

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs A Simpkins
Headteacher
Westfield Nursery School
Westfield Road
Dunstable
Central Bedfordshire
LU6 1DL

Dear Mrs Simpkins

Short inspection of Westfield Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 28 June 2016, 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 school was judged to be outstanding in January 2013.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You have successfully created a school of high expectations where all adults are committed to ensuring the best for all children. You took appropriate action to tackle the single area of improvement identified in the previous inspection. Teachers relentlessly support children in understanding what they are learning and how they can improve their work. It was clear from my visit that all children benefit from the skilful questioning that adults use to elicit high-quality responses from children in their care. As a result, children's understanding, skills and rates of progress are impressive.

In September 2013, leaders and governors made the decision to integrate the on-site provision for two-year-old children into the main Nursery. This provision was registered separately and, therefore, was not considered at the previous inspection. The provision was inspected during my visit because it is now registered as part of the school. The size of the school has increased considerably as a result of the 30 additional two-year-old children. You remain adamant that this was the right decision to make for this community to ensure that children receive the highest-quality experience of early learning and care. The children are accommodated in a newly built part of the school which has its own entrance, classroom and outdoor area.

You and the senior leaders within the school ensure that children experience an exciting but relevant range of activities, experiences and resources. This is evident from the minute they arrive in the outdoor area at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Children are accompanied by their parents and are eager to begin their 'play' before school officially starts. The exceptionally well-organised learning areas guarantee that every available space is used to the best advantage. Children make their way to the variety of activities and play either independently or with others. Whichever they choose, children sustain their interest and are keen to tell visitors what they are doing. During my visit, it was impressive to see a group of five children playing a game of 'football'. They had organised this game by themselves and were using a multitude of skills which belied their young age.

The environment within the school is equally inviting and welcoming. Children show real excitement when playing with spray foam, building sand castles or talking to adults on the play telephones. Adults gently encourage development of speaking, which is a key focus of the Nursery. They model extremely well and children copy them. As a result, the quality of responses from children is very high and increased vocabulary evident. I saw children 'buying from the class shop'. An adult asked searching questions about the items children bought while also reiterating what they were doing: 'Are you queuing and waiting for your turn?'

You and your staff ensure that children make at least good progress and many make outstanding progress. Children who are disadvantaged, those who have special educational needs or disabilities, and the most able children all thrive. This is because of a number of factors, namely: the extensive range of activities; adults' astute observations of children's learning; and excellent planning that meets individuals' needs. As a result, children in your Nursery achieve the very best that they can.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Those who responded to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, appreciate all the hard work that 'the brilliant staff' do to ensure that their children are very well cared for, and receive 'an excellent start to their learning life'. The staff told me that they are very proud of the Nursery, which was clearly reflected in the way they go about their work. Children use words like 'fun' and 'friendly' to describe how they feel about being at Westfield. The best endorsement, however, remains the children's evident delight at being in the school.

You and your leaders have accurately assessed where the school is now and what it needs to do to improve further. You have pinpointed many of the key priorities for the next academic year. However, plans for improvement are too general and do not provide sharp enough evidence about how successfully the Nursery is meeting its identified priorities. For example, there is limited information about expectations of the children's social and academic development upon which the governing body can hold leaders to account.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors ensure safeguarding arrangements for children have high priority. The arrangements that you have put in place are fit for purpose, and, as you demonstrated during my visit, are under constant review.

Robust checks on staff suitability to work with children are undertaken during recruitment, and meticulous records are kept. You ensure that all staff know how to identify children who are at risk, and follow the school's policy well. Confidential information is logged appropriately and kept in a secure location. Records are well organised, ensuring that external agencies are well placed and well informed to take appropriate action when required. As a consequence of this, and the development of strong relationships with, for example, the Children's Centre, you have ensured that the best possible support is provided for children and their families.

You keep staff and governors fully informed about changes in the statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education'. As a result, all staff are vigilant about all aspects of safeguarding, including, for example, the government's 'Prevent' duty related to the risk of radicalisation. In addition, you cascade appropriately to relevant staff members information that arises from 'team around the child' or 'children in need' meetings. This ensures that all staff have a very clear understanding of a child's or family's developing needs.

Inspection findings

- A considerable proportion of children enter the Nursery with skills that are below those typical for their age. Those children who attend the Nursery's two-year-old provision have a good start to their further learning as they go into the main Nursery. The vast majority of children by the end of their time in the Nursery school make at least good progress in most areas of learning. An increasing proportion make outstanding progress.
- Children's well-being is at the heart of the school's work. Children come to school ready and eager to start their learning, which is begun superbly in the well-resourced outside area. Parents have the opportunity to speak with their child's key worker and share their child's successes for the 'wow' boards in each classroom. This time at the beginning of each morning or afternoon session is proving invaluable in the further development of relationships with parents, and also in catching quickly any concerns that parents may have about their child's development. Consequently, adults know all of the children exceptionally well and cater effectively for their individual emotional needs.
- The school's systems for assessing and checking on children's progress are very well developed. The senior leadership team uses this information effectively to ensure that all adults are aware of any child or group of children who are at risk of falling behind their peers. Regular meetings, and daily discussions between key workers and other team members, ensure that individual children's interests and future needs are extremely well planned for and met.
- All adults are highly skilled in supporting children to develop their skills and understanding. They give deliberate and sometimes unobtrusive guidance to

children, ensuring that every opportunity is seized to further children's learning. Adults' questioning and probing skills, and their astute identification of children's next steps, contribute significantly to all children's progress.

- Teachers make very effective use of whole-class learning times to reinforce language and number skills. The older children respond exceptionally well during 'message board' sessions, often demonstrating exemplary listening and highly developed social skills. Adults supporting children who have additional needs do so very effectively and with sensitivity. Consequently, these children settle well and other children's learning is not disrupted in any way.
- Children show high levels of independence, resilience and concentration from a young age. Children in the provision for two-year-old children serve themselves at snack time, pouring their own drinks and selecting their snack. Older children plan their own learning, gently guided by adults. As a result, children know what they are learning and say what they want to get better at. This is particularly so for the most able children, guaranteeing that their progress is similar to, if not better than, their peers.
- Adult-led focused work with small groups of children is highly effective. The variety of activities designed to ensure that differing skills are honed and developed, ensures that children's interest is sustained and their progress assured. As a result, children's learning behaviours are exemplary. The children who will be leaving the Nursery in July are 'school ready'. Effective liaison arrangements with local schools ensure a smooth transition to the next stage of the children's learning.
- Leaders have developed very effective relationships with parents and external agencies. This work continues to be a key part of the Nursery's focus. As a result of the work already undertaken, the needs of disadvantaged children and those who have special educational needs or disabilities are exceptionally well met. Consequently, these groups of children make at least good and often outstanding progress from their varying starting points.
- Leaders and governors know the strengths and areas of development of the Nursery. There has been a decrease in the number of children who attend the provision for two-year-olds. This, and the school's work in meeting the needs of children who need one-to-one support, is challenging the school's finances. Governors are keeping a close eye on the school's budget to ensure that all children's needs are met and that staffing in the future is of the same high quality as it is currently.

Next steps for the school

In order to ensure the school maintains its outstanding status and does not risk a decline in the outcome at the next inspection, leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvement planning at all levels is sharpened so that targets are more closely linked to emerging key priorities and children's progress.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Central Bedfordshire.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Brock
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, the designated lead for safeguarding, the special educational needs coordinator, two children at the school and two governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke with a representative from the local authority and also with parents at the beginning of the school day. I looked at the 33 views expressed by parents in Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 17 responses to the staff survey. I scrutinised the school's own assessment information and children's records of achievement known as 'learning journeys'. I visited all classes, often with you, and spoke with individual children about their learning. I viewed a range of documentation including the school's plans for improvement and evaluation of its performance, and all relevant documentation regarding safeguarding, including the record of staff recruitment checks known as the single central record.