

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



10 November 2016

Mrs Kate Marnoch  
Headteacher  
Kingsdown Nursery School  
Kingsdown Road  
Doddington Park  
Lincoln  
LN6 0FB

Dear Mrs Marnoch

### **Short inspection of Kingsdown Nursery School, Lincoln**

Following my visit to the school on 12 October 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 good in January 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have ensured that your staff work very closely together, regardless of their role, so that all children get off to a good start from their arrival at Kingsdown. You, and staff, know the children, and their different abilities and personalities very well. Staff use this knowledge to plan learning that meets their needs effectively.

Staff that I met during my visit were very keen to tell me how you encourage them to work as a united team, and in shared ways. They felt both valued and proud to work at the school, and had a clear idea of its aims and values that, they explained, you work with them to review regularly. They also discussed with me how you and they meet together each term with the chair of the governing body to analyse the progress of different groups of children. I heard how governors use this information to hold you to account effectively. Those members of staff who were working at the school at the time of the last inspection judge, correctly, that it has continued to improve.

You, staff and the governing body have written an accurate evaluation of the education you provide. This document provides compelling evidence of why your school is a good one. Because of the high level of involvement of the governing body, governors also have a clear idea of the areas that need further improvement. The school development plan is effective because it focuses appropriately on those areas.

Staff also work closely with parents and carers. This begins with visits that staff make to the homes of parents before children start at the school, so that staff can gain an early understanding of each child, and plan for their needs accordingly. An effective partnership continues through the year. Staff keep parents well informed of the progress their child is making, and show parents ways they can help their child to also learn at home. A large majority of parents who had responded to the school's own questionnaire expressed positive views of all aspects of the school, and those I met at the end of the day were full of praise.

You have dealt effectively with all the areas that inspectors identified as needing improvement at the previous inspection. Teachers now have a good idea of highly effective teaching, having visited three outstanding schools to see excellent practice for themselves. Teachers are self-reflective, and give useful advice to teaching assistants and those new to the profession on how to improve what they do. When you check the quality of lessons yourself, you judge how effective teaching is by the amount of progress that children are making. Adults are also skilled at questioning children, and use many opportunities to make children think for themselves, often at a moment's notice. For example, during my visit I saw that, when it began to rain, a teaching assistant quickly raised an umbrella and asked children to come underneath it to describe what they could hear in the best way they could. Children were eager to huddle up and tell her how the 'patter pitter' of raindrops were falling loudly and were making a noise for them all to hear.

The assessments that you and your staff make show that around three quarters of children enter the Nursery with levels of skills that are below those typically found in children of the same age. By the time they leave, a very large majority have caught up quickly and have skills that are at, or beyond, those typically found. However, although both disadvantaged children and children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good overall progress, you are aware that higher proportions of these children do not make good progress in their physical development.

The monitoring of children's progress is effective overall. However, you agree that you do not yet track the progress of the most able children as a distinct group. As a result, governors are not currently able to see clearly any potential trends of outstanding progress, or underperformance, in the most able children.

Children who attend the provision for two-year-olds quickly settle in, because staff are very friendly and welcoming. Adults provide a positive climate for learning, which results in children wanting to learn new things. Staff also take care to model language continually well to children, speaking to them frequently. Consequently, children want to show and explain what they can do. For instance, I saw children using the play equipment outdoors and proudly telling me how they were 'climbing up on the big caterpillar'. As a result of lessons and activities that are well planned, children also develop determination, along with skills in thinking of different ways to do things. For example, I saw a child wanting some modelling clay that had rolled

under the table, but he was unable to reach it with his arm. Rather than give up, he tried using a short stick until he had made the clay roll to where he could reach it.

Staff give older children activities that are more challenging than those for two-year-olds. However, the approach of staff continues to be caring, with good opportunities for children to develop their personal, social and emotional skills. As a result, children learn to cooperate increasingly well, riding tricycles and building models together or, for example, deciding to put on a CD themselves so that they can sing songs as a group and perform the actions. Staff maintain their focus on promoting children's language, providing good narratives aloud to explain how well children have, for instance, painted rainbows on the ground. Children are also given good opportunities to gain early responsibilities. During my visit, I saw children acting as monitors at snack time to give out the fruit to their peers and to collect the banana skins afterwards, to put in the bin. As a result of the school's careful planning to promote their independence, children are keen to continually 'have a go' for themselves.

The school website, though meeting statutory requirements in all other respects, does not give sufficient detail regarding your spending of the early years pupil premium. Though this funding is spent appropriately, you do not, for example, show how it is improving greatly the communication skills of disadvantaged children.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Staff understand fully their responsibility to report any concerns they have to you immediately. All staff, as well as governors, have been trained well in safeguarding, including in areas of recent national concern, such as extremism. They were able to describe to me clearly and without hesitation the many warning signs that might suggest that a child could be being harmed. Staff are very aware that they must be highly vigilant at all times for any potential harm to children.

You ensure that you and members of the governing body have had training in safer recruitment, and always ask questions regarding children's safety when interviewing for new staff. You ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of high quality. You make brisk referrals to external agencies, including social care, whenever required.

Children feel safe at Kingsdown, and behave safely too. They understand that, for example, while they are free to run about in the outdoor areas, they should take care and walk calmly indoors. Staff also give them, in a way that is appropriate to their age, good guidance on how to manage risks to their safety. For example, staff teach children the dangers of fire, but children are also given the opportunity to toast marshmallows safely, under close supervision.

You are aware that the school's safeguarding policy does not meet all requirements set out in the latest update to 'Keeping children safe in education'. You are attending to this without delay.

## Inspection findings

- Governors are highly committed to the school and are rigorous in asking you good questions about the levels of progress and achievement of children across the different areas of learning in the early years. The information you supply means that they have a good understanding of children's outcomes.
- A large majority of parents express good levels of support for the school. As one parent who responded to free text facility explained, 'Both of my children have loved their time at Kingsdown and I always recommend it to others'.
- You ensure that the early years pupil premium is well spent. During my visit, I saw how disadvantaged children were developing their communication skills well through much-enjoyed singing sessions with the school's musician, who visits each week. The majority of disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress from their starting points. This is particularly the case in both literacy and mathematics.
- Staff are aware that many children enter the school with skills in language and communication that are particularly low, as with skills in their personal, social and emotional development. They ensure that they place continual emphasis on developing these skills. As a result, children make the fastest progress in these skills. The focus on developing these skills is not at the expense of teaching in other areas. Children receive a balanced and broad curriculum.
- The school's own records of children's outcomes show that they are making good progress across the different areas of learning. This good progress was confirmed in the many learning journals of children's work that I studied during my visit. These journals demonstrate that staff are able to assess children's skills effectively. Staff share these assessments with teachers in other settings to check that their judgements are accurate.
- This year, from starting points that were lower than typically found, 85% of children left the school with levels of development in line with the expectations for their age.
- Staff support well children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They plan good learning for these children and ensure that they are fully included in the things that other children do. Staff also teach Makaton signing with these children, as well as with those who speak English as additional language, and other children. As a result, children are able to communicate increasingly confidently as the school year progresses.
- The majority of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least good overall progress from their starting points.
- Almost half of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and almost one in three disadvantaged children, do not make good progress in their physical development.
- Staff ensure that children develop an early love of books. Children of both lower ability and those who are the most able, whom I saw sharing books with adults, were demonstrating good skills in being able to talk about the

characters and also predict what might happen next in a story. The children told me that they liked to read very much.

- Your staff insist that children use polite manners when communicating, and model these very well themselves. As a result, children develop good habits of saying 'please' when asking for things, and 'thank you' when they receive them.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of specified information on its website, in respect of the early years pupil premium.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the proportions of disadvantaged children and children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities making good or better progress in their physical development is in line with that of other children nationally
- the progress of the most able children is tracked effectively, so that governors can hold leaders to account for ensuring the progress of this group of children is brisk across the different areas of learning
- the safeguarding policy is updated in line with all new national requirements
- the school website meets requirements in respect of information about the early years pupil premium.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Roary Pownall

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

My inspection focused upon a number of key lines of enquiry. These included whether:

- the areas for improvement, identified at the last inspection, had been addressed effectively
- the quality of teaching was high for all children, including children who are two years old, and children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the rate of progress of children across the different areas of learning in the early years foundation stage remains good
- disadvantaged children make strong progress from their starting points
- the quality of leadership and management was good, including the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures.

During the inspection, I met with you, other members of the teaching staff, and representatives of the governing body. Together, you and I visited all areas in the school to observe teaching and learning for all children. I looked at children's work across the school. I observed children's behaviour in lessons. At the time of the inspection, there were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, for statistics to be analysed, but I read the six comments received through its free text facility. I considered the views of 34 parents who had replied to the school's own questionnaire, and I met with a number of parents at the end of the school day. I also met staff and discussed with them their opinions of the school and its leadership. I read a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, your school development plan and information on outcomes for children currently in the school. I visited the breakfast club, which is maintained by the governing body, to check that children were safe. I studied an external assessment of the school recently undertaken on behalf of the local authority and I examined available safeguarding documentation. I examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information.