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Ms Sharon Hogan
Headteacher
Midland Road Nursery School
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Dear Ms Hogan

Short inspection of Midland Road Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 1 November 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 November 2012.

This school continues to be outstanding.

You have maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have not been complacent and have created a school which has continued to prioritise high-quality teaching and learning successfully. You have done this while taking on the leadership and management of a cluster of five children's centres and maintaining your work as a designated national support school. More recently, you have had to manage some significant changes in teaching staff and leadership. You have built a strong and committed staff team and drawn upon the skills of the wider leadership team, both in the birth to three-year-old provision and in the children's centre cluster. For example, you have used the parent involvement coordinator to lead on matters related to child protection and engagement with parents. This is a demanding role which has enabled you to remain focused on teaching and learning.

You and the governing body say that the staff team is a strength of the school, and parents agree. Staff have shown this in the way they have sustained high-quality teaching and support for children during recent changes in leadership and teaching. You have ensured that they have the knowledge and skills they need to do their job well, and they are overwhelmingly positive about your leadership.

You and your staff have created a happy and harmonious school where young children of varying abilities and backgrounds settle quickly, are keen to learn and continue to make outstanding progress. Your staff provide a wonderful place for children to play and learn, because the staff plan stimulating learning across all

areas of the early years curriculum. Parents say the school is 'brilliant' and staff are 'excellent at treating children as individuals, developing their interests and helping them make progress'.

The key area for development at the last inspection was to engage parents more fully and effectively in children's learning and development. You have developed this successfully in a number of ways. For example, you have introduced an electronic system of recording what children learn and do in Nursery. Through smartphone technology and the internet, you have given parents a detailed insight into their child's day at Nursery. Parents add their own pictures and information and, increasingly, parents are extending children's learning beyond the classroom. Teachers and key workers hold regular meetings with parents where they provide information about precise next steps in children's learning. They explain to parents how to support their child's learning effectively. You provide a wealth of information about the curriculum on the school website, which includes some visual models of how to read effectively with a young child. Your staff ensure that parents have access to the books children are using in the setting. These are known as 'Core stories'. This excites children about their reading and enables parents to explore and talk further about what children have been reading in Nursery. Children and their parents also have access to a school library. This has helped to bring about tangible improvements in children's reading skills.

You and the governing body have ensured that those children eligible for the early years pupil premium funding receive the teaching and support they need to catch up quickly. You have used this funding innovatively through dance and outdoor play. Teachers have woven the areas of learning skilfully into these sessions. 'Special time' is used to engage the parents of these children in their learning to support improvements in language and communication. You and the governing body check rigorously on the quality and impact of this additional provision and you ensure that teachers' plans focus precisely on the right next steps in children's learning. You constantly review and refine this work. Consequently, these children have accelerated their progress at a pace. Most of them leave Nursery at or above age-related expectations in their personal, social and emotional development, their physical development and communication and language. You are ambitious for these children and have put actions in place to improve their literacy and mathematics skills. The local authority has used your approach as an example of outstanding practice. Although you have shared your plan for the use of this funding on your school website, you have not shared your success. This means that the school does not fully meet the requirements for published information on its website.

Safeguarding is effective.

The expansion of the school's remit to lead and manage a cluster of five children's centres has enabled you to further improve and enhance safeguarding procedures. The parental involvement coordinator takes a lead role in this aspect of the school's work. She is pivotal in ensuring swift referral and action for children at risk or in need of support, not only through external agencies such as social care, but also

through the support systems operated within the children's centre cluster. This means that you prevent situations from escalating. Your monitoring records show that this is helping to increase parental involvement and is having a positive impact on children's learning and development.

The systems and procedures you have in place to safeguard children are robust. Staff are well trained and knowledgeable about safeguarding matters. Children's safety is a high priority in all aspects of the Nursery's work. All concerns are recorded, no matter how small, and followed through to ensure that children are safe and thrive.

Governors and the leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding and welfare arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of high quality; regular checks are made on the effectiveness of this work.

Inspection findings

- The quality of teaching has remained outstanding because you have made robust checks on the impact of teaching on children's learning and development. From the information gathered, you have helped teachers and early years practitioners systematically to improve their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Teachers provide very well-planned, stimulating and cohesive learning environments and activities which take into account children's own ideas. Open-ended tasks provide challenge for the most able. Adults are watchful of opportunities to extend learning with their questioning, as seen in our joint observations and your monitoring of teaching. This ensures that children learn exceptionally well. One example we saw was when a most-able child was exploring how a vacuum cleaner works. The practitioner knew when to question and when to step back to give the child 'thinking time'. This enabled this child to hold a very mature conversation with the member of staff and showed the depth of his thinking and learning.
- Children are focused in their play. They have high levels of concentration and perseverance and show independence when accessing, using and tidying away resources. They display excellent social skills in the way they interact with each other and adults. Adults model positive relationships and effective communication skilfully, which ensures that children learn how to communicate well quickly, including many who speak English as an additional language.
- You have developed and refined systems and procedures for assessing and checking on children's progress. These are robust and allow for no slippage in achievement for any group of pupils. Every child at risk of underachieving has a targeted plan. This ensures that you and your staff adapt teaching and provision to meet children's needs precisely and accelerate progress. For example, you have focused on raising boys' achievement by improving the outdoors. This has enabled boys to develop rapidly in some key areas of their learning. One parent

commented, 'I really feel he has excelled here in terms of his learning and behaviour. I love the fact he has access to outdoors all day and he especially enjoys the freedom to play outdoors as and when he likes.'

- Over time, children have consistently made outstanding progress from their various starting points. There has been a year-on-year rise in the proportion of children reaching age-related expectations. The majority of them make better than expected progress from low starting points to ensure they are ready to move on to primary school. You and the teachers have high expectations of what children can achieve. Teachers' skilful teaching, accurate assessment and well-planned next steps and provision ensure that all groups make excellent progress, including the most able and those children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- You are very clear about the importance of good attendance and it is an ongoing priority for you. The parental involvement coordinator monitors attendance closely and works hard using resources at her disposal to ensure that children attend and are safe.
- The governing body makes sure you have remained focused on what it says is the core purpose of your work, which is ensuring outstanding teaching and learning. Governors are highly committed and well qualified to offer challenge and support in equal measure in all aspects of the school's work. They are outward-looking and have sought, and continue to seek, to strengthen and sustain the school's work in the community. They manage the school's finances well. They challenge you about spending and make robust checks on the impact of this.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- you include an impact statement in the information you publish annually on your website for the use of the early years pupil premium funding.

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Bowyer
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the visit, I met with you, the parental involvement coordinator, members of staff and the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. There were too few responses from parents on the Ofsted's online questionnaire to take note of this.

However, I spoke with some parents during the day and scrutinised your monitoring records, which included parent views. All staff completed the online questionnaires. Visits were made to the indoor and outdoor environments to observe children's learning. I reviewed a range of Nursery documentation and records of your checks to safeguard children, and scrutinised records of children's progress and attainment.