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Mrs Cheryl Kirby
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Kirby

Short inspection of King's Lynn Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 17 May 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 good in July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school has gone from strength to strength. Governors, your predecessor and the local authority made significant changes. They extended provision to include two-year-olds, meeting the needs of parents. They federated with a good local infant school to share expertise. Both initiatives have contributed to the good quality of education provided and the school's financial viability.

Since arriving at the school in January 2017, you have continued to drive improvements. Your and the governors' accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement enable you to take effective action to make the school better still. You analyse very thoroughly and use the resulting information well. The school has taken effective action to address the issues for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

Staff morale is high and the staff form a well-established, knowledgeable team. All those responding to Ofsted's online survey agreed that they are proud to be members of staff, and that you do all you can to see that they are motivated, respected and effective. They said they clearly understand the school's aims and agreed that professional development is used effectively.

Parents are equally positive. Their confidence in the school, its leadership and staff is strong. All responding to the online survey, Parent View, would recommend the

school to another parent. They all agreed, most strongly, that children are safe, happy and well cared for at school. A comment typical of many parents was: 'My child loves school, cannot wait to go and doesn't want to leave. You can see the excitement on his face every morning. He doesn't like holidays!'

Every morning gets off to a good start. Key workers meet with the children they have particular responsibility for. These staff promote children's speaking and listening skills well as they talk about what children did the last time they were in school and what they would like to achieve today. Children contribute well. They decide if they want to extend that learning, or try something new. Learning is highly personalised to meet each child's interests. As a result, the children develop their own ideas and make links between them. They usually keep on trying till they succeed.

Children's enthusiasm for learning and thirst for knowledge are strong. They are inquisitive: always looking to try something new, to investigate and 'have a go'. Persistent rainfall during the inspection led to overflowing gutters. Some children seized the moment, joyously exploring the falling water. Staff 'tuned into' children's thinking and asked questions to encourage their learning and promote the development of language. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, staff do not routinely use the many and varied opportunities as effectively to promote early writing skills.

The school's information and examples of children's previous and present work show that children who join when they are two make good progress. Their social and emotional development is particularly good. Transition to the eldest class is smooth because children are familiar with the school, its routines and staff. Good progress continues. By the time children leave to start their Reception Year, a high proportion demonstrate knowledge and skills similar to those typical of their age.

Effective provision for vulnerable children, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enables these children to thrive. Staff draw on the expertise of the federated school and a local special school. Extra help is tailored to each child's unique needs. Parents praised the change in their children; a typical comment was, 'He has blossomed with the extra support.'

Staff encourage children to take responsibility. From an early age, children learn to recognise their names and use this to register their arrival. Children's 'wet suits' are cleverly designed to go over their everyday clothes easily so children can dress themselves. This is an example of staff enabling children to be independent.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of good quality. The safeguarding culture is strong. Having four designated safeguarding leads ensures that at least one is always on site.

Staff are well trained. They, and governors, receive regular updates. All staff are vigilant and concerns are reported immediately. Parents say their children feel safe, happy and well cared for at school. The key-person role effectively promotes secure attachments with children and strong, positive partnerships with parents. Children enjoy positive relationships with staff and one another.

Inspection findings

- The previous inspection asked leaders to check the progress of different groups of pupils more thoroughly. This became my first line of enquiry. When you arrived, you quickly realised that checks did not measure children's progress in enough detail, or regularly enough, to be useful to you or teachers. Information about different groups, particularly disadvantaged children, children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language, was insufficient. You immediately changed the system. It now gives you the information you need to ensure children progress well and to hold teachers to account if they do not.
- You have rechecked the children's progress from the start of this academic year. You showed me in detail the good progress children make. When children receive extra help, you measure their achievement at the start and periodically afterwards, to see it is working and to change it if not. Different groups generally progress well, too. You showed me how the progress of disadvantaged children, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language clearly benefits from this more forensic approach. It has enabled you to see that the progress of children who speak English as an additional language is not quite as rapid as that of other children.
- My second line of enquiry was about how teachers have improved the quality of their dialogue with children. Again, at the last inspection it was an area for improvement. Our observations of learning showed that staff routinely and regularly involve children in dialogue to promote their learning. In all activities, inside and out, adults use talk very effectively to promote learning.
- My third line of enquiry was about the differences in achievement between boys and girls, and between children who speak English as an additional language and those who do not. Again, we looked at the school's records of children's progress. These show the difference is diminishing. You explained that this was largely because, now that they have more precise information, teachers plan learning experiences specifically to promote these groups' learning.
- Although it is diminishing, some difference in achievement between children who speak English as an additional language and those who do not remains. Staff recognise that many children join with limited English language and all staff use identical signs for basic requests and instructions. Each sign is accompanied by the corresponding word or phrase, so that the children can begin to learn English. Children copy and use these signs, also. However, very few opportunities are provided for children who speak English as an additional language to develop and use their home language in either their play or their learning. This inhibits their progress.

- My fourth line of enquiry was about children's attendance. Although non-statutory at this age, it is a concern to you because you know how important it is to establish good attendance habits. You have listened to parents' views and acted on them. Parents, particularly when all adults in the household work, say they appreciate the new approach, which allows them greater flexibility regarding which sessions their children attend and the extended hours they can stay.
- My final line of enquiry was about the school website. A governor had recently reviewed the website and produced a list which accurately identified the required changes. She has already begun to implement these improvements. This demonstrates effective governance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- provide more opportunities for children who speak English as an additional language to develop and use their home language in play and learning
- increase the promotion of children's early writing by:
 - promoting and modelling the skills of mark-making, giving due regard to the symbols and marks with which children from different cultures are familiar
 - providing more opportunities for writing during other activities
 - noticing and encouraging the marks children make.

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

Yours sincerely

Robert Greatrex
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, members of staff and governors. I talked by telephone to a representative of the local authority and the chair of the governing body.

We visited both classrooms and the outside area together to observe teaching and learning. I looked at children's work.

I scrutinised safeguarding policies and practice. I considered a wide range of other documents, including assessment information, the school's own self-evaluation, plans for improvement, documents relating to children's attendance and the school's

early years pupil premium report.

I took account of the 17 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and six comments received electronically. I spoke with parents bringing their children to school and took account of the 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.