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Mr M Wright
Hayes School
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Dear Mr Wright,

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 30 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 communication, language and literacy skills and levels of personal, social and emotional development that are well below what is typically expected for their age. However, they settle quickly and go on to make good and sometimes outstanding progress, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. As a result, children achieve broadly in line with national expectations by the time they are ready to transfer onto the next stage of their learning.

- Children often make very good progress in their learning because adults' observations of children's learning are used very carefully to plan further learning experiences that are tailored to engage and address the needs of every child. Parents also are encouraged to make a record of their children's learning at home which helps in building an accurate and more complete understanding of how children are developing.
- The gap between girls and boys, particularly in developing writing skills, is beginning to close because of plenty of activities, indoors and outside, that are now appealing to boys to develop their social and literacy skills.

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. Adults provide a wide range of activities to support children who are identified as needing additional help or challenge.
- The learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, is of the highest quality. It is a secure environment in which children can learn safely. As a result, children are able to move freely between both these environments throughout the day. All activities are constructed in such a way as to promote children's independence and learning through carefully guided questioning. Nothing is left to chance.
- The school is aware of the importance of providing a curriculum that is appropriately broad to ensure children learn about other cultures and lifestyles. It successfully celebrates, when possible, children's interests and activities that they participate in outside of school. However, resources do not always reflect the diversity of cultures within the United Kingdom.
- Teaching is personalised with targets set for all children. Activities are purposeful, engaging and include a strong focus on developing children's emotional awareness, often through small focused group work. For example, the 'Baby SEAL' and 'Thrive' intervention groups that focus specifically on developing children's emotional and social skills.
- Adults draw on their considerable subject knowledge and use new technologies, such as interactive whiteboards, to enhance teaching and engage pupils, especially in their learning of letters. Activities are structured carefully 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 language development and, as a result, enable children to progress at a much faster pace. Writing is a major focus within the school and is planned to impact on almost every activity, including encouraging children to write outdoors.
- Adults work very closely together as a team to ensure every opportunity is taken to promote children's learning and personal development. Workshops for parents and carers to help support their children's learning

are provided regularly. To encourage more parental involvement, occasional impromptu presentations and activities are offered to parents just before the end of the school day and these are well received.

- Resources are deployed well, including extended services, to improve outcomes for children. Strong links exist with other agencies, such as speech therapy and the local authority, to strengthen and sustain provision for children.

Leadership and management

- The Early Years Foundation Stage leader possesses an accurate knowledge and understanding of the strengths and areas for development. Through the very good use of assessment and communication, all adults possess a thorough knowledge of each child's learning needs. The school works closely with a wide variety of other agencies. For example, it works with children, in a local hospital, who require additional support in emotional development.
- Staff are provided with regular 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 the children and their learning needs.
- The training of parents and carers is a priority for the school and all are included from the start in working with children. Home visits are offered to all families before a child starts nursery. Leaders endeavour to establish effective and trusting communications with parents as soon as possible after their children have started in the nursery.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that the curriculum takes every opportunity to teach children about the cultural diversity that exists within the United Kingdom.

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