

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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



15 December 2016

Mrs Shirley Doveton  
Headteacher  
Little Hayes and Hillfields Early Years & Family Centre  
Symington Road  
Fishponds  
Bristol  
BS16 2LL

Dear Mrs Doveton

### **Short inspection of Little Hayes and Hillfields Early Years & Family Centre**

Following my visit to the school on 7 December 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 October 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Against a background of amalgamations, expansions and growing numbers, you, ably supported by your senior leaders and governors, have ensured that the effectiveness of the nursery provision has never been compromised. Your extremely strong commitment to nursery education, coupled with your expertise and dedication to the education and welfare of young children, firmly steers provision.

Staff and governors mirror your passion and vision for the nursery in their day-to-day work. Together, you form a strong team that is highly respected by the local community. As you expand further next year into the Hillfields Library site, you are fully aware of the need to extend and develop the roles and responsibilities of your middle leadership team to meet the needs of your growing community.

Since the last inspection, and to meet the changing needs of the locality, you have devised detailed ways to track and assess the progress of those children who are learning English as an additional language. Staff have undergone extra training to make sure that they are meeting the needs of these children. This has included visits to other parts of the country to observe best practice. The employment of early years practitioners who speak English as an additional language has had a very positive impact on children's progress because they reinforce learning with them.

You have improved the quantity and quality of opportunities that the children have to work on developing their speaking and writing skills. In all classes, practitioners support the development of children's listening skills when they work together with them in small groups. They talk to them, ask questions and model language. Story books are used well to promote the children's language skills. The monthly visits from a theatre group provide exciting and engaging opportunities for the children to develop their listening skills and join in with action songs.

A rich choice of interesting activities, which are consistently planned for in all classes and across both sites, support children well in developing coordination between their hand and eye. This effectively promotes their early writing skills. Children gain confidence in holding different types of equipment in their hands, such as large tweezers and chopsticks to pick up small blocks of ice. They carefully roll out different types of soft, pliable materials and use cutters enthusiastically to cut out different shapes. Shaving foam is used well to help children handle substances which change texture and shape.

You, your senior leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the effectiveness of the school. You identify the effective improvements which have successfully developed children's speaking and writing skills. However, you are also very clear that there needs to be a greater consistency of approach in the development of children's knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The safety of all the children who attend both sites is paramount to you and your staff, and your culture of safeguarding permeates strongly across both sites. You all receive the highest-quality safeguarding training and this enables you to be knowledgeable about keeping children safe. You have accurately identified that female genital mutilation is a concern within your community and prompt action is taken when you identify any child at risk. Staff have a clear understanding of the need to protect your children from radicalisation and extremism.

You and your governors recruit safely by rigorously following all vetting procedures. Governors ensure that all policies and procedures are up to date, regularly reviewed and meet statutory requirements. The designated child protection and safeguarding governor uses a background and expertise from the medical profession to effectively support and challenge safeguarding procedures.

Parents trust the nursery to care for their children and appreciate the warm and welcoming environment. You and your staff take time to get to know your families well and the close relationships formed enable you to quickly spot any issues of concern. Parents who use the carefully filtered computers in the nursery to access the internet are closely supervised. All parents who responded to Parent View, the online inspection survey, reported that their children felt safe at nursery and they were in no doubt that 'the school takes safeguarding very seriously'.

There is a very strong culture of seeking early support. Links with external agencies

to support vulnerable families with their children are extremely effective. The strong link with your adjoining school, Frome Vale Primary, enables you to share concerns about individual families and maintain a watchful eye. Displays around the nursery and plentiful supplies of informative literature not only help parents to keep safe but also signpost them to any specialist help they may need.

### **Inspection findings**

- Your ability to adapt and adjust key priorities to meet the changing needs of the school is a significant strength of your effective leadership. You have developed a close working partnership with the Cabot Learning Trust. You work particularly well with your adjoining school and have started to work with other local schools in the trust to establish similar links.
- Your innovative approach to mixing two-, three- and four-year-olds together enables older children to model positive behaviours and good learning habits to the younger ones. By working closely with the local schools, you support parents who opt to keep their children in nursery education until they are five.
- You have developed effective systems to track and check the progress of your children through nursery and beyond. This has enabled you to evaluate the outcomes of children who started nursery at age two in 2013 and then transferred into Reception in 2015. By the end of their Reception Year in 2016, all of these children had reached at least a good level of development.
- You also effectively use the information you collect to carefully check the progress of different groups of children. Not only have you improved the progress made by those children who speak English as an additional language but you have swiftly identified and are working to eradicate any differences in achievement between boys and girls. You are also providing additional help for your summer-born children to accelerate their progress.
- As one of the first nursery schools to pilot additional government funding to support those children who are disadvantaged, you have used it well to provide enriching opportunities, such as the provision of a summer school and exciting trips to the zoo and the seaside. You also make sure that your disadvantaged children are nourished so that they are suitably fuelled ready for their learning and play.
- Children develop a love of reading because practitioners share books and stories with them. In their lively performance of 'Twas the night before Christmas', a theatre group effectively modelled the use of rhyming words and extended the children's vocabulary by using a rich range of different words.
- Practitioners take every opportunity to link stories with print. Letter sounds are displayed around classrooms and taught during small-group time. Children develop their writing skills well when they paint, trace letter shapes in sand and foam, and make marks on paper. Children are encouraged and supported well by

adults to write their own versions of popular stories.

- Your improvement plan has accurately identified the need to improve consistency in the development of the children's mathematical skills across all classes. Children learn best in the classes where numbers are displayed and are used as part of their learning experience. One group was busy working out how many spoonfuls of food were required to feed a reindeer. Another group was numbering and labelling Christmas parcels. However, this depth and breadth of mathematical activity was not mirrored in all classes.
- Given the rapidly expanding nursery, you have accurately identified the need for sustainability in leadership. As headteacher, you are stretched to full capacity and are still eagerly working on new initiatives and external partnerships. You have invested well in supporting your staff with opportunities for high-quality professional development. They are now poised to take on more responsibility and contribute to the strategic vision of the school.
- Parents are very pleased that their children attend the nursery. One parent summed up the views of others by explaining that 'it is a wonderful nursery setting to which I am delighted to send my children. All staff are welcoming, friendly and caring.'

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- classes have a consistently high focus on promoting children's mathematical knowledge and understanding alongside their speaking, reading and writing skills
- the role of the emerging middle leaders is strengthened to support the leadership of the nursery, especially with the forthcoming opening of the third site in the new year and the growing partnerships with local schools and external agencies.

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

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and one of your deputy headteachers and we discussed the school's self-evaluation. We talked about the improvements which had been made since the last inspection and reviewed the information you use to check the individual progress of each child. I looked at all safeguarding records and explored your recruitment and vetting procedures. I also held discussions with two governors,

including the chair of governors, and six middle leaders. Together, we visited the two sites and spent time in all three classes watching the children developing their skills both indoors and outdoors. I also saw children looking at books and sharing stories with each other. I looked at the 12 survey results from 'Parent View' and considered the comments that had been submitted.

The key lines of enquiry tested on the short inspection day were as follows:

- How effectively have the actions that have been taken since the last inspection developed the children's speaking and writing skills?
- How effectively have the actions that have been taken since the last inspection improved the assessment and developed the progress of those children who use English as an additional language?
- Is there a thorough culture of safeguarding across the two sites, both indoors and outdoors?
- Given that the school identified developments in the way that it tracked summer-born children during the initial inspection meeting, how is this informing provision?
- How is the role of middle leaders developing, given that this is a focus of the school's development plan?