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Mrs D Barratt
Glebe Primary School
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Dear Mrs Barratt,

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 17 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 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 skills and aptitudes that are well below what is typically expected for their age. However, they make good and sometimes accelerated progress across all areas of learning because all staff prioritise getting to know the children and their families.
- Children are encouraged to become active and independent learners because planned activities take account of children's interest. For example, the teacher-planned topic of 'light and dark' evolved, with children's input,

into a space theme. Several Reception boys engaged in role-play around a space station that led to them looking at non-fictional books on space for an extended period of time and sharing detailed information they had found out about space travel.

- In 2010 the school saw significant improvements across all areas of learning that brought children's achievements more closely in line with national figures, especially for those children who joined in the Nursery. Thirty per cent of the cohort achieved in line with expectations for their age or above in communication, language and literacy skills. In personal, social and emotional development, this was 47%. This was a significant increase on previous years where none had achieved at that level before.
- By the time they are ready to transfer into Key Stage 1, children are able to perform tasks with confidence and have a very positive attitude towards school. They are able to engage in collaborative activities, understand and follow routines, participate in self-directed activities and interact positively with others. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make very good progress because they are identified early and appropriate provision is put in place.

Quality of provision

- All staff exercise very good levels of communication and teamwork. They know the children well and are quick to share any concerns about their progress as well as to celebrate their achievements.
- A lot of creative thought is given to the learning environment and planned activities. Children are provided with individual targets for their personal development and independence and have a clear understanding of expected behaviour.
- Children's progress is monitored carefully and outcomes are shared with other staff to inform further planning. Key workers play an important role in helping children to settle to learning. They are particularly effective in helping children with English as an additional language and their families develop confidence in speaking English.
- Individual needs are met well. Children are divided into small groups to manage access to the outdoor environment. They benefit from the very good and extensive outdoor learning resources. All adults work closely with children to support and extend their learning through careful observation, timely intervention and skilful questioning that extends and reinforces children's learning through play.
- Very good use is made of the excellent school learning centre where children are taken for directed time in using computers and other information communication technology. A group of nursery children were engrossed, with their teacher, in learning how to programme a robot. Children were highly motivated and, through skilful questioning by the teacher, were able to predict successfully the path of travel for the robot.

- Children are provided with lots of opportunities for reading, mark-making and writing. The school follows national guidance in structuring the development of children's awareness of the links between letters and sounds (phonics). The involvement of all staff with small groups of children ensures progress at a rate that meets individuals' needs.

Leadership and management

- Self-evaluation is rigorous and has improved significantly in the past year. This is because outcomes from assessment now drive teachers' planning and provision. With a better knowledge of how children develop and learn, leaders are now able to gather a much clearer understanding of children's strengths and weaknesses, and next steps in learning.
- The time and resources spent in strengthening the school's partnership work with parents is paying dividends in improving outcomes for children and their families. The deployment of a 'Children-at-the-Centre Co-ordinator' has been very effective in drawing together a wide range of provision to meet the needs of children and their families.
- All adults are very well trained. Performance management objectives are used to inform further professional development. Highly effective partnerships with other providers have resulted in additional support for the school in developing curriculum provision and ensuring that children and their families' specific needs are met.
- Innovative leadership, demonstrated through working creatively with other partners, has enabled the school to lead the way as a knowledge centre for cross-cultural communication and language learning. For example, the school hosts a Community Craft and Language Café which has provided regular family learning opportunities and a platform for further multi-agency support.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- enabling more children to make outstanding progress in all areas of learning so that by 2011 the proportion reaching the level expected for their age increases.

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