

**Professional
learning matters
at Greenshaw
High School**

SEN Provision

GREENSHAW 

...be remarkable

SEN PROVISION AT GREENSHAW HIGH SCHOOL: WHAT ARE THE INGREDIENTS OF SUCCESS?

GCSE attainment is more than 5 times better than the national average

Very good provision for pupils with SEN is underlined by their very good achievement and progress – Advice and Inspection Service, London Borough of Sutton.

This observation by AIS about provision at Greenshaw High School is justified by, amongst other achievements, GCSE outcomes: 100% of pupils with statements at Greenshaw achieve 5 A* - C grades, compared with 18% nationally; 31% of pupils with statements at Greenshaw achieve 5 A* - C grades including English and maths, compared with 6% nationally.¹

Greenshaw opened in 1969 and was, for many years, the only purpose-built comprehensive high school in the Borough of Sutton.² In a highly selective authority, the School has always proudly declared its aim to be the provision of education for all of its local community. The motors that have driven Greenshaw's development are equality of opportunity, inclusion and raising standards of teaching and learning, all of which have influenced provision for young people with special educational needs.

Post-Warnock, SEN provision developed rapidly to include in-class support and collaboration between SEN and pastoral teams to ensure the best possible match between needs and available resources.³ It was not long, however, before the most significant influence on provision was a potent combination of flexibility, creativity and collaboration, underpinned by the readiness of the School to supplement funding generated by statements.

A 'Can-Do' approach to removing barriers to learning

Flexibility means that there is no rule book that determines what can be done. Or if there is, it is the Equal Opportunities Policy of the School. As long as interventions serve the entitlement of all pupils to experience success, they are considered legitimate. So it is that the curriculum can be altered for the learner and an individual support programme put in place.

The creativity and resourcefulness of the staff allow for this personalisation to take many forms. The 'can-do' attitude of the members of all teams is of great importance here: a challenge is always seen as the opportunity to find a solution and ways forward may be tried and tested or innovative.

The capacity for innovation comes from the breadth of experience and interests represented by the team. SEN provision is led by the SENCO who has also wide-ranging responsibilities as Director of Inclusion. Special Needs are considered and provision allocated through the Inclusion Management Team, a group meeting weekly to consider its existing caseload and referrals that can come from any

¹ Secondary Schools GCSE Performance Tables, 2010, DFE

² Overton Grange School opened in 1997

³ Mary Warnock, now Baroness Warnock, chaired a committee of inquiry into the needs of children with SEN. The inquiry concluded, i.a., that some 20% of children could have special needs at some time in their education and that 2% would need support over and above mainstream provision. The 2% should receive specialist provision. The Warnock Report led to the Education Act 1981 which required that local authorities assess learner needs and decide on appropriate provision. The 1981 Act was followed by further legislation introducing such aspects of provision as the Code of Practice, the SEN tribunal and provision for inclusion.

member of staff. Through the IMT, the special needs of all young people can be considered: it is a high priority to give all pupils, with or without statements, access to a broad range of provision within school and from outside agencies. While those who have statements are monitored by the SEN team and the usual review process, those without statements can access resources that include programmes in the Learning Inclusion Department,⁴ support from the in-house HOWED consultant and work with the School's Speech and Language team.⁵ It is important to stress also that young people with statements benefit from rapid and sensitive response to the monitoring process: additional or alternative support can be put in place without the need to wait for the next annual review.

The quality and range of provision that Greenshaw can provide is greatly supported by the provision of a full-time SEN administrator and a member of staff responsible for securing examination concessions for pupils with SEN. Efficient administration and record keeping are promoted by these two colleagues and the fact that their posts exist is an indication of the importance attached by the School to resourcing provision of the highest quality.

Excellent communication across the School is linked to efficient tracking of interventions and pupil progress. The Director of Inclusion meets termly with each Head of Department to provide information about the needs of individual pupils and to advise on strategies to support them. The Head of Department discusses with the Director of Inclusion departmental tracking data.

Provision Manager has been introduced by the Director of Inclusion and is being used to track the impact of individual interventions. It is possible, therefore, to evaluate the wide range of support provision in the School's repertoire and use data to inform future personalised programmes for young people.

Baseline testing

Baseline testing provides the initial information upon which interventions are based and the response to data supports the progress of young people who are not operating at the level that will permit successful access to the mainstream curriculum. Upon admission to the school, all pupils are tested, using MIDYIS, for vocabulary and non-verbal ability, skills and mathematics. In addition, they take a Suffolk Reading Test. All those whose score falls below 85 are given a detailed literacy screening to investigate their decoding, comprehension, processing ability and speech and language skills. They are tested using MALS – Myself as a Learner Scale – so that information may be gained about their attitudes to their learning.

Pupils who are targeted on the basis of the Literacy and MALS tests are supported through a number of interventions. As well as in-class support from learning support assistants, there are six-week long block interventions. The latter involve withdrawal from lessons for a period each day for intensive, small-group literacy development work.

⁴ The Learning Inclusion Department is a team of staff providing short, intensive programmes to help remove barriers to learning that manifest themselves, usually, in challenging behaviour.

⁵ HOWED – Helping Others With Emotional Development – is a local consultancy providing mentoring, advice and support for young people and families, including a weekly drop-in parents' support meeting at the School.

Currently 30 pupils in Year 7 are in the literacy target group. With effect from September 2011, a primary-trained teacher will join the School to provide literacy catch-up for any pupil functioning below level 3. This intervention will provide one hour per day until the learner is able to access the curriculum. This appointment will allow the School to provide literacy enhancement for 30 further pupils, as evidence indicates that this number would benefit. These figures of 30 + 30 compare strikingly with the number of statements in the yeargroup: just four (4).

Although all 4 statements in the current Year 7 (2010-11) are for speech and language difficulties, there is a wider range of needs identified in statements of older pupils, and there is a greater number of statements: a total in years 8 to 11 of 14 statements for cognition and learning, 5 for behaviour, emotional and social difficulty and 30 for communication and interaction needs. The dramatic reduction in the quantity and scope of the statements is directly linked to local and national government policy. Will Smith, Headteacher, comments that the deliberate reduction in the number of statements and in the range of special needs they cover is a source of considerable anxiety.

Deployment of Learning Support Assistants

Throughout the school, 21 learning support assistants, led and managed by the Director of Inclusion, are at the heart of provision for these young people with statements. In-class support is effective and the LA Advice and Inspection Service reports as follows:

Highly skilled LSAs offer entirely appropriate support in lessons, based on a good understanding of the subject, and their detailed understanding of pupils' needs. In addition, all pupils seen were comfortable about asking for support as required.⁶

Additional funding provided by the school permits, amongst other resources, the employment of a greater number of learning support assistants than would be provided by the funding generated by statements of SEN. Except for two hours per week spent writing reports or IEPs, the LSAs spend all curriculum time and some lunch breaks in direct contact with the pupils. The Read, Write, Inc programme is delivered by LSAs.⁷ They also run social skills sessions at lunchtime and GCSE catch-up groups. The organisation of these LSAs in yeargroups has allowed them to know the pupils well and to provide good individual support, including advocacy and mentoring at options time, and in-class support.

Although it is the responsibility of the Director of Inclusion and her Deputy to liaise with parents, increasingly LSA Year Team Leaders are contacting parents to discuss anxieties expressed by learners or concerns about them. To promote communication with the home, the email addresses of all staff working with Year 7 have been shared with parents and carers. Families of children with statements have expressed their appreciation of this, with the result that all staff email addresses will be fully available through the school's website.

⁶ London Borough of Sutton Advice and Inspection Service, *Summary Report on Special Educational Needs Spring 2011, Greenshaw High School*

⁷ For further information on Read, Write, Inc go to <http://www.ruthmiskinliteracy.com/training.aspx>

A comprehensive programme of staff development supports LSAs' communication with parents and other aspects of their work. LSAs have a fortnightly training session, currently focussing on mentoring skills. Previously training has been provided in transactional analysis and Elklan methodology and individual LSAs have developed interests and strengths in further strategies through attendance at off-site courses. In-house expertise includes practitioners in Drawing and Talking Therapy and in Comic Book Conversations. This year two LSAs have been trained as Emotional Literacy Support Assistants during the one-year TAMHS project (targeted mental health initiative). The vast majority of the LSAs have also completed an introductory certificate in counselling skills which has given them additional listening skills.

LSA work is monitored by observations linked to performance management and learning walks. Further, LSA records are routinely checked.

Case study: Members of the SEN Team are encouraged to use their initiative and to develop their interests in a range of approaches to learning support. One example of the benefits for pupils and for the development of staff is the case of a Year 7 pupil with speech and language difficulties. The SALT therapist carried out a diagnosis by Comprehensive Test of Phonological Testing. A customized programme of support for the pupil was created by the SALT Therapist and the LSA who had previously successfully trained to become the Speech and Language Therapy Assistant. The personalized programme drew on three different phonological schemes. With the support of the SALT Assistant for this intervention, the pupil made in sixth months progress that would normally be expected to take 15 months.

Speech and Language Provision

Greenshaw has an Opportunity Base for children with speech, language and communication difficulties that was opened in the 1990s in collaboration with ICAN.⁸ The base is staffed by a manager, two full-time speech and language therapists and 1 SALT assistant. All pupils with statements for SALT difficulties have personalised provision. This allows them to spend the vast majority of their time in mainstream classes and to access speech and language therapy as well as other personalised learning support through individual or small group work.

⁸ ICAN is a charity supporting children with speech, language and communication difficulties. For further information go to www.ican.org.uk

Case study: *A pupil who entered the school in Year 7 presenting acute symptoms of Asperger's Syndrome gave rise to concerns about the appropriateness of mainstream secondary education. Interventions by the School have included in-class support by trained LSAs and speech and language therapy. A LSA was assigned from the outset to work with the pupil and to be on call to provide immediate help for him to process his concerns. Comic Strip Conversations and Talking and Drawing Therapy have been part of the programme provided. Further vital components have been time and patience and close contact with the family. The School and the family have observed in this young person a dramatic increase in confidence and social skills, leading to friendship and the achievement of awards. The learner's participation in the mainstream curriculum is confidently expected to lead to a full range of GCSE certificates.*

The speech and language expertise in the base is often used in the wider School to the benefit of a number of pupils far larger than just those who have statements. It has happened not infrequently in cases of pupils showing challenging behaviour that the speech therapist has identified significant communication difficulties. This and other diagnostic strategies have allowed the school to examine each case of BESD (rarely statemented) in detail. For example, a teenager who struggles to follow instructions in the classroom and presents challenging behaviour is assessed by the SALT therapist and it is revealed that s/he is unable to understand all instructions – so his/her challenge is an expression of confusion and anxiety and teachers are provided with the necessary information and advice. The pupil receives help to develop comprehension skills. Other support, for example for coping strategies, can be provided through the Inclusion Management Team.

The Greenshaw speech therapists and the SALT Base Manager are all accredited Elklan trainers. Elklan works to help those involved with young people to promote and support the communication skills of all children especially those with speech, language and communication needs. SALT staff have provided training for LSAs and teaching staff at Greenshaw that has greatly increased the range of strategies used to support pupils at the school, including the increasing number of those on the ASD spectrum. Further, the Greenshaw SALT staff have provided training to colleagues in other local schools and there are plans to extend this outreach work in the near future.⁹

The Inclusion Management Team: More creative use of resources than was officially intended

The IMT meets fortnightly to consider referrals that can be made by any member of staff. Colleagues refer using forms that require them to differentiate between different kinds of behaviour that are considered to represent a barrier to learning. The IMT panel is made up of the School's Director of Inclusion, Deputy SENCO, Speech and Language Manager, LINC Manager and House Support Officer. It is through the IMT that SEN and BESD practices are fully aligned. The composition of the group allows efficient communication between all those who have a responsibility for the welfare of the pupil and for interventions to promote it. The team is responsive and flexible and makes more creative use of resources in the school than was 'officially' intended for those resources. The IMT devises a personalised programme that may include intensive support for communication difficulties

⁹⁹ For further information on Elklan go to <http://www.elklan.co.uk/about/index.html>

provided by the SALT department, anger management sessions with the LINC department and regular mentoring meetings with the HOWED consultant.

The School's Senior Leader responsible for the Pastoral Support Programme leads on the monitoring of Pastoral Support Plans and liaises with IMT so that the effectiveness of interventions can be monitored and in order that evaluation may receive a rapid response.¹⁰ House staff devise the PSP in partnership with other teams as appropriate, and support it with day to day encouragement, mentoring and monitoring of targets. It is not unusual for support to be provided by the SEN team also. The House team communicates with staff in the classroom and often provides immediate intervention when there is acute difficulty.

Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties

In common with many schools, Greenshaw identifies pupils' difficulties in this area in spite of a lack of evidence or formal diagnosis at an earlier age. Experience indicates that adolescent learners demonstrate these difficulties in greater numbers than do primary school pupils. Statements of special educational need for these young people are hard to come by. Greenshaw is aware of the need to make its own provision. The team deployed to help pupils with BESD can include any combination of the House team, Learning Support, speech and language therapist, the Learning Inclusion Department and HOWED. The Learning Inclusion Department (LINC) and HOWED have developed over the last 10 years as important aspects of Greenshaw's inclusive provision. LINC has 1.4 FTE staff: a full-time leader and 0.4 leaning mentor. It provides highly effective anger-management programmes and sessions to raise self-esteem and expectations. All pupils have clear and manageable targets and are expected to apply their LINC learning in mainstream lessons. Communication between LINC and teaching staff is of paramount importance and is promoted through face to face meetings as well as memoranda. LINC staff build positive relationships with young people referred to them, in a short space of time. The pupils are responsive and give of their best; they usually succeed in achieving their PSP targets.

General support for emotional development has been bought in from outside, independent providers, who work with Learning Support, SALT and House teams. From September 2011 the School will use additionally specific behaviour support interventions provided by CAMHS. Important input at family support meetings is made by all the adults who work with young people experiencing emotional difficulties, and visits made to the home facilitate clear and constructive communication between home and School.

¹⁰ The Pastoral Support Programme and support for the House system are two roles of a member of the Senior Leadership Team whose full title is Director of Parent Engagement.

Case Study: A Year 11 pupil finds it increasingly difficult to work within school boundaries. Challenges to expectations of behaviour in class and during college NVQ link-course sessions have led to various House Team interventions, including a daily report and the drawing up of a PSP. The PSP targets have not been met. The IMT decides to provide a LINC course (focus to be decided after discussion between the pupil, the parents and the LINC manager), a weekly HOWED mentoring session and an extended work experience placement of two days per week. The work experience will be monitored and supported by the school's Learning Mentor. In consultation with parents and the pupil, the timetable is adjusted so that the pupil is able to concentrate on a reduced number of subjects. Permanent exclusion is avoided. The Learning Mentor supports the pupil with applications for employment, which lead to a permanent position from July of year 11.

The resourceful and flexible approach taken by the IMT and House teams to support for pupils with BESD means that permanent exclusions from the school are rare and the number of fixed-term exclusions is low. The figures are further held in check by the availability of the Internal Centre for Inclusion (ICE). Here, pupils spend a day in school and working on the subjects in their normal timetable rather than a directionless day at home, often unsupervised, on fixed-term exclusion.

The School's very inclusive ethos was evident in each interview and [so was] the pupils' confidence in themselves, both academically and socially.¹¹

It may seem unusual for young people who have presented persistently challenging behaviour to acknowledge the support they have received during some difficult years at school. Yet many of them return, sometimes quite soon after they have left school, keen to catch up with the staff who were instrumental in providing support for them and perhaps asking for more help and advice. Many, then, who cannot, for a variety of reasons, identify with learning goals in the mainstream curriculum, still have a sense of belonging that leads them back to their mentors and that underpins their further development. The raising of the participation age will bring the effectiveness of Greenshaw's strategies for inclusion into even sharper focus.

Pupils with statements of special educational needs not only fare significantly better at Greenshaw than (as represented by national average figures) at other schools, but 100% of them enjoy school and their attendance is good.¹² They know their targets and have been involved in negotiating them and feel that they have made much progress since coming to the School.

¹¹ London Borough of Sutton Advice and Inspection Service, *Summary Report on Special Educational Needs Spring 2011, Greenshaw High School*

¹² London Borough of Sutton Advice and Inspection Service, *Summary Report on Special Educational Needs Spring 2011, Greenshaw High School*

The level and variety of expertise in the SEN and inclusion teams at Greenshaw richly support the development of pupils and staff. Other schools too have been able to take advantage of training programmes offered by Greenshaw's experts in a range of fields.

Combined with strong leadership, rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning, special interventions and learner progress, resources serve young people well and offer them the opportunity to do as the School exhorts them in its mission statement:

Be remarkable

June 2011

William Smith, Headteacher, Greenshaw High School wsmith@suttonmail.org

Gay Bennett-Powell, Education Consultant www.gbpedcon.co.uk email: info@gbpedcon.co.uk



Grennell Road, Sutton, Surrey SM1 3DY
Telephone: 0208 715 1001
www.greenshaw.co.uk