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Mrs Hayes
Head of Centre
Caverstede Early Years Centre
Caverstede Road
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Dear Mrs Hayes

Short inspection of Caverstede Early Years Centre

Following my visit to the school on 14 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 September 2013.

This school continues to be outstanding.

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

Since your appointment in January 2014, you and your senior teacher have been relentless in ensuring that excellence is maintained in all aspects of the school's work. There is a strong sense of teamwork across the school. Staff share your aspirations that all children should be helped to fulfil their potential. This can be seen throughout the setting. All adults have very high expectations for children's behaviour, learning and social and emotional development.

The school is a happy place to work because relationships across the school community are very strong. Staff support each other extremely well to plan activities and to support learning. You continue to challenge staff to improve their practice and they respond well to this. As one member of staff commented: 'I feel this school has done a lot for my development and I wouldn't be the teacher I am today without it!' Consequently, there is no complacency as you and your staff strive to secure the best possible outcomes for children.

Provision for the high number of children in the school who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is managed exceptionally well. Adults are well trained and provide high-quality support for these children, very successfully meeting a range of diverse needs.

Children are enthusiastic and confident learners. They behave extremely well and greatly enjoy school. They willingly talk about their learning to visitors. Adults plan work that builds effectively on the children's natural curiosity. Your staff are highly skilled at responding to children's interests so that work is purposeful and fun. There is a delightful atmosphere as children work together, sharing resources and helping each other. For example, after a visit to the local church, several children worked well as a team to build a church using large wooden blocks.

Parents are highly complimentary about all aspects of the school's work. They feel that their children's needs and interests are taken into account fully and that they thrive from their first day in school. They typically make comments such as, 'staff are excellent at communicating and they make me feel comfortable leaving my child in their care', and 'the school provides our child with fabulous learning opportunities both indoors and outdoors due to the wonderful facilities and highly trained staff.'

You have worked hard to involve parents fully in their children's education before they start school, through activities such as the regular messy play sessions for pre-school children. You have introduced an online assessment record that gives parents regular information about their children's learning so that they can support them at home. You ensure that parents are able to work alongside their children in the 'Adventure Café' and the library, helping to break down barriers between home and school.

Safeguarding is effective.

The governing body and other leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that appropriate and detailed records are kept. You and the staff know the children and their families very well. You are vigilant about monitoring pupils who are at risk and, when needed, you take swift action to ensure that they are kept safe. You work very closely with other agencies such as health visitors, family support workers and social care services to seek additional support.

You ensure that staff give the well-being and safety of children the highest priority. Teachers carry out daily risk assessments. These are very thorough and mean that children are able to work in a safe, clean and secure environment.

Children feel safe at school. They willingly take responsibility for their own safety by handling resources sensibly and by being careful not to hurt others when playing. For their age, children show a good awareness of internet safety. They recently produced an award-winning film about e-safety which demonstrated their understanding.

Inspection findings

- We met at the start of the inspection to agree the key lines of enquiry for my day in school. The first of these looked at the only recommendation from the previous

inspection. This identified the need for the school to do more to share its excellent practice. Since then, the school has become a leading light in disseminating its high-quality practice with other settings both locally and nationally. You are part of a teaching school alliance and regularly provide training for other early years settings in the city, including by using videos of children at work to show their effective learning.

- We also agreed as a second line of enquiry to look at children's progress and the quality of teaching. This was to check whether these strengths had been maintained since the previous inspection. I found that children continue to make excellent progress across the school. When they start school, few children are working at a typical level of development for their age. Excellent teaching means that by the time they leave, most children are working at or beyond the levels expected for their age, reflecting their very rapid progress over time.
- Teaching continues to be highly effective in meeting differing needs, including for two-year-old children. Staff ensure that there is a vibrant environment, with outdoor learning especially well integrated into everyday practice. A parent described the Woodland Area as a 'magical place to learn'. I could see that it is a hive of activity as children garden, cook and explore their own ideas. Children learn new skills very quickly due to the timely interventions of staff when working both indoors and outdoors.
- Our third line of enquiry was the role of middle leaders and governors in checking the work of the school and in strategic planning. We agreed to look at this because it was one of the priorities you have identified in your development planning. You have made good progress in improving this aspect of leadership. Staff are very clear that they are being given more responsibility than in the past for monitoring the work of the school and for leading their different teams. Activities such as your 'away days' give all leaders, including governors, an opportunity to contribute to planning for the school's next steps. The governing body is knowledgeable about the school. Governors have thorough systems for checking provision for themselves. They are working closely with you to secure the school's long-term future.
- The final line of enquiry was the quality and impact of support for disadvantaged children and how well you are using and reporting on the early years pupil premium. I wanted to check this because there was limited information about this aspect of your work on the school website. I found that disadvantaged children make the same very rapid progress as others. They are given high-quality support. Well-tailored individual or group interventions have a positive effect on their learning. However, the school has not published a plan on the website for how this additional funding will be used in the current year. We also agreed that the evaluation of spending for the last academic year does not focus well enough on the impact of different initiatives. This makes it difficult for you to be certain about what is working well and what needs to improve when it comes to deciding how to allocate the pupil premium in future years.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they report annually on the school website on the use of the early years pupil premium and include in this report sharper evaluations of the impact of this spending.

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

Yours sincerely

Mike Capper
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Evidence collected on inspection included:

- observations of teaching and learning across the school during learning walks with the head of centre and the senior teacher
- meetings with senior leaders and members of the governing body
- informal discussions with parents and children and the scrutiny of 101 responses to the Ofsted 'Parent View' questionnaire, including written comments
- the scrutiny of 29 responses to the staff questionnaire
- consideration of a range of information supplied by the school, including checks on the quality of teaching, the school development plan and records relating to attendance and safeguarding procedures
- scrutiny of school assessment information and children's work.