

# Greensward Academy

## Inspection report

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|                                |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 135652            |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | N/A               |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 364393            |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 2–3 March 2011    |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Elaine Taylor HMI |

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

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|--|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Academy                               |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Non-maintained                        |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11–18                                 |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                 |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form         | Mixed                                 |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 1609                                  |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 262                                   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                    |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Trevor Fulcher                        |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Deborah Stokes                        |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | Not previously inspected              |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Greensward Lane<br>Hockley<br>SS5 5HG |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01702 202571                          |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01702 200219                          |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | contactus@greenswardacademy.org       |

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|--------------------------|----------------|
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. In total there were 51 lesson observations, some of which were undertaken jointly with senior leaders; 49 teachers were seen teaching. The inspectors observed the academy's work, and looked at the documentation relating to the safeguarding of students, the progress that different groups of students are making in their learning and their wider participation in the life of the academy. Inspectors analysed 293 questionnaire responses from parents and carers, questionnaires returned by some staff and from 160 students. Meetings were held with nominated staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and groups of students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Is the progress students make in English and mathematics at least good?
- Are all students supported in lessons to develop skills as independent learners and drive their own progress?
- Does the curriculum at Key Stage 4 adequately prepare students for the requirements for further study in the sixth form?
- Do all the specialist subjects contribute to high achievement and improving provision?

## Information about the school

Greensward Academy opened in September 2008 as one of the Academy Enterprise Trust schools. It holds specialisms in science and applied learning, is a Leading Edge school and holds Training School status. Greensward Academy is a large and popular school and is heavily over-subscribed. It serves a wide catchment area where there are six grammar schools and a number of sixth form institutions. A very large majority of students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national figure, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, but there is a below-average number of students with a statement of special educational needs. The academy has Chartermark and Investors in People status. It has been awarded the Healthy Schools status and the full International Schools award.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

Greensward Academy provides outstanding value for money because it serves both its students and its community so well. The students enjoy their time there and leave with many personal attributes which will be of exceptional benefit to them in their future lives. Leaders of the academy have built an outstanding curriculum with a host of options, which is finely tuned to students' individual needs. As a result, all students leave with good qualifications and the wider personal skills they need. The number who are not in education or employment with training after their time at Greensward is much lower than average. In GCSE examinations in 2010, 98% of students gained five or more passes at grade C or above and 65% included English and mathematics. Students feel very safe, because the systems to guide and support them are excellent. They behave well and make an outstanding contribution to the academy and to the wider community. However, leaders are not complacent and the constant drive for improvement is highly effective. Each year standards are rising for all groups of students. Those students who need additional help with their work make outstanding progress. The percentage gaining the top two grades at GCSE has increased significantly. Standards in mathematics and English are rising steadily and are now above average. Outcomes in the specialist subject of science are especially high. One parental comment summed up these successes in a questionnaire for the inspection by saying: 'An excellent school, where our child is happy, relaxed and learning.'

An outstanding range of partnerships has been built up in order to extend the provision. These cover partnerships to enhance the support students receive and partnerships with local industry to enhance the vocational subjects on offer. Partnerships with higher education through the training school enable the academy to plan effectively for future developments in education. Governors are extremely proactive in promoting this and other aspects of the academy's work. Partnerships with parents and carers are seen as an important area which leaders are seeking to develop. Despite efforts to engage with all parents and carers, in order to provide them with the information they need to support their children's learning, some still feel unhappy with the systems in place.

Highly effective systems for self-evaluation ensure the academy has outstanding capacity to improve further. Exceptional improvement has been made. Weaker aspects of provision are tackled strenuously and to very good effect. For example, the priorities identified at the monitoring visit by Her Majesty's Inspectors in March 2010 left two development points for teaching which are already established in many classrooms. Teaching is good at present in all key stages, with a growing proportion that is outstanding. However, not all teachers are making sufficient use of the information they have on the progress students are making in order to provide work that has a high level of challenge for all levels of ability. Moreover, not all teachers check as the lesson proceeds to ensure they gauge accurately when to move to the next activity. Teachers in the sixth form do not

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consistently allow students sufficient opportunities to develop fully their independent study skills.

Leaders at all levels are fully committed to the aims and vision for the academy. Searching analysis of data on the progress students are making, allows leaders to identify quickly any student who is falling behind and intervene effectively. Data on all aspects of students' development are collected into an innovative data booklet which is an example of best practice. The systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the academy are very thorough. The academy's status as a training school has an outstanding impact on all aspects of professional development. All members of the community are regarded as learners with an entitlement to further career development. The success of this is seen in many areas. Trainee teachers are employed in the academy and many are promoted rapidly to positions of responsibility. High numbers of staff undertake further qualifications and the academy offers generous support to other schools facing difficulties.

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

- Raise levels of attainment so they are consistently high across the academy by:
  - sharpening assessment to ensure teachers fine-tune their planning to build even more effectively on prior learning
  - increasing the range of strategies teachers use to gauge when individual students are ready to move forward.
- Reduce the amount of time teachers in the sixth form spend explaining and demonstrating, to allow students to hone their skills as independent learners.
- Develop further the three-way partnerships between the academy, students, parents and carers, in order to share the information needed for all to play a full part in supporting students' progress.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

Students enter the academy with average standards of attainment and there are few who have attained the highest levels. They make good progress and the vast majority meet their challenging targets so that, by the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is above average. All groups of students make the same good progress with the exception of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities who make excellent progress. Eighty eight per cent of this group gained five good passes in GCSE examinations last year and for one quarter of them this included mathematics and English. Students enjoy their learning and appreciate the many opportunities provided for them within and beyond the curriculum and show their appreciation with good attendance and good behaviour. Inspectors saw good progress in lessons and above average standards of work. Students are keen to succeed and have strong inter-personal skills, as seen in their ability and willingness to work productively with others. They contribute willingly to discussions and respond very positively when given opportunities to work independently. Students have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and many participate in the sporting activities provided by the academy. Pupils are extremely polite and considerate around the academy and demonstrate excellent social and moral development, explaining to inspectors how important it is to stand up for people who are disadvantaged or suffering. Their cultural and spiritual development is good, but they enjoy music and art from a variety of cultures

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and respect different artistic traditions. Students' understanding of spiritual matters is satisfactory, but they have difficulty in articulating their views.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons with a good mixture of activities and using good resources. Occasionally, the planning focuses too much on what students will do, rather than what they will learn and does not clearly show how the lesson will build on each student's prior learning. Teaching assistants support students who need additional help exceptionally well and help them to develop independence. Technology is used well by both teachers and students to enhance learning. The academy was encouraged at the monitoring visit to provide greater challenge in lessons, especially for more-able students. This is now established in many areas of the curriculum, for example in English, where standards have risen sharply in the last two years. A learning walk focusing on this aspect of teaching was undertaken with a senior leader and some excellent examples were seen. In a football lesson, students had to incorporate and refine both practical and statistical skills in a game, while other students observed and constructively criticised their performance. Some teachers are using sophisticated questions well to judge when students are ready to move forward and to develop their understanding. However, this is not yet consistent across all subject areas and sometimes

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students struggle when expected to move forward too quickly. In a few instances, this leads to off-task behaviour which reduces their progress.

The curriculum provides an impressive range of options. It is regularly reviewed to ensure it responds exceptionally well to students' needs. There is a very wide range of vocational and applied learning courses in areas in which the students want to and can succeed. The facilities for courses such as hairdressing and construction are excellent. Innovative features such as the integrated studies sessions are evident across all years. The excellent review currently underway is designed to respond to government and national initiatives and increase the already highly personalised offer. There are a great many trips and visits designed to enhance enjoyment of learning and a wide range of enrichment through extra-curricular clubs and sports provision.

Students' individual circumstances and needs are well-known to staff and highly appropriate support is provided promptly and most effectively. Excellent links with outside agencies ensure the academy can provide precisely the right support for their needs. The care and support provided by sixth form students for younger students is particularly effective. Very well-planned transition arrangements ensure that students settle quickly and move smoothly from one stage of their education to the next.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of teaching</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The use of assessment to support learning  | 2        |
| <b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b> | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>   | <b>1</b> |

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders at all levels pursue excellence in all they do. Monitoring is regular and rigorous and there are numerous examples of the effectiveness of actions taken when weaker aspects of provision are evident. For example, standards in English were identified as a concern as they were below average in 2009. Actions taken resulted in a rise to significantly above average standards a year later and they are set to rise in 2011. Ambitious targets are set for all aspects of the academy's work and progress towards them is shared with all partners and tracked at regular intervals. The progress of all groups of learners is carefully analysed and all make similarly good progress. In addition, the academy works very hard with great success to tackle discrimination. There are teachers with specific responsibilities for each potentially vulnerable group. There are few racist incidents and all students in Key Stage 4 undertake a course in equality and diversity.

Governance is excellent. The governing body challenges the academy's leaders and has a highly effective system to track progress towards development points in the academy's action plan. It has ensured safeguarding arrangements are outstanding and has introduced a health care package for staff to support their well-being. The checking of all

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who come into contact with the students is exceptionally rigorous as is the training for all staff on how to keep students safe. There is an impressive range of links with outside agencies to ensure nothing is left to chance. The characteristics of the academy community have been regularly analysed, an audit carried out and a community plan constructed with milestones to measure progress on each of the three strands of faith, ethnicity and culture and socio-economic disadvantage. This has led to a wide range of activities especially on global and local levels, for example through developing links with schools in other countries. Already the impact of this work has resulted in the academy being accredited as a full International School.

The academy uses its specialist status to great effect. As a training school, the teachers benefit from opportunities for further qualifications which many pursue. The science specialism allows a range of courses to be studied and outcomes in science are high and applied learning has resulted in a wide range of vocational courses for students. The outstanding leadership has resulted in outcomes in achievement and well-being for most pupils which are good, and for some are exceptionally high.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The leadership and management of teaching and learning   | 1        |
| <b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b> | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>   | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>   | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>  | <b>1</b> |

## Sixth form

Most groups of students make good progress when measured against their below-average starting points. They achieve appropriate qualifications and develop good levels of independent study skills. Sixth form students enjoy coming to the academy, as seen by their good attendance, and make good contributions to the wider life of the academy, such as through their work as mentors for younger students and working with primary pupils. They develop a good understanding of what they need to do to gain places at a university or to start a career. Their good learning is as a result of good teaching and assessment. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and explain key aspects well. There

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are times in lessons where learning is hampered because teachers do not put enough responsibility on the students to describe and present their own ideas. There are many courses and qualifications available and students are guided well as to the best choices. Teachers check each term to see that no student is falling behind. The leaders of the sixth form monitor the quality of teaching well and take effective action to support those teachers whose practice needs to improve. They monitor the courses on offer and provide additional courses where necessary or remove those which are proving unsuccessful. They are effectively ensuring that standards are rising.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b> | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:                           |          |
| Outcomes for students in the sixth form        | 2        |
| The quality of provision in the sixth form     | 2        |
| Leadership and management of the sixth form    | 2        |

## Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are happy with the education which the academy provides. They are most satisfied that the academy keeps their children safe and least satisfied with how the academy takes account of their suggestions. Many wrote warmly of the support their children receive. They were not especially convinced that the academy supports their children to follow a healthy lifestyle, with some expressing concerns over the availability of healthy options at lunchtime. The academy is aware of this and is taking steps to improve the situation. A number of parents and carers were concerned over behaviour, especially when there was a need to employ supply teachers. However, although the inspectors saw nothing that was disruptive, they did agree that some students allowed their attention to wander and were off-task when teaching was less engaging.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Greensward Academy 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 293 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1609 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |    | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | %  | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 89             | 30 | 171   | 58 | 23       | 8  | 6                 | 2 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 93             | 32 | 181   | 62 | 13       | 4  | 5                 | 2 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress  | 99             | 34 | 152   | 52 | 35       | 12 | 6                 | 2 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 83             | 28 | 158   | 54 | 38       | 13 | 4                 | 1 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 58             | 20 | 176   | 60 | 45       | 15 | 5                 | 2 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning  | 46             | 16 | 179   | 61 | 48       | 16 | 8                 | 3 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 43             | 15 | 169   | 58 | 66       | 23 | 8                 | 3 |
| 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) | 61             | 21 | 174   | 59 | 28       | 10 | 3                 | 1 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs  | 63             | 22 | 173   | 59 | 35       | 12 | 6                 | 2 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 53             | 18 | 166   | 57 | 41       | 14 | 23                | 8 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 40             | 14 | 160   | 55 | 57       | 19 | 6                 | 2 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 72             | 25 | 171   | 58 | 26       | 9  | 13                | 4 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school   | 95             | 32 | 153   | 52 | 29       | 10 | 7                 | 2 |

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 all 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

| Type of school       | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) |      |              |            |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
|                      | Outstanding   | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools      | 59  | 35   | 3            | 3          |
| Primary schools      | 9   | 44   | 39           | 7          |
| Secondary schools    | 13  | 36   | 41           | 11         |
| Sixth forms          | 15  | 39   | 43           | 3          |
| Special schools      | 35  | 43   | 17           | 5          |
| Pupil referral units | 21  | 42   | 29           | 9          |
| All schools          | 13  | 43   | 37           | 8          |

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul> |
| 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.**



4 March 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Greensward Academy, Hockley, SS5 5HG**

Thank you all for the warm and respectful welcome you gave us when we inspected your academy. I am writing to tell you what we found.

We agree that the academy is outstanding. We were most impressed by the excellent contribution you make to the communities within and beyond the academy itself. You told us how much you appreciate the wide and varied courses on offer. We judged teaching to be good and ensuring that you make good progress overall. We observed you working well together in pairs and groups and contributing to discussions. Your behaviour is good, but there are times when some of you allow your attention to wander and do not actively take part in the lesson. You need to try to stay focussed in all lessons if your progress is to improve to outstanding. Those of you in the sixth form do not have enough opportunities to discuss your ideas.

The leaders of the academy work extremely hard on your behalf in order to ensure you make even better progress. To help with this we have asked them to:

- make sure teachers use all the information they have on how well you are progressing to give you work that has precisely the right challenge for your needs
- check how well you are doing during the lesson and adjust the teaching if you are not ready to move on
- make sure those of you in the sixth form have more time to discuss your ideas
- strengthen the links with your parents and carers so they can be even more supportive in helping you with your learning.

We wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Elaine Taylor

Her Majesty's Inspector

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