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19 October 2011

Mrs Lewis
Headteacher
Hindley Surestart Nursery
Morningson Road
Hindley
Wigan
Lancashire
WN2 4LG

Dear Mrs Lewis

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Hindley Surestart Nursery

Following my visit to your school on 18 and 19 October 2011, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in May 2010. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures - good

Progress since previous monitoring inspection - good

Newly Qualified Teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Wigan.

Yours sincerely

Gill Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector

September 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2010

- Raise children's attainment and ensure their consistent progress across the areas of learning, by:
 - eliminating unsatisfactory teaching
 - ensuring that the curriculum meets children's learning needs and is responsive to their interests
 - ensuring that staff carry out good quality assessments and that children's progress and achievements are recorded appropriately.

- Improve the effectiveness and impact of leadership and management by ensuring that staff work together as an effective team with a clear focus on school improvement

Special measures: monitoring of Hindley Surestart Nursery

Report from the third monitoring inspection from 18 and 19 October 2011

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised documents, including children's records of achievement and assessment data. Meetings were held with the headteacher, a governor, a representative from the local authority, staff and children.

Context

Since the last inspection, two teachers have left the school and another has returned from long-term sick leave on a phased return. A teaching assistant has left the school and her post has been filled by another member of staff. Two teaching assistants have joined the school and one has returned from maternity leave. Another has started maternity leave, and her post is being covered by one of the new colleagues. Three new governors joined the governing body in July 2011.

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

Children's attainment and progress is improving in all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school is continuing to develop its systems for assessing children's progress. This aspect of its work is becoming far more accurate. It has made good strides in identifying children who are below the levels expected for their age and staff plan carefully to meet their needs. Consequently these children are progressing more rapidly than at the time of the last inspection.

Children already in the Nursery and those who joined in September have settled well. They know the routines and all understand and follow the, 'good listening, good watching, good sitting' encouraged by the practitioners. Children are happy in their play and enjoy the wide range of activities available to them both indoors and outside. For example, when they start the session, some are keen to mix the play dough and set purposefully to work. Others are keen to read well known books, such as '*The Gingerbread Man*', in the story areas. They are becoming increasingly confident learners.

Children's personal and social development is continuing to improve and relationships are becoming more positive. For example, it is now common to see children helping one another with coats, wellingtons and in the general tidying up sessions. In the short, taught activities, children focus well. Their attitudes are positive and they appear keen to learn. For example, in an excellent story session, children were enraptured by the '*Little Red Hen*' and thought carefully about the ending to the story and whether it was fair. Parents and carers respond positively to the 'busy board' and to the 'records of achievement'.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Raise children's attainment and ensure consistent progress across the areas of learning
- good

Other relevant pupil outcomes

As reported at the last monitoring inspection, children's behaviour continues to improve. During the inspection, children treated each other with respect and are learning to take turns well in the group sessions and during independent play. Although a couple of minor incidents occurred in the outdoor play area, these were dealt with effectively by vigilant and responsive staff.

The effectiveness of provision

Both the quality of teaching and the curriculum have improved well since the last visit. High quality teaching in two of the sessions observed enabled children to make rapid progress in their learning. For example, in a numeracy session children increased their understanding of 'more than', 'less than' and 'the same as' by attaching leaves to a drawing of a tree then singing a rhyme about the leaves on the tree falling to the ground. They enjoyed this and continued to practise it once the practitioner had left the activity. Stories and rhymes are being used more effectively to support children's language development and to increase their vocabulary and understanding. Practitioners are highly skilled at reading and telling stories and they use them increasingly well to check children's understanding of concepts.

Improvements to the outdoor area mean that children's play is more productive. Activities such as rolling balls down guttering into a bucket or climbing and balancing on crates encourage children to develop their motor skills well. There is some excellent practice in adults using opportunities that arise during 'continuous provision' to develop children's vocabulary, understanding and skills. However, staff occasionally miss such opportunities. Not all staff pick up on children's learning needs swiftly enough. For example, a practitioner did not respond appropriately to a child who was struggling to put an abacus away during 'tidy up time' despite him saying he needed help. Classroom routines are well established and children respond well. However, not all practitioners are confident in leading these routines, which means that occasionally children do not follow them and there is some inattentive behaviour.

Staff are using detailed assessment information increasingly well to plan activities which are supporting individual children to develop their skills. For example, a short intervention session for children experiencing a delay in their speech was effective because it met their exact learning needs in a lively yet structured way.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are working much more effectively as a team to drive forward improvements. Since the last monitoring inspection, the deputy headteacher has taken responsibility for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. She has introduced a programme to support children with speech difficulties. The school now identifies children who are below the levels expected for their age earlier and plans more carefully to meet their needs; consequently these children are making more rapid progress than previously. The headteacher is effectively increasing the leadership capacity of staff at all levels by valuing staff's contributions to development planning and supporting this with well planned professional development opportunities. Staff are becoming more confident and morale is high.

Systems to hold staff accountable for the outcomes achieved by children are being used effectively by the headteacher, who is supported well by the governing body and local authority. Close adherence to the statutory professional standards for teaching is ensuring that staff are clear about their responsibilities. Regular progress meetings and close scrutiny of children's records of achievement are leading to staff increasing their expectations of children's progress. As a result more children reached nationally expected levels for their age in 2011 than previously. However, the school recognise that there are still some weaknesses in their evaluation of children's attainment data.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on areas for improvement:

- Improve the effectiveness and impact of leadership and management by ensuring that staff work together as an effective team with a clear focus on school improvement - good

External support

The school continues to receive good support from the local authority. Additional areas for improvement set at the last monitoring visit have been tackled effectively by the school. They are appreciative of the support from the local authority adviser and consultants.