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Miss Becky Wood
Headteacher
Wingate Community Nursery School
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Dear Miss Wood

Short inspection of Wingate Community Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 11 January 2017, 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 December 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 promote successfully a vibrant and harmonious culture in which everyone is valued and respected. Since your appointment, you have continued to drive the school forward, introducing new ways of working and bringing staff, parents and governors with you along the way. Everyone in your school community knows your ambitious and inclusive vision, and they support you towards achieving this. This is a strength of the school and is seen throughout the work you do. It is reflected in children's positive attitudes and exemplary behaviour, and in the strong relationships you have established with parents. Parents talk about how lucky they are to have the nursery in their community, and how their children love both the nursery and the staff.

Children are enthusiastic, confident and independent learners. They are effectively supported to be inquisitive because of the way you and your highly skilled staff continuously enhance the learning environment to enable them to follow their interests. Children are encouraged to plan their own learning, and staff then use every opportunity this gives to develop further the children's knowledge, skills and aptitudes. Staff are reflective and challenge the children but always give them the time to really absorb their learning. This means children are consistently engaged in purposeful tasks and activities, and not a moment of time is wasted.

You analyse and use assessment information robustly to identify any areas that need improving, with a constant focus on improving outcomes for children. This has

ensured that the vast majority of children make more than typical progress from their starting points and are exceptionally well prepared for their next stage of education.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and records are detailed and of high quality. Case files for children in need follow the local authority format, and are regularly updated. Any issues are swiftly tackled to reduce any safeguarding risk. Risk assessments for activities are regularly completed and you adapt provision considering this. For example, when cooking independently, the children are not yet able to use the oven until you can secure their safety by disabling the hot plate.

Governors and staff complete annual update training on safeguarding and know the procedures to follow should there be any concerns about the children in their care. Attendance is high, because the children enjoy coming to the nursery, and parents value the education their children receive. However, when a child is absent, there is always a phone call that morning to find out why, and to make sure there is no safeguarding issue.

Parents state how safe and secure their children feel when at nursery. Children are taught how to keep themselves safe, for example when cutting up cheese for a snack using a sharp knife, climbing on outdoor equipment, such as the high-level village, or the tree trail, and when lighting fires in the outdoor log burner and fire pit. Staff talk children through these activities and only intervene when necessary, so boosting the children's confidence and skills.

All safeguarding and welfare requirements are met. The site is secure, and all staff hold a paediatric first aid certificate.

Inspection findings

- The vast majority of children, including disadvantaged children who are eligible for early years pupil premium funding and the most able, make at least typical progress. A good proportion of the children are making more than typical progress from their different starting points. Any gaps in skills, knowledge or understanding between groups on entry are diminishing rapidly or have already been overturned. Most children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also make at least typical progress. This is due to highly skilful and knowledgeable staff who are extremely able at identifying children's individual needs and allowing them the time to develop and grow. The high-quality learning journals and planning for individual children show highly effective planning is in place to address their needs and that all children are meeting their targets.
- The school's judgements of children's achievements are accurate and robust because staff work together to make assessments of children's achievements. These decisions are agreed by the highly knowledgeable headteacher and

assistant headteacher.

- 'In2nature', the school's initiative to enable children to explore their learning outdoors, is having a positive impact on outcomes for children eligible for early years pupil premium. The staff and children are benefiting from the input of a lead arts coordinator in improving their awareness and skills. Parents are highly supportive of this approach and appreciate how their children are learning in the outdoors, and having experiences parents could not easily provide.
- Children love reading books with staff. The most able can discuss different authors, and name other titles they have written. They can identify with different characters in a story, and use their developing skills and understanding of how books work to predict what may happen next. They can identify rhyming words, and know when they are used. Staff are highly skilled in developing and instilling a love of reading and books.
- Relationships with parents are extremely strong. Parents know the process to follow should they have a complaint and are confident it would be effectively dealt with. They were in disbelief that anyone would have a complaint! There are many effective routes for parents to be involved in their child's learning. Currently they are very involved in the development of the allotment, preparing the layout and building a large cabin. Transition arrangements from home to school are very effective. Staff visit most children at home before they start in the nursery so children get to know their key person. This gives them the confidence to leave their parents after the introductory period in the nursery. Parents contribute effectively to the initial assessment of their child. They add to the child's learning journal whenever they identify learning at home. This means that there is a complete picture of every child's progress, not solely based on what a child learns at school.
- Different cultures are valued and respected in the nursery, with children planning and leading celebrations from their own and many other cultures, such as at Diwali. Parents talk about how very appreciative they are of the support and love given to their children.
- At the previous inspection, a recommendation was made for governors to secure a smooth transition during the retirement of the present headteacher and appointment of the new headteacher, while maintaining the high-quality provision for children and their families. This has been achieved successfully. The school has had a significant change in leadership since the last inspection, with a new assistant headteacher also being appointed following the promotion of the existing assistant to headteacher. The smooth transition has not meant that the school has stood still. New initiatives in assessment include using electronic data systems to aid analysis of children's progress to identify next steps in learning more accurately and address any areas for improvement even more swiftly.
- The curriculum is strong. 'The Studio' has enabled further development and exploration of materials such as clay. The firehouse, an outdoor cabin with log burner, means children can learn outdoors for longer periods of time. Improving relationships with parents has involved the development of a communication book particularly to support communication with those parents seen less

frequently. The award of Investors in People demonstrates the commitment of the headteacher and governors to the whole staff and the value and respect shown for each other.

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

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Dorrity
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The focus of the inspection was to check whether the high standards identified at the previous inspection had been maintained through a period of change, and to find out how well particular groups of children were progressing.

I observed learning jointly with you, in both indoor and outdoor activities led by children. We also observed a guided reading session led by a member of staff.

I considered a range of evidence, including the school's latest assessment information about children's learning and development, the school development plan, leaders' self-evaluation, learning journals, planning documents and behaviour logs.

I met with three members of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority.

As there were no responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, I analysed the school's own survey of parents' views and spoke with nine parents.

I met with all the staff including you, your senior leader and a newly appointed member of staff.