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18 December 2008
Mr David Francome
Surestart Lime Tree Children's Centre
Heathfield Road
Handsworth
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Dear Mr Francome

Ofsted survey inspection programme – narrowing the gap in literacy and Numeracy – EY3389943

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation during my visit on 17 December 2008 to look at work in literacy and numeracy.

As outlined in the initial letter, the visit had a particular focus on how well you meet the needs of all children in relation to their literacy and numeracy, with particular consideration to those at risk of not reaching their full potential. The visit also evaluated the level of expertise to support children learning English as an additional language (EAL).

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 settings but these will not be identified in the main text. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included interviews with you, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of children's work and observation of children's play.

The overall effectiveness of provision for literacy and numeracy was judged to be outstanding.

Learning and development

The quality of learning and development is good.

- Children are well nourished and ready to learn.
- Children receive a high level of individual time and attention from the staff team, who know the children and their families well. Children enter the setting happily and soon settle into the routine of the day.

- Children enjoy books and stories in a variety of ways, for example, through use of ICT equipment or when snuggling up with a staff member in a one to one situation.

Leadership and management of literacy and numeracy

The quality of leadership and management is good.

- Staff ensure the premises are welcoming and attractive to children by displaying posters and samples of children's work. However, books are not always displayed in an inviting manner, with some showing signs of wear and tear.
- Staff develop sound links with the range of settings to which children transfer; this includes sharing information about each child's progress and achievements.

English as an additional language

- Staff go to great lengths to support children learning English as an additional language; this includes bi-lingual staff and the use of interpreters.
- You have not undertaken any training in supporting children learning English as an additional language.

How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?

Inclusion in literacy and numeracy is good.

- Staff use observations of the children to record each child's achievements and identify their next steps in learning. Observations inform future planning for each child in literacy and numeracy.
- Staff know each child well. They plan and adapt activities and resources to enable children to explore and find out through their own interests, for example, using toy animals in foam.

Areas for development, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring books available to the children are in good repair and are stored attractively
- seeking training to support children learning English as an additional language.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop literacy and numeracy in your setting.

As was explained in the previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the inspector for your next inspection.

Yours sincerely

Judith Butler
Inspector