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Mr Andrew Feeley
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Dear Mr Feeley

Short inspection of Green Fold School

Following my visit to the school on 3 November 2016 with Caroline Pollard, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be outstanding in April 2012.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your senior leaders have carefully built an environment where exemplary resources and therapy are used to ensure that pupils with a wide range of needs flourish in the school. Pupils make excellent progress from their starting points because of the high expectations and staff expertise that is offered to them. Staff are passionate about pupils in their care; they recognise pupils' unique gifts and sculpt appropriate learning opportunities around each of their needs. The school environment is bright, vibrant and welcoming. Classrooms are well cared for and staff take pride in their work. Teachers communicate expertly with all pupils, despite their varied barriers. A wide range of assistive technology and communications is used by teachers to ensure that pupils are clear on their timetables and personal learning during lessons. For example, picture boards, coloured signs, iPad applications and hand gesture signs are all used to guide and support pupils' learning within the classroom. Parents are complimentary about the school's facilities and admire the positive, 'can do' atmosphere that pervades the school.

Since becoming executive headteacher in September 2014, you have restructured the leadership team to further refine and sharpen teaching and learning across the school. The curriculum has been redesigned and pupils are taught in classes dependent on their ability rather than key stage. The school is growing and evolving, and operates across two sites. Nevertheless, you have ensured that there

is a high degree of consistency in how well pupils' academic and emotional needs are catered for. Staff endeavour to meet and share good practice frequently so that approaches and classroom provision consistently meet pupils' needs. Your self-evaluation is accurate in identifying the areas of strength and areas for development, and the school's work is externally moderated to provide challenge. You have addressed the areas for improvement from the previous inspection and have a strong desire and clear goals on how to continue school improvement to ensure that pupils' achievement continues to rise across the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that safeguarding is a high priority across the school. The arrangements for safeguarding are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. When incidents do occur, they are dealt with appropriately by leaders within the school. Parents and staff consider the school to be a very safe place.

Staff are well trained on the risks and safeguarding concerns that are most relevant to the needs of the pupils. Safety is paramount and a fundamental part of everyday life across the school. For example, a large number of staff have received training in dysphagia, so that they can better support pupils with swallowing food and drink during lunchtimes. Members of staff at all levels understand how to raise concerns and are well versed in their responsibility for pupils' welfare and safety. Staff are vigilant and recognise that pupils are extremely vulnerable; they work hard to understand pupils' varying communication barriers in disclosing worries, difficulties or abuse. Pupils are informed about how to keep themselves safe but some aspects of this information are not delivered as effectively across the curriculum. Consequently, a few pupils do not have a wide understanding of how to keep themselves safe in society.

The welfare and well-being of every pupil is risk-assessed and staff are knowledgeable about healthcare plans and the application of pupils' medication needs. The school environment is well designed to ensure that pupils are safe at all times. Playground areas cater well for pupils' needs. As a result, behaviour triggers for pupils are reduced and anxiety levels controlled. Pupils from the federation's mainstream primary school volunteer as play leaders during Green Fold school social times. They stimulate guided play and ensure that pupils play safely in the playground. Inspectors observed this unique approach and witnessed pupils from the different schools playing in harmony and forming caring bonds. A high number of pupils travel to and from school by organised transportation and leaders have ensured that this is well organised and that pupils are safeguarded from risks. A well-established school team, the 'children and families team', works closely with families so that safeguarding of pupils reaches out beyond the school gate.

Inspection findings

- Leaders ensure that pupils and families experience a happy, supportive and welcoming school with staff that nurture pupils' self-worth. Pupils benefit immensely from the excellent facilities and range of therapy on offer within

the school. As a result, pupils' academic, personal and physical development is very well supported. Pupils flourish because they are given the skills to overcome their very specific difficulties. For example, I observed excited pupils engaging in a hydrotherapy session with staff tailoring motor challenges, strength and coordination to match pupils' needs and requirements. As a result, all pupils made progress, splashed with delight and left the session calm and ready for their next challenge.

- Communication between teachers and teaching assistants is seamless. Together they work tirelessly to ensure that pupils' individual learning plans are catered for and that barriers to pupils' learning are removed. This ensures that most pupils make small but significant steps in progress.
- There is a strong focus on the use of assessment across the school. Leaders have recently strengthened the school's systems for tracking and monitoring pupils' performance. Teachers are growing in confidence in their use of the new system and leaders are poised to check its effectiveness. Leaders scrutinise pupils' performance termly and ensure that pupils' learning plans and personal targets are amended to reflect their most recent performance. However, leaders do not always analyse pupils' performance in the early years as sharply as they do in key stage 1 and 2. As a result, opportunities to share the exemplary good practice across the school are sometimes missed.
- Leaders go the extra mile to ensure that pupils at the end of key stage 2 make successful transitions to their feeder special school. A dedicated leader ensures that a wide range of rich, well-organised programmes are in place. As a result, pupils and families are well informed and have any uncertainties dispelled before their arrival in Year 7. Teachers and therapists ensure that new providers have a secure understanding of the needs of pupils and the needs of their families. For example, pupils make regular visits to their new school and video reminders are used to familiarise pupils and reduce the anxiety about change.
- Leaders take great care to ensure that end of year group changes are carefully planned, with clear communication between teachers. Information regarding pupils' learning styles, assessments and health and welfare is transferred effectively to the next teacher. Parents and pupils are provided with a plethora of opportunities to meet new staff and visit their new classroom environment so that they feel reassured and familiarised. This approach ensures that individual learning plans continue to boost learning and ensures continued pupils' progress.
- The chair of the governing body is recently in post. Previously a governor, she has an informed knowledge and understanding of the school. The governing body has been reconstituted and a review of governance was undertaken in the summer of 2015. The governing body has emerged revitalised and is performing its statutory duties well. Governors use their plethora of skills to challenge and support the school effectively. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governing body meetings are well attended. Records of meetings show clear and appropriate challenge to school leaders.

- Leaders have established partnerships with families to ensure strong collaboration and support for pupils. Parents and carers are signposted to vital organisations that provide support to families whose children have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspectors attended a parent group meeting, Green Fold Parent Group, which was established by the school to support parents. Parents highly praised the support and the benefits of regular, high-quality training. For example, basic first aid training has been provided to parents and carers so that they are more confident in medical emergencies.
- Parents speak passionately about the school and recognise the efforts of staff to ensure that their children thrive and achieve. There were several positive comments regarding the school's work on the online questionnaire (Parent View): 'Since my child started at Green Fold he has made excellent progress. Learning targets are tailor made to each individual child and their abilities. To have a child with severe physical and learning disabilities is very difficult & the school have a very much "I can" attitude towards the children. They treat the children as individuals & not as a "diagnosis". I have found staff to be very approachable, supportive...They update us regularly on my child's progress and if there are ever any problems they contact me straight away.'
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they sharpen the analysis of pupils' performance in the early years foundation stage so that exemplary practice can be shared more widely across the school
- new assessment systems introduced across the school are fully embedded and their effectiveness closely monitored
- teachers use even more creative ways to ensure that pupils understand how to keep safe in society.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bolton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Dawn Platt
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- Meetings took place with you, your senior leaders, members of the governing body, members of staff and a group of parents. A phone conversation was also held with a local authority adviser regarding safeguarding in the school.
- Short visits were made to a number of lessons, most of which were accompanied by a member of the senior leadership team, to observe teaching and look at pupils' learning development.
- Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour in a range of situations, including in lessons, around school and at breaktime.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of supporting documentation about safeguarding and child protection, the school's self-evaluation, monitoring information and improvement plans, minutes of governors' meetings, records related to attendance, and information relating to pupils' achievement.
- Inspectors took into account eight responses from parents on Ofsted's free text service. They also considered 38 responses to the online staff questionnaire.
- This inspection particularly focused on a number of key questions:
 - Do leaders effectively track and monitor pupils' developments and achievements across the school and intervene appropriately to ensure outstanding outcomes for all?
 - Are pupils effectively safeguarded and are staff kept up to date with current safeguarding legislation?
 - Do governors hold the school to account effectively and are they ensuring that they carry out their statutory responsibilities?
 - Are pupils' destinations and next steps in learning well supported by the school?
 - Is pupils' transition between year groups and across the sites well supported to ensure that there is no loss of learning?