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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Isabel Davis
Executive Headteacher
Peter Pan Nursery School
Edward Road
Bedford
Bedfordshire
MK42 9DR

Dear Mrs Davis

Short inspection of Peter Pan Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 8 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You are an inspirational leader with expert knowledge and understanding of how young children learn best. Your passion for the nursery to provide high-quality teaching and care for all children is shared by all staff. As a cohesive and effective team of practitioners, you are relentless in your drive to continuously improve outcomes for children. All staff confirmed in Ofsted's staff questionnaire that the school is even better than it was at its previous inspection, when its overall effectiveness was judged to be outstanding. While your high expectations for staff's performance are explicit, their well-being is important to you. This is why staff go the extra mile for every child on a daily basis. They give high consideration to the quality of the environment for learning. Resources and spaces they create to promote learning through play are excellent. Provision for two-year-olds and three-year-olds supports progression in children's knowledge, understanding and skills.

Parents have very high regard for everything that the nursery provides for their children. They particularly appreciate:

- 'the excellent quality of teaching'
- 'the friendly atmosphere'
- how safe the nursery is
- 'the staff's support towards our needs and concerns'

- the way in which 'staff seem to be constantly looking for new experiences to engage the children in'
- knowing that their child is 'receiving the best start in life'.

Since the previous inspection, leaders and governors have managed the transition from a single nursery to a federation of two and then three nurseries extremely well. The challenges of staff recruitment with new contracts, restructuring the leadership team, and changing the age range of children attending the nursery have not distracted you from ensuring that the nursery has continued to improve. For example, through rigorous monitoring of staff's performance and high-quality training, the nursery has addressed the area for improvement identified in the previous inspection successfully. In teaching large groups of children, adults now ensure that all children participate and sustain their interest and engagement during these sessions.

Governors provide you with support and challenge in equal measures. Nonetheless, some policies have marginally overrun the time they set to review them. They do not check the school's website well enough to ensure that information available to parents and the general public is current.

Provision for children to learn through purposeful play, in all areas of learning, both indoors and outside, is outstanding. This is because staff review the provision and children's progress on a daily basis. They know the individual interests and preferences of every child and use this information impressively to hook them in to learning. From this point, adults take them on a 'learning adventure', as one governor called it, where no limits are set for their achievement. Staff nurture the children through this process with great sensitivity, lending confidence to their learning. The levels of independence we saw in the two- and three-year-olds were exceptional for their ages. The needs of all children, including those children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the most able children, those who speak English as an additional language, and disadvantaged children, including those who are also most able, are all met. This means that they make excellent progress from their individual starting points in all areas of learning.

In their planning, staff prioritise the prime areas of learning (communication and language, personal, social, emotional and physical development) because these are frequently less well developed on entry to the nursery. They also ensure that provision for developing children's early literacy and number skills is promoted effectively. Many of the three-year-olds, for example, can write their name without adult support and the most able children are able to combine numbers to make sums of up to 20. Two-year-olds show a strong desire to engage with books and stories. They talk freely and enthusiastically, whatever it is they are doing, and the adults know just how to move their learning on by asking the right questions. Staff are expert in stepping in when a child is struggling and stepping back to allow them to think for themselves and work things out.

Your excellent leadership ensures that the nursery is inward looking to identify

accurately where improvements can be made. Equally, it is outward facing both to seek and to share the best practice with other schools in the federation, the local authority and nationally through research projects. The nursery is a 'jewel in the crown' for early years education in Bedford Borough, as the improvement adviser confirmed. It is in safe hands to continue to refine and develop as a first class provider of early years education.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are of high quality and they are effective. You and the governing body have created a culture where everyone shares responsibility for safeguarding and it is a priority. Staff are all trained to the right level to fulfil their duties, including the lead professionals for safeguarding and child protection. Staff receive regular updates, ensuring that they know when guidance from the Department for Education changes. You ensure that every child's achievement and well-being is discussed on a weekly basis, so that none 'slips through the net'. Staff are all vetted carefully prior to appointment and all of the statutory checks are made to ensure their suitability to work with children. A strong ethos surrounding children's safety and well-being exists within the school community. All staff are entirely confident in raising concerns. These are followed up quickly and effectively by the designated leads for child protection. They retain an overview of each case to ensure that any referrals on to the multi-agency hub to seek early help assessments are timely. You ensure that a representative from the nursery attends all formal inter-agency meetings. Documentation, including individual child protection case files, is kept in very good chronological order so that important information can be retrieved easily.

The family support worker provides excellent support for vulnerable families, often signposting agencies from which they can seek support and guidance. The strong and trusting relationships that exist between staff and parents often give parents the confidence to share any concerns or anxieties. Importantly, you provide high levels of supervision to support staff who are dealing with complex and sensitive child protection issues. All of the statutory welfare and safeguarding requirements for the early years foundation stage are met.

Inspection findings

- Leadership and management are outstanding. Through training, coaching and leading by example, you and the deputy headteacher have developed a highly-effective, professional team. Everyone understands their roles and responsibilities and they know that they are accountable for children's achievement, well-being and safety.
- The governing body is now responsible for governance in three nurseries, including Peter Pan. Governors have a broad range of skills that enhance their governance, such as experience in health and safety, finance and early years education.
- Governors have provided strong governance while the federation has grown. They demonstrate that they support staff as well as holding them

to account. For example, they asked you to provide them with information about children's progress in a particular format so that they can evaluate it easily. This put them in a strong position to ask pertinent questions about children's learning.

- The school's website is not checked regularly to ensure that information for parents and the public is easily accessible and kept up to date. In addition, the review date for some school policies has overrun, albeit by a matter of weeks. You responded very quickly and professionally when I identified this and updated some information immediately. However, governors have not ensured that there is a system in place for them to monitor the contents of the website.
- All staff share your ambition for the nursery to be a beacon of excellent early years practice. This is typified by their strong desire and willingness to attend further training, acquire further qualifications and participate in early years research projects.
- You maximise opportunities for staff within and beyond the federation to mix, meet and share their practice. This keeps staff fresh, professionally invigorated and enthusiastic. You value everyone's ideas and suggestions which brings out the best in them.
- All staff completed a questionnaire and agreed strongly that the school is even better than it was at the previous inspection. The area for improvement from the previous inspection has been addressed. The nursery's plans for improvement are closely linked to raising children's achievement. It makes clear who is responsible for leading each action and who will check that it is on track for completion.
- Your evaluation of strengths and areas for development is exemplary. Along with staff and governors you gather unequivocal evidence to support your judgement that the nursery's overall effectiveness is outstanding. However, you also value the work of an external adviser in checking that your judgements are secure and accurate.
- Almost all of the 20 parents who completed the Parent View questionnaire responded positively to all of the statements. Parents that I spoke with during the inspection were all delighted with the nursery and told me that their children thoroughly enjoy attending. Staff strive successfully to include parents in their children's learning.
- Teaching is excellent. Staff have a clear understanding of the diverse and individual needs of children and how these can be met through the rich and engaging curriculum that they provide.
- Adults' engagement with children is extremely good. They use language and conversation expertly to develop children's speaking and listening skills, and their personal and social skills.
- Detailed evidence is kept of each child's progress in all of the areas of learning. The information is used to identify individual children's needs and to build on their particular interests and abilities. The proportions of children making at least good progress from their starting points in all areas of learning ranges from 80% to 100%, which is excellent.
- Children's achievement is also tracked in groups. This provides leaders and governors with detailed information about how well different groups

are performing, such as children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the most able children, disadvantaged children including those who are also most able, and those who speak English as an additional language. Governors, for example, are then well placed to evaluate if the pupil premium is making a positive difference to children's achievement.

- At the end of each day, all staff review the provision and contribute to planning activities for the following day. This ensures that the activities enable children to practise what they already know and can do in a different context, as well as developing new skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, children used tea bags dipped in red paint to create a large painting depicting fire. The next day they added more paint, using large spray bottles, and then very small bottles requiring precise fine motor skills and coordination to squeeze the paint from the bottle.
- Staff very effectively support children to respect others and work together. For example, a small group of three-year-olds created a beautiful collage of exploding fireworks, sharing resources sensibly and cooperating well with each other. Throughout the activity the adult told the children how well they were working together and helping each other.
- Children's behaviour is outstanding. During our joint observations, we saw that they know the nursery's routines and help to clear up after themselves. They listened attentively, showed feelings and were sensitive to others. If their behaviour falters, adults intervene quickly, managing the situation appropriately and calmly. Children recover very quickly and follow their guidance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- dates set for reviewing and updating key policies are rigorously kept to
- a system is implemented to check that information available to parents and the general public on the school's website is up to date.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- During the inspection I met with you, all of the senior leadership team, the family worker, the chair of the governing body and three other governors. I also met with the school improvement adviser allocated to the nursery by the local authority. I looked at a range of information about children's achievement, documents, records and policies including those relating to safeguarding and child protection.
- I took into account results from 20 parents' responses in Parent View and those provided by 14 staff in the staff questionnaire. I also spoke informally with parents at the start of the day and when they collected their children from nursery.
- Together with you and the assistant headteacher, I observed the two-year-olds and three-year-olds at play both indoors and outside. In particular, we watched children when adults taught them in larger groups. I observed children as they sat together to eat lunch.
- The key lines of enquiry that I identified to look at in more depth during this inspection included: how effectively leaders and governors have sustained and improved the quality of provision since the previous inspection; the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able; how effectively the nursery spends the pupil premium funding and the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements.