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Kusum Trikha
Headteacher
Lea Nursery School
Wexham Road
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Dear Ms Trikha

Short inspection of Lea Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on Tuesday 15 December 2015 I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the nursery school was judged to be outstanding in January 2012.

This school continues to be outstanding.

Children thrive and make excellent progress during their time in the nursery. Parents are delighted with the support and care their children receive and the progress they make. You, the staff and the governors have an exceptionally strong and very evident commitment to ensuring that all children are provided with the opportunities they need to flourish. Cultural diversity is celebrated in a vibrant environment where many different heritages and languages are represented. Leaders, staff and governors are determined to do everything possible to make sure that all children, particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged children, achieve very well and are ready and confident to start school by the time they leave. All adults have a very good understanding of how children learn and develop. They plan interesting activities which children eagerly explore. The adults are skilled in promoting children's learning and well-being. Well qualified, knowledgeable leaders and staff work very well with external agencies to support the children and families. The staff also make good use of external expertise to further their own knowledge and skills and improve the provision. You track children's progress very carefully indeed and act swiftly to make sure that no one is left behind.

At the time of the last inspection, the inspector recognised many outstanding qualities of the school. These included the excellent progress children made across all areas of learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy, as a result of exceptionally high-quality teaching and well-planned, engaging learning activities. Other strengths included the high priority given to promoting children's spiritual,

moral, social and cultural development and the positive impact this had on children's personal development. The quality and impact of leaders' self-evaluation and swift action taken to make further improvements were also commended. These continue to be exceptionally strong features and are very evident in practice.

The inspector identified support and involvement of families, particularly the most vulnerable and those new to the United Kingdom, as areas for further enhancement. Leaders have addressed these issues very effectively so that there are many opportunities for parents to contribute, feel valued and welcomed in the nursery and receive support when appropriate. The response to parent surveys is overwhelmingly positive to all questions.

You, the staff, and the governors have very high expectations and have certainly not rested on your laurels since the last inspection. You are all keen to make sure that the nursery keeps on providing the best possible experiences for all the children and families. You have identified that, although boys achieve well they do not do quite as well as the girls, particularly in literacy. You have identified possible reasons and are already taking action to address this. You have also enhanced the provision for the youngest children and sharpened the focus on children who are eligible for additional government pupil premium funding. A recent development has been to give a member of the staff particular responsibility for working with, and monitoring, the achievement of this group. This is at an early stage and is working well, however, you are very aware that it is important to make sure that all adults take responsibility to ensure that each child in this group is supported to overcome barriers and make rapid progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

Staff and parents say wholeheartedly that children are very safe, happy and well cared for in the nursery. Adults and children treat each other with kindness and respect and the atmosphere is calm and gentle. Keeping children safe has the highest priority. The systems for ensuring children's health and safety are rigorous and effective. Policies are comprehensive, up to date and clear. All adults understand that the safety and well-being of children is everybody's responsibility and they are very well trained in all aspects of safeguarding, including the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. They understand the importance of helping children to become confident and articulate. There are safe routines. Adults model good behaviour and attitudes and as a result children develop confidence and very good personal and social skills which, in turn, contribute to their own safety and the well-being of others. Staff are alert to any concerns and work very well with other agencies to support all children. Attendance is carefully tracked and any concerns rapidly followed up. As a result, attendance is improving. The site is very secure and there are very regular health and safety checks to make sure everything is in good working order. You carry out very comprehensive risk assessments for visits and the staff check the safety of the equipment and environment every day. The safeguarding governor carries out regular visits, scrutinises arrangements and provides detailed, helpful reports.

Inspection findings

- You have the full confidence of the staff, governors and parents. Staff feel valued and are proud to be part of the nursery. You all know that maintaining outstanding provision means that everyone must, and does, play their part in continual improvement.
- You have developed an effective model of collective responsibility and team working which means that all staff have clearly defined responsibilities and understand how these link into, and contribute to, overall leadership, management and direction. For example, each key worker assesses and monitors their group of children and identifies individual needs. Leaders analyse all of this information, identify any trends and improve provision to address any weaknesses immediately.
- Each adult who has responsibility for different groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs, disadvantaged children or those who are learning English in addition to their home language, acts as an effective and knowledgeable champion for their group.
- The governors make a strong contribution to strategic leadership. They have a range of very valuable skills and experiences. For example, the family liaison officer with the children's centre on the same site is a governor and this supports close working links. Governors know the nursery and the staff very well. They make regular, valuable focused monitoring visits, provide support and also rigorously hold the headteacher and staff to account. They are committed to providing opportunities for staff to develop their skills and, as a result, staff are very well qualified and knowledgeable.
- The staff and governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. Improvement plans are practical and quickly adapted when necessary. This year there is a particular focus on making sure that the needs of the youngest children and disadvantaged children are highlighted. One of the governors has particular responsibilities for disadvantaged pupils and this group are always part of her focus on visits. Gaps between the achievement of this group and the other children are small and closing; however, you are determined to make sure they do at least as well as all the other children.
- The children love to learn. They achieve well both in learning and in personal development and this continues to improve year-on-year. Because they are enjoying themselves and because of skilful teaching, the children are able to concentrate for fairly long periods and stick at activities. As a result, they make exceptionally rapid progress from often low starting points so that by the time they leave, about two thirds exceed the expected standards in communication, language and personal and social development. Interventions and remedial action are effective so that all groups make at least expected and usually very rapid progress.
- Last year, as a result of a successful focus on mathematics, 95% of children exceeded the expected standards for their ages. Mathematics permeates all activities and some children can already recognise and count numbers to 10. Adults are proactive and take every opportunity to promote mathematical

understanding and vocabulary, for example by getting the children to count out the fruit during snack time.

- Having identified that more girls than boys exceed the expected standards, you have analysed the outcomes carefully, identified the relative weaknesses in their starting points and are taking action to enhance boys' well-being and engagement. This is showing early signs of success, as is the targeted support for the youngest children.
- Adults demonstrate high levels of skill and a very good understanding of how to promote excellent learning. Activities are very well planned to provide a wide range of interesting learning experiences inside and out. All children are captivated by the interesting learning opportunities throughout the nursery. During the visit, they were particularly interested in using the torches and in discovering the qualities of ice. Children are fully engaged and adults are extremely alert so that if any children show signs of drifting they are immediately and subtly re-focused.
- There is a strong focus on communication and language because, at this time in the year, many of the children's language skills, particularly in English, are limited. All of the adults model communication very well, talking with the children, starting sentences which the children complete, sharing and talking about engaging stories, using home languages to develop children's involvement and understanding. During the visit, one group was encouraged to retell the Christmas story with actions and appropriate masks. They did so with gusto.
- Parents' views on the nursery and how their children are settling in and making progress are gathered regularly. The responses are exceptionally positive. Useful home visits and a series of transition workshops mean that parents and children are well prepared to make a smooth start in the nursery.
- Parents are encouraged to become volunteers. They take part in activities such as home language storytelling. Many have gone on to further study and achieved qualifications, including at degree level. This has enhanced their well-being, their contribution to their children's development and to the wider society.
- Weekly parent workshops are well attended. In some cases the workshops draw parents into the nursery to carry out activities with their children, thus developing their understanding of how the children learn. Parents regularly contribute to children's records of achievement to capture children's home learning. All parents are invited to go on all trips and visits with the children. The nursery values their contribution, and supports their socialisation, particularly those new to the country.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should:

strengthen further all adults' understanding of their collective responsibility to overcome barriers and ensure the disadvantaged pupils continue to make rapid progress.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Slough. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sheena MacDonald
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, the deputy headteacher, a group of staff with various responsibilities, six members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. We visited all of the teaching groups during the morning to observe two free-flow sessions and snacktime. I took account of 27 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 13 staff questionnaires and the school's own parent surveys. I spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including information about teaching, children's achievement, staff training records, safeguarding checks, policies, and procedures. I also looked at, and discussed with you, the evaluation of the school's effectiveness and the current improvement plans.