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Mrs Jill Jones
Headteacher
Rosemary Lane Nursery School
Rosemary Lane
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Dear Mrs Jones

Short inspection of Rosemary Lane Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 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.

Leaders and managers have effectively maintained the outstanding progress demonstrated in the last inspection. Your passion and drive mean the school has not stood still during a period of transition. Since your appointment, you have moved the school forward with the introduction of new ways of working. Your reflective approach to your work means that you demonstrate the values and ethos of this caring school at all times. All the members of the school community feel extremely well-respected and that their views are heard. This is shown in the exemplary attitudes to learning and behaviour of the children and the high quality of teaching and commitment of the staff. Parents talk enthusiastically about how they are involved not just in setting learning targets for their child, but also the best ways resources can be used to help their child. The wider family support offered by the school and other agencies is also greatly appreciated.

You and your staff make sure that no opportunity for learning is lost. When a child brings in a carrot, staff instantly seize the opportunity to follow the children's interest, exploring what plants need to grow from a seed and using the internet to research the history. Parents comment how 'staff make learning out of nothing!' Staff are extremely skilful in developing children's critical thinking by using challenging questioning at the right moment, knowing when to intervene and when to step back. For instance, in the outdoor sandpit they move children on from making sand-castles to exploring the texture of the sand. Children know the routines to follow and are always ready and prepared for their learning. They really

enjoy coming to school. Children are confident because of their close and secure relationships with adults in the nursery.

Your robust and detailed analysis of school data alongside your continuous evaluation of practice, outcomes and children's progress enable you to accurately identify any areas that need improving. You swiftly act to remedy or improve these with a constant focus on improving outcomes for children. The new way of recording children's achievements and any gaps in their learning has been carefully implemented. Through this, staff have enhanced their observation and assessment skills and parents have developed their understanding of how their children learn. This has ensured that the vast majority of children make outstanding progress from their starting points and are exceptionally well prepared for their next stage of education.

Safeguarding is effective.

Staff know the procedures to follow should they have any concerns about a child. All staff and governors have undertaken all relevant training. The school works exceptionally well with key agencies such as family support to meet the needs of all children, particularly the most vulnerable. Parents talk of how well supported they feel as a family when they have been going through any difficulties either in their parenting or with wider family issues.

Attendance is notably high because children enjoy coming to nursery. The few unauthorised absences are swiftly followed up with an initial phone call, and referral to family support, and other partners if there is no response, ensuring that children are safeguarded. Parents state how safe they feel their child is in the building, and how close supervision is at the start and end of a session. They tell of how their children are taught to keep themselves safe while taking part in activities with a 'controlled risk' and how their children come home and pick them up on unsafe practice such as how to hold scissors safely.

All staff hold a paediatric first aid qualification. All areas of the nursery have been risk assessed, and when undertaking learning in the wider environment staff make rigorous weekly assessments to ensure that children will be safe. All safeguarding and well-being requirements are met.

Inspection findings

- Improvement priorities are effectively identified using detailed school data, observations and other sources of evidence. Staff and governors are productively involved in the process of developing these priorities. Actions are now being rigorously monitored by the governors to ensure that the school progresses rapidly and that impacts are focused on improving outcomes for children.
- At the previous inspection, it was recommended that the school develop the teaching of number through play and exploration. This has been addressed. Mathematics is seamlessly interwoven into all aspects of the curriculum across all age groups. Every possibility is used to develop children's mathematical

understanding, and there is a focus on an understanding of number and number recognition. In their play, children, including children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, were busily engaged recording and tallying up the results of which ball is the fastest when racing down a gutter.

- The stimulating environment is literacy rich. The introduction of the story tray has been exceptionally successful in developing all aspects of children's language and literacy. Children become really engaged in the art of storytelling, and concentrate for extended periods of time. They listen to and act out stories, then use the resources of the story tray to adapt or retell the story to their friends. They have an in-depth knowledge of how books work, talking confidently about the 'blurb' and the author of the story.
- In the provision for the younger children, staff effectively model play and language. They follow the children's interests and focus on the prime areas of learning and mathematics. For example, staff use the comparative language of bigger and smaller when describing measuring spoons to develop mathematical understanding. They use excellent open questioning to make children think critically, such as asking, 'Why do we need more water?' when children are playing in the gloopy mixture. Children stop and think, then respond that it will make the gloop 'more runny'. Children are engaged in their learning and concentrate for extended periods of time. They listen well to instructions and are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same excellent rate of progress as their peers. They all achieve their individual targets while working alongside their friends. The nursery ensures that these children continue to make excellent progress, with individual programmes, even while awaiting additional support from other agencies.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the governing body embeds further their individual monitoring responsibilities regarding the school improvement plan so that they gain an even more robust understanding of its effectiveness in contributing to the school's development.

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 story 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 improvement plan, leaders' self-evaluation, children's work, and planning documents.

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

I considered the responses on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, I analysed the school's own survey of parents' views and spoke with 11 parents.

I met with all the staff including you and your senior leader.