

Green Fold School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105281
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	308817
Inspection dates	4–5 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Christine Emerson

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	53
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Emma Scowcroft
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Grecic
Date of previous school inspection	6 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Highfield Road Farnworth Bolton Lancashire BL4 0RA
Telephone number	01204 333750
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small special school for pupils who have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A substantial minority of pupils have an autistic spectrum disorder. All pupils have a statement of special educational need. Because of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities all pupils are working well below national age-related expectations. Although most pupils are of White British heritage, there are a significant number of pupils from Asian or Asian British backgrounds. Fifteen pupils are at the early stages of acquiring English. Pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. A small number of pupils are looked after by the local authority. The school is part of a federation made up of three schools. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are based at The Orchards upper site where they are co-located with the partner mainstream primary school. The 14 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are based at the lower site in a fully integrated provision. They are taught alongside children from the partner mainstream primary school and a mainstream nursery school. The school holds the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. It has submitted an application for the Artsmark award.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Green Fold is an outstanding school. This is because the leadership of the executive headteacher and the head of the school is exceptional. They have both been highly effective in using the federation with mainstream partner schools to give Green Fold pupils exceptionally good opportunities to work and play with mainstream pupils. This enables pupils to make excellent progress, particularly in personal and social development and in learning to communicate effectively with others. Consequently, pupils are equipped very well for their lives beyond school. The school makes an exemplary contribution to community cohesion. It is particularly effective in promoting positive attitudes to disability in the partner schools and in the local community.

Although standards are exceptionally low because of the pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the achievement of pupils in Years 1 to 6 is outstanding. The school carefully analyses information gained from assessments to demonstrate that all pupils, including those with complex needs such as autistic spectrum disorder and pupils learning English as an additional language, make equally good progress. There is no difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Although children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) make outstanding progress in personal development and communication, the present lack of an outside play area restricts their physical development. This means that their achievement overall is good rather than outstanding.

Pupils' exceptional achievement is brought about by the excellent learning opportunities that the school provides. The outstanding curriculum is innovative and is very well adapted to pupils' individual needs. There is a very good balance between teaching pupils key skills such as literacy and numeracy and exposing them to lively activities to enrich their understanding of the world. Pupils gain huge enjoyment from the themed weeks, such as the Spanish week when an area of the school was transformed into 'Spain'. The carefully planned programme of personal and social education ensures that pupils make outstanding progress in learning how to keep themselves safe and healthy. For example, they are highly motivated by their 'tooth brush buses' and are eager to clean their teeth after mealtimes. Teaching and learning are of outstanding quality. Teachers and support assistants understand pupils' needs exceptionally well. Excellent relationships are evident throughout the school. As a result, work set is very well matched to pupils' individual needs and they are given just the right amount of support to succeed in their tasks. Lessons are fun and pupils are given consistent positive feedback. This enables them to know how well they are doing and how they can improve. Staff are particularly skilled at encouraging pupils to communicate using speech, signing, switches and visual symbols.

Pupils make good progress in improving their behaviour. They join in lessons enthusiastically and try very hard. Attendance is good. Pupils make a full and highly valued contribution to the school and the community. The quality of care, guidance and support offered to the pupils is outstanding. Excellent links with a range of therapists and health personnel ensure that pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and those with complex medical needs receive very sensitive and consistent support. Relationships with parents are strong. The school goes out of its way to support vulnerable families.

The senior leadership team is highly expert and experienced. Very effective middle managers are now in post. However, the role of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluation is

underdeveloped. The governing body for the federated school supports Green Fold very well. As it is getting to know the school better it is developing its role as a critical friend. The school has improved very well since the previous inspection and has an outstanding capacity to improve further. It makes excellent use of all resources and provides outstanding value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The integrated Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision has only been open for an extremely short time. Consequently, the planned outside environment is not yet developed to provide facilities, such as large play equipment, to promote children's physical development. As a consequence, at the present time, children are making less progress in physical skills than in other areas. Very high quality planning and organisation promotes children's personal, social and emotional development and their communication extremely well. Because of their complex needs, children have exceptionally low starting points but they make outstanding progress in these areas and also in their creative work. Children benefit enormously from being taught in a fully integrated setting with children from the mainstream partner schools. For example, they make excellent progress in developing independence skills such as using cutlery because they have good role models to watch and copy. Children's welfare is promoted exceptionally well in all respects. Behaviour is very well managed and children receive expert and sensitive support. Very effective work with parents/carers ensures that children make a strong start and settle into school quickly. The EYFS is led and managed extremely well. Leaders have been highly effective in bringing staff and children together from three settings to create happy and successful provision with a common sense of purpose.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the involvement of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards of pupils' work are well below national expectations because of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school tracks pupils' progress in English, mathematics, personal and social development, and science very carefully and thoroughly using a variety of measures. This includes analysing the progress of pupils with different learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those who are looked after by the local authority and those at an early stage of English acquisition. There are very effective systems in place to ensure that assessments are accurate. Using these measures, there is considerable evidence that all groups of pupils are making outstanding progress in all core subjects. The outstanding achievement in the school is exemplified by assessment results which demonstrate that some pupils continue to make progress despite having degenerative conditions.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. School assemblies are uplifting. They help pupils to appreciate the fragility of life and how to live it to the full. Pupils regularly take part in the festivals of a variety of faiths and are encouraged to recognise that they are part of the global community. For example, they develop a good understanding about

children's lives in Africa through the strong links with a school in Uganda. Behaviour is good and often excellent. The minority of students who find it hard to control their behaviour have detailed plans to help them to improve. Pupils respond very well to the excellent emphasis on developing independence skills and are keen to take on small responsibilities such as clearing tables at lunchtime. Consequently, they make an excellent contribution to the school community and are very well prepared for their lives beyond school. Pupils' attendance is good because they really enjoy coming to school. It is notable that on the first day of the inspection, many pupils still attended despite the cancellation of school transport because of inclement weather.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Excellent teaching is underpinned by the outstanding teamwork and exemplary individual support evident in all lessons. Well chosen resources, stimulating activities and teaching methods, which are very well matched to pupils' needs, engage pupils very well so that they make excellent progress. For example, in a class for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, the pupils remained very alert and demonstrated really good looking when they had good sensory opportunities to explore materials in the 'Farmer Duck' story. Similarly, in a lesson that included some higher achieving pupils, including those with autistic spectrum disorder, pupils made outstanding progress in developing their understanding of the local community because of the excellent use of a variety of visual aids such as pictures, symbols and a PowerPoint display. As a result, the pupils were able to recognise and label community facilities such as the pharmacy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum fully meets national requirements and the aspirations and capabilities of the pupils. It is enriched extremely well by the contributions of visiting performers and artists, such as a project with the partner schools to carve a large tree sculpture, which stands in the foyer of the school. There are many good opportunities for physical education including an annual outdoor pursuits week held with the mainstream school. Pupils are prepared very well for future economic well-being through mini enterprise projects where they make and sell items. The curriculum is very well adapted to meet the needs of different groups of pupils including those with the most complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Teachers use very effective strategies, which pupils understand and enjoy, such as the 'Tony the Tiger' puppet, to give out targets for the week. This helps the pupils to know what their targets are and what they have to do to achieve them. Excellent links with outside agencies, and with the mainstream partner schools, ensure that pupils' individual support needs are exceptionally well met. Pupils have very comprehensive individual health and welfare plans, which all staff adhere to. The school works very closely with parents. Pupils told the inspector that they feel very safe and well supported. They said that there is always someone to turn to if they are worried and there is never any bullying. The school meets current government safeguarding requirements. All procedures for child protection and those to ensure pupils'

health and safety are securely established and regularly reviewed. The transition to the secondary special school is managed very well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The senior leadership team has a very accurate view of the school's strengths and what needs to be done to improve it even further. This includes a secure understanding of the quality of teaching in the school. A joint lesson observation, and other information provided by the school, indicated that senior leaders' judgements as to the quality of teaching throughout the school match the judgements of inspectors very closely. However, subject leaders are not yet always sufficiently involved in monitoring teaching and learning in their subject areas. The school sets itself challenging targets and the school development plan is a comprehensive and useful vehicle to drive school improvement. Senior leaders have been exceptionally effective in promoting inclusion. They provide an excellent role model of a school, which gives the highest value to equal opportunities for all members of the learning community. Governors are very supportive of the school and share the commitment to create a centre of inclusive excellence. The governing body, which is constituted from governors from the three partner schools, is developing its expertise and understanding with regards to the particular needs of Green Fold well.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Green Fold School, Bolton, BL4 0RA

I know that some of you find reading very difficult, so your teachers will tell you about this letter. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school. We really enjoyed finding out about the things you are doing and talking to you. It was very useful to know what you think about your school.

We think that your school is outstanding. There are many things that are really brilliant in your school. These include the:

- outstanding care, support and guidance you are given so that you feel safe, make excellent progress and know how well you are doing
- excellent opportunities you have to work and play with pupils from other local schools
- excellent assemblies which celebrate how well you do and really make you think about others
- exceptionally good teaching which enables you to learn masses in lessons.

All of this is possible because the executive headteacher, head of the school, staff and governors do a fantastic job and try their very best to make the school as good as they can for you.

I have asked your headteacher to do one thing to make the school even better. That is to involve the teachers in charge of subjects more in keeping a check on how good the teaching is and how well you are learning.

I wish you all the best for the future.