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Mr A Morris
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Morris

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 2 December 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 you and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader; 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 start in the nursery with levels of personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy skills that are well below what is typically expected for their age. They settle quickly and the majority go on to make outstanding progress, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Children make very good progress in their learning because the school is skilled in identifying their learning needs from the moment they start in

the Nursery. The observations of children's learning and progress carried out by adults within the setting are used to provide learning activities that are tailored to engage and address the needs of every child. Overall, children achieve broadly in line with national expectations by the time they complete the Early Years Foundation Stage.

- Although girls generally outperform boys in most areas of learning the progress made by both groups relative to their starting points is very similar. The same applies to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result of the school's focus on providing plenty of activities, indoors and outside, that are appealing to boys, their writing skills are beginning to show signs of improvement.

Quality of provision

- Children settle quickly into the class routines at the beginning of each day and all show a good level of confidence and independence in choosing what they wish to do. A lot of effort is made by adults to provide a wide range of exciting activities to support children's learning. For example, a large tray full of melting ice sculptures provided excellent opportunities for children to experiment with ice, and for adults to extend and develop their language skills.
- The learning environment both indoors and outdoors is of the highest quality and under continual review for improvement. For example, leaders are aware that the outdoor environment requires further opportunities for children to practise their reading and mark-making. It is a secure environment in which children can learn safely. Children are able to move freely between all learning areas throughout the day and activities are constructed in such a way so as to promote children's independence and learning.
- The school is aware of the importance of providing a curriculum that is appropriately broad to ensure that children learn about other cultures and lifestyles. To this end the school successfully celebrates a national heritage theme throughout the year and, when possible, children's interests and the activities that they participate in outside of school.
- Teaching is personalised with targets set for all children. Activities are purposeful and engaging and include a strong focus on developing children's emotional awareness, often through additional focused group work. All adults draw on their expertise and use new technologies, such as interactive whiteboards, to enhance teaching and engage pupils, especially in their learning of letters.
- Activities are carefully structured to maintain a brisk pace of learning. The programme to teach children their letters and sounds (phonics) has been very well introduced within the setting. Adults are highly skilled and confident in teaching literacy skills which results in children progressing at a good pace. For example, children were encouraged to talk with a partner

in developing their thoughts and ideas prior to practising their writing skills on individual whiteboards.

- Writing is a major focus within the school. Adults work very closely together as a team to ensure that every opportunity is taken to promote children's learning and personal development. Regular workshops are provided for parents and carers to help support their children's learning. Parents say that they are kept very well informed about their children's learning and progress. They appreciate the 'open door' approach of the school that allows them to be as involved as they want to be in the life of the school.
- Resources, including extended services, are deployed well to improve outcomes for children. Strong links exist with other agencies, such as speech therapy and the local authority in order to strengthen and sustain provision for children.

Leadership and management

- The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has ensured that all adults possess an accurate understanding of the setting's strengths and areas for development. Through the very good use of assessment, adults possess a thorough knowledge of each child's learning needs. Very effective communication means that all staff contribute to ongoing self-evaluation. The school works closely with other agencies in its role to support children's personal and emotional development.
- All staff benefit from ongoing training and development opportunities to update their skills and knowledge. Their development needs are identified clearly, provided for and monitored through the school's performance management systems. As a result, all adults within the setting possess a secure knowledge and understanding of how their work contributes to the success of the setting.
- Home visits are offered to all families before a child starts nursery. Through this initial contact leaders endeavour to establish effective and trusting communications with parents. The school works closely with other agencies, such as speech and language specialists, to make certain that every opportunity is taken to ensure that children learn and make progress.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- enhancing the outdoor provision so that it provides the same good opportunities for children to practise writing as those available indoors.

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

David Edwards
Her Majesty's Inspector