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Mr P Maunder
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Maunder

Ofsted 2010–11 survey inspection programme: early learning

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and children during my visit on 16 November 2010 to evaluate the provision and outcomes for children in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff, scrutiny of relevant documentation, including assessments of children's learning; and observation of sessions in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The effectiveness of meeting the children's communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional learning and development needs is outstanding.

Achievement

- Children make outstanding progress over their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage in language, communication and literacy and in their personal, social and emotional development. Their progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved in these areas over each of the last three years.
- In 2007, children's communication, language and literacy skills were broadly in line with those expected for their age. By 2010, the proportion of children reaching the level expected for their age in both their

communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development was above that found nationally. Children enter Year 1 with excellent levels of attention and concentration. In their social development, children form very good relationships with both adults and peers and work well as part of a group sharing fairly. Children's emotional development was lower in 2010, but the school has acted quickly to improve outcomes of a small group of children. They are now more able to consider consequences of their actions and to develop their understanding of the needs and views of others.

- Children in adult-led sessions make good and outstanding progress in linking letters and sounds. This is because sessions build on children's previous learning and introduce new phonemes on a daily basis. Children are shown how to use their tongue and mouth to form the correct sound. Teachers use assessments very well to develop children's understanding but, occasionally, opportunities are missed to reinforce key points with all children.

Quality of provision

- Staff have given considerable thought as to how to make best use of classrooms to develop children's learning. Teachers plan interesting topics and use assessments well to meet the needs and interests of children. In a topic on parties, children enjoyed visiting writing areas to make marks, write their names on envelopes and compile party lists. A role-play area indoors continues the party theme with serviettes and balloons adding to the theme, but there are fewer opportunities for children to develop their expressive language and writing outdoors.
- There is a strong focus on teaching early reading and writing skills which is effective in raising standards. The Nursery teacher uses visual displays effectively to help children's excellent recall of the characters and setting of a favourite story.
- Staff work closely with other agencies to ensure that all children make the progress of which they are capable. With strong support from speech and language therapists, children with communication difficulties made good progress in their social skills and language development. They join in enthusiastically, retelling favourite nursery rhymes and describing pictures and sounds.
- Relationships with parents are good; they are able to meet and discuss their children's progress at the start and end of the day. Home-school reading diaries help to encourage communication and ensure a common approach to developing reading skills. Staff have invited parents to become more involved in assessing their child's development by recording special moments.

Leadership and management

- Outstanding leadership over recent years has resulted in improvements to practice and a marked rise in children's outcomes. Staff assessments and observations of children's learning inform detailed planning. Their careful monitoring of children's progress feeds directly into planning for the next steps in children's learning. Consequently, children of all abilities make good and often outstanding progress in their communication and social skills.
- The Reception Stage leader, working with the knowledgeable support from the deputy headteacher, has an accurate view of what has worked well and where action is needed to improve the quality of provision further. Close and supportive team work has proved valuable in developing ways to improve children's early reading and writing skills.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing opportunities for children to develop their expressive language and exposure to new vocabulary through increased role play opportunities, especially outdoors
- continuing to develop parental involvement in initial and on-going assessments of their child's learning and development.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop the Early Years Foundation Stage in the school.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Mark Lindfield
Her Majesty's Inspector