

# Inspection of Green Gates Academy

Melton Road, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland TS19 0JD

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Inspection dates: 8–9 October 2019

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils told inspectors they really enjoy coming to school. Pupils' happy smiles as they skipped down the school path at the start of the day supported this view.

Staff and leaders are ambitious for pupils. The school mantra, that pupils need to be the very best they can be, is shared by staff. Pupils recognise that staff care for them. Pupils know even if they have a tough day, tomorrow is a fresh start and difficulties can be overcome.

Pupils wear their uniform with pride and feel valued and respected in the school community. Bullying is rare and if it occurs, it is dealt with well by staff.

Most of the time, pupils behave very well. However, as pupils told inspectors: 'Everyone has their moments.' Staff understand pupils' needs well. When a pupil has a crisis, staff know exactly what to do. Their swift action ensures learning continues uninterrupted for the rest of the class.

School leaders want pupils to learn from as many different experiences as possible. Pupils' recent encounters have included boat trips at sea, kayaking, sheep-washing in North Yorkshire and bee-keeping. These experiences broaden pupils' understanding of the wider world and help them learn and remember more.

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

The school curriculum is based securely on the national curriculum. Staff understand pupils' needs well and are expert at making sure the challenging curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of all pupils.

Curriculum leaders regularly reflect on what helps pupils to learn. For example, in science, pupils learn by carrying out investigations that help them to remember key content more accurately. Pupils took great glee in telling me about how they used tights to make a model small intestine. Their good recall of the movement of the small intestine and how food is digested showed how much they had remembered.

Research carried out by leaders shows that a large proportion of pupils' additional needs directly affect their learning. Pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans show that more than 80% have difficulty retaining information. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and occupational therapist have put in place a programme to help pupils improve their memory skills.

In the previous inspection, the school was asked to improve the mathematics curriculum. Mathematics is now carefully planned so that pupils build on the knowledge learned in each unit taught. This enables pupils to know and remember important information more effectively.

School leaders are working on improving pupils' writing skills. A handwriting programme is in place. This helps pupils to master the motor skills needed to form equal-sized letters. Pupils also often struggle to write longer pieces of work and get their ideas down on paper. Further planning is needed to give pupils more opportunities to practise these skills in all areas of the curriculum.

Pupils enjoy art. The carefully planned curriculum enables pupils to follow their imagination and learn about other places in the world while building on their artistic skills. Examples of African animals adorn the walls of the corridors. The pupil artists are proud to show visitors their work.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have revolutionised a number of elements of the curriculum. They have combined high expectations for pupils with a curriculum that builds pupils' knowledge and skills. Pupils' achievement has improved significantly as a result.

Reading is given a high priority in the school. Leaders' goal is that all pupils will learn to read. Books chosen for early readers match the sounds that they are learning in phonics. Specialised training for teachers enables them to support pupils who arrive in school as non-readers. Pupils say their daily storytime has helped them to gain the confidence to read harder books and develop a love of reading.

Pupils are offered many opportunities to enhance their personal development. Extra sporting activities include horse riding and swimming. Pupils also spend as much time as possible outside in forest school. Leaders recognise that these activities contribute to pupils' social skills and could enrich the science curriculum. However, at the moment, science curriculum planning does not include these valuable experiences.

Leaders work hard to support parents and carers to help their children learn. However, few pupils spoken to said they were able to practise their reading skills at home.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure the school is a safe environment for pupils. They are clear about the challenges pupils meet each day within the community. They work closely with other agencies to keep pupils safe.

Staff are well trained in identifying safeguarding issues, particularly those relating to the school's locality. The school's safeguarding record keeping is well organised and is overseen by the trust's safeguarding lead.

Teachers are aware of current safeguarding legislation and ensure that vulnerable pupils are well supported. The work of the parent support adviser ensures that

families are supported to care for their children and ensure they attend school regularly.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Since the previous inspection, school leaders have improved both pupils' achievement and the quality of the curriculum. Curriculum planning shows that most subjects within the curriculum are now effectively planned so that learning is sequenced and meets pupils' complex needs. However, some pupils' writing skills are stronger in some areas of the curriculum than in others.
- The curriculum gives pupils many different experiences. Leaders are planning to increase pupils' opportunities to learn in science through, for example, visits to forest school. However, this has not been put in place and opportunities are missed to develop further the science curriculum.
- Leaders work hard to support parents in a variety of different ways. For example, the school's information technology (IT) leader helps parents to upload parental controls onto their computers to safeguard pupils. However, sessions put on by school to help parents to support pupils' learning are not always well attended and pupils may not always get the added support needed. School leaders are aware that strengthening relationships with parents is important in reinforcing and consolidating pupils' knowledge and understanding.

## **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 Ofsted Parent View information 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're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding, pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 141384   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Stockton-on-Tees   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10110606   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Special  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy special converter  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 5 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 45   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                      | Maurice Jones  |
| <b>Principal</b>                           | Melanie Lyons  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.horizonstrust.org.uk">www.horizonstrust.org.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 27–28 June 2017  |

## Information about this school

- The school converted to an academy in September 2014.
- Since the previous inspection, pupil numbers have increased by more than 10%.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During the inspection, we spoke to pupils about their work and what it is like to be a pupil in the school. We also spoke to pupils in lessons and in the playground.
- We watched pupils arrive and observed the systems in place to ensure pupils moved safely from their transport into school.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, curriculum leaders, those responsible for school governance, teachers and teaching assistants.
- We scrutinised a range of school documents, including curriculum documents and the school's evaluation of strengths and areas for improvement and the school's improvement plan.

- We evaluated the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding system and record keeping. We did this by analysing records kept and discussing with staff and leaders the actions they would carry out if a pupil brought them a concern. We also checked the school's single central record to ensure that appropriate checks had been carried out when recruiting staff.
- We took into account the views expressed by pupils, the small group of parents who met with me and those parents who left comments on Ofsted's online free-text service. We also took into account the views of 12 members of staff who had completed Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspection focused deeply on mathematics, science, design technology and reading. In these subjects, we met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, met with teaching staff and looked at pupils' work. Other subjects were also considered as part of the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Marian Thomas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Moira Banks

Ofsted Inspector

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