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Mr Andrew Sanders
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Sanders

Short inspection of Moorcroft School

Following my visit to the school on 12 June 2018 with Karen Matthews, 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 good in November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a full section 5 inspection.

You have continued to drive improvement within the school since the last inspection. Recently appointed senior leaders support you very well. You have recently appointed a number of middle leaders to increase leadership capacity further. You have very clear plans for school improvement. These are drawn from carefully analysing trends in assessment and progress information. Therefore, improvement work is evidence-based and can be focused on priority areas for the current cohort of learners. Leaders, including trustees, have a strong commitment to raising standards and improving outcomes for pupils. Trustees are well-informed about the work of the school and they are able to support and challenge effectively.

Teachers plan stimulating lessons for pupils. Activities and resources are well selected to match individual needs, abilities and interests. Classrooms are calm and staff work together to encourage pupils to participate in activities. You have grouped pupils according to key stage, ability and their particular needs. This means that teaching strategies, pace and learning styles can be adjusted to meet the specific needs of pupils in each group. In lessons, pupils with profound and multiple

learning difficulties are given the time they need to respond. Most-able pupils benefit from faster-paced sessions which enable them to maintain interest. Occasionally, teachers are not able to engage all pupils in lessons.

Parents value the work of the school and can see the progress that their children are making. Parents spoke positively about the progress their children make in key areas such as communication and personal development.

Pupils enjoy school and attend well, particularly given their complex health needs. They told inspectors that they learn lots at school and are encouraged to choose where they go for work experience and community activities.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders make referrals to and work closely with other agencies if there are concerns about a pupil. All concerns are recorded and follow-up is timely and pro-active. This ensures that pupils are safe and families receive the support they need.

You make sure that there is always someone available on site for staff or pupils to go to if they have a concern. This includes during the after-school provision which is run by the school. You are very well supported by the leaders responsible for safeguarding in the group of schools to which you belong. Staff are well-trained and clear records are kept of the training they receive. They are fully aware of the procedures they need to follow if they are concerned about a pupil.

The designated leads for safeguarding understand the particular vulnerability of the pupils who attend the school. Many pupils are non-verbal and have severe learning difficulties, so may be unable to raise concerns directly or communicate their thoughts and feelings. Therefore, staff know to be vigilant in looking for changes in behaviour or presentation of a pupil. Staff are directed to report any concerns, however small, and these are recorded and carefully monitored.

Inspection findings

- Firstly, we agreed to look at how well pupils make progress from their starting points. You work closely with the primary school that most pupils come from to ensure that you have accurate baseline assessments for pupils. From low starting points, pupils make very strong progress in all areas of their development. Progress rates have risen over the last three years, with all pupils now meeting their challenging targets and a significant proportion exceeding them. Assessment information indicates that all pupils, regardless of key stage, gender or disability make equally strong progress. Disadvantaged pupils make the same rates of progress as other pupils. Leaders analyse this progress information very carefully to identify any pupil who is not making the progress expected. Action plans are put in place which result in barriers to learning being removed so that pupils are able to progress.
- Teachers set challenging targets for individual pupils in English and mathematics

and in their personal development. They record the small steps of progress pupils make in detail and evidence this using photographs and videos. Leaders check these judgements to ensure they are correct and that targets are relevant and challenging for each pupil. You work with other leaders and the director of schools in the academy chain to make sure assessments are accurate.

- Our second line of enquiry looked at the curriculum and how well it meets pupils' individual needs. Leaders have reviewed and developed the curriculum. They have sought the views of staff and pupils in its development and there is a clear shared vision. It has been designed with the key needs of the pupils at its centre. You have placed a strong focus on the acquisition and application of functional skills and independence for all pupils. There is planned progression in expectations for each key stage, building on pupils' previous learning.
- The new curriculum is in place. The strongest teaching provides personalised learning activities for all learners. Leaders have identified that further work is needed to enable all staff to implement the curriculum consistently. In particular, you explained that you now want to develop the personal, social and emotional development strand of the curriculum. The aim of this is to place an even greater emphasis on the development of functional and independence skills for each individual.
- Our third line of enquiry looked at what leaders have done to improve teaching and learning in English. This was an area for improvement at the time of the last inspection. You have worked closely with the speech and language therapists to develop pupils' communication skills and work together on joint target-setting. On visits to lessons, inspectors saw a range of communication aids being used effectively. Some pupils use symbol boards and books, others use technological aids to communicate. These are carefully chosen for individual pupils to ensure that they are able to physically access them and they contain the appropriate vocabulary.
- Improvements to teaching and learning in English have had clear results in terms of the strong progress pupils make in this subject. Despite this, pupils still make stronger progress in mathematics than in English. Therefore, leaders have identified that teaching in English remains a priority for further improvement. You have recently added capacity to the leadership team to continue to improve teaching, learning and outcomes.
- Finally, we considered how well the school prepares pupils for the next stage of their education and life. All pupils work towards accredited courses at an appropriate level, including the least able. This was an area for improvement at the last inspection which has been addressed successfully. All pupils who left the sixth form last year secured a college placement. In the sixth form, pupils apply their knowledge and skills in functional, real-life situations. They have opportunities to work in the school café or tuck shop. Some pupils undertake external work experience placements to apply their skills in the real world. Leaders are currently developing more specific learning pathways for pupils in the sixth form with an eventual aim of either supported living, work or college. This will enable pupils to follow an even more functional, personalised curriculum.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the new curriculum is implemented to a consistently high standard by all teachers
- pupils make as much progress in English and communication as they do in mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hillingdon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Charlotte Millward
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with senior leaders throughout the day. We met with a group of staff, members of the management committee and a group of pupils. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, school development plan, progress and achievement information and curriculum documentation. Inspectors met with the designated lead for safeguarding and looked at records relating to safeguarding including the single central record of staff suitability checks. We also looked at assessment information including teachers' records and photo and video evidence of pupils' achievements. We visited a range of lessons across all key stages in conjunction with school leaders. There were too few responses to Parent View and the pupil survey to generate a meaningful analysis. We considered the 11 responses to the staff survey.