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Ms S. Williamson
Regent Park Children's Centre
Augustus Street
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Dear Ms Williamson

Ofsted subject survey: good practice in promoting equality

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff at Regent Park Early Years Centre during my visit on 6 January 2009 to look at work in promoting equality.

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 made included: observations of children and staff, discussions with yourself and staff and scrutiny of documents.

The quality of provision to promote equalities is outstanding.

Features of good practice observed

- The strong focus on children for whom English is an additional language, through using English, signing and community languages to communicate. This allows children to start to learn English from an early age, and enables them to develop the social skills they need to operate in a group setting in this small, friendly environment. By the time most children start school they have gained a good grasp of English and are able to successfully communicate with others. This emphasis on the development of communication skills is very effective in raising pupils' self-confidence.

PROTECT INSPECTION

- A well qualified staff team and good adult ratio means children are well supported at activities and staff are able to respond to individual children, extending their learning; for example, by ensuring that children understand the importance of listening during circle time and how simple strategies like holding the teacher's bangle indicates to children when it is their turn to share their news. Excellent team work between staff in the speech and language unit and the main nursery ensures each child's individual communication programme is followed effectively.
- The centre effectively supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff and other professionals work well together to ensure that individual care and learning needs are met. Additional staffing, adapted resources and translation services also support children's individual needs. Care is taken to ensure that all children are fully included in all the activities, for example careful layout of activities so that a child with a walking frame can easily and independently access them.
- Children's individual needs are known, valued and respected and all receive excellent care taking account of their needs. They develop excellent social skills and their behaviour is outstanding.
- The staff team reflects the local community exceptionally well. Several staff are able to communicate with parents in their home language which is reassuring for them. Communication with children in their home language supports their development; for example, where a baby is noted to babble more freely when an ancillary worker speaks to her in her home language.
- Children and staff are kind and courteous towards each other. Staff are good role models and take account of the differing levels of understanding of the children they care for. Children learn to treat each other kindly and gain an understanding of their similarities and differences through discussion, activities, and events like the international food day.
- Parents views are valued and respected which enables staff to evaluate and monitor the care provided. Excellent feedback was received from parents during the visit who feel they are valued, welcomed and included in the everyday life of the centre. For example, they explain how they are welcomed into the centre, and that the allocation of a key worker, particularly when that person speaks their home language, enables both them and their child to feel part of the centre.

Areas for development

- Continue to work on increasing children's fluency in English.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop promoting equalities at Regent Park Children's Centre.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Ofsted gathers information on the immediate and longer-term impact of survey inspections, both on the institutions themselves, and with a view to improving its own processes. To this end, I should be grateful if you would complete the attached questionnaire and return it within the next ten days. We have also just sent a copy of the questionnaire by email. Please return your completed questionnaire to either the email or postal address on the form, not to me. We may also contact some schools by telephone after several months in order for us to gain a picture of longer-term impact. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Janice Shaw
Childcare Inspector