. Leaders have a thorough understanding of pupils' needs. They think deeply about the reasons underpinning pupils' anxieties and identify different ways of supporting each pupil. The school's success in changing pupils' attitude to school is evident in marked improvements in attendance for individual pupils. Leaders work closely with local authorities and agencies, such as the police, to ensure that pupils are well supported.

Pupils develop increasingly positive attitudes to school and usually behave well in lessons. However, their significant emotional needs mean that pupils sometimes find it hard to settle in the classroom. Leaders have established clear procedures to minimise the impact on other pupils' learning when this is the case. For example, the school's clinical education support assistants (CESAs) are always on hand to support pupils whenever needed. One of the CESAs was present while an inspector had a discussion with individual pupils. His quiet, reassuring presence meant that pupils felt comfortable talking with a visitor.

Governors regularly discuss the school's work. They ask sensible questions which help them to monitor the impact of developments. The proprietors have strengthened their relationship with the school during recent months. For example, the headteacher now attends the proprietors' strategy meetings so that her views can feed into planned developments. The proprietors are pleased with improvements introduced by the headteacher since her appointment and are excited about the school's future. They have ensured that the independent school standards continue to be met.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school takes pupils' safety seriously. Adults take care of the pupils, who feel safe and valued as a result. Pupils know that they can speak to an adult for help and advice.

Well-established safeguarding procedures help to keep pupils safe. For example, the estate manager makes sure that all safety equipment is regularly checked and serviced. Leaders have made recent changes to enhance pupils' safety further. For example, they are currently relocating some classrooms to increase security. The school's safeguarding policy meets requirements and is available from the school on request.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Weaknesses in careers advice and work experience mean that pupils are less able to make informed choices about future work and education options. Staff provide pupils with reasonable careers advice. However, they lack the specialist knowledge needed to ensure that pupils understand the full range of career options available. Leaders should make sure that pupils have access to effective careers advice.
- The computing curriculum does not support pupils' learning in this subject well enough. Limited availability of computer equipment makes it difficult for teachers to deliver some aspects of the computing curriculum. Pupils have too few opportunities to use and improve their computing skills in subjects such as mathematics and science. Leaders should develop this aspect of the school's curriculum.

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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

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| Unique reference number | 131780 |
| DfE registration number | 886/6084 |
| Local authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 10202272 |
| Type of school | Other independent special school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 14 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 |
| Proprietor | Childhood First |
| Chair | Sarah Scarratt |
| Headteacher | Kelly Cartwright |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £30,000 |
| Telephone number | 01580 292 523 |
| Website | http://childhoodfirst.org.uk |
| Email address | greenfieldsschool@childhoodfirst.org.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 27 to 29 June 2017 |

Information about this school

- Greenfields is an independent special school, registered for up to 23 pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs. There are currently 14 pupils on roll.
- The school admits boys and girls aged between five and 16. At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils attending the school under the age of eight.
- The school operates from two sites within a short distance of each other. The younger pupils attend one site while the older pupils attend the other.
- The last standard inspection took place in June 2017, when the school's overall effectiveness was judged to be good and all of the independent school standards were found to be met. A subsequent material change inspection took place in February 2019.
- The school forms part of a therapeutic community managed by Childhood First, a registered charity.
- All pupils are in the care of local authorities. All have an education, health and care plan. Many pupils have histories of disrupted schooling.
- The school offers a therapeutic approach to teaching and learning, with a strong focus on the personal development of pupils.
- Since the last inspection, the school has increased its age range from five to 14 years to five to 16 years. There were no pupils over the age of 16 attending the school at the time of the inspection.
- The school is currently using one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- The inspectors held a wide range of meetings during the inspection. These included meetings with the headteacher and other school leaders, the chief executive officer, the proprietor's director of education, a representative of the governing body, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also held a telephone discussion with a member of staff from Catch-22, the alternative provision currently used by the school.
- The inspectors looked closely at the following subjects when considering the quality of education: reading, mathematics, science and computing. They met

with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and reviewed curriculum plans.

- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, during breaktimes, and as pupils moved around the school.
- The inspectors reviewed seven responses to Ofsted's online parents' survey and accompanying free-text messages. They also considered the surveys for staff.
- The lead inspector checked the single central register and talked with leaders responsible for safeguarding. She also considered safeguarding documents and records.
- The inspection team reviewed a range of documentation, including policies and documents associated with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alan Johnson

Ofsted Inspector

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