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Mrs Margot Dixon
Headteacher
Abbey Green Nursery School & Children's Centre
Green Lane
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Dear Mrs Dixon

Short inspection of Abbey Green Nursery School & Children's Centre

Following my visit to the school on 12 July 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 nursery was judged to be good in April 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the nursery since the last inspection. You and your staff have high expectations of what children can achieve from their different starting points. Most children speak English as an additional language. A significant minority have speech and language difficulties. The nursery responds well to this challenge with a clear focus on communication, language and literacy. Staff are extremely skilled in working with children to develop their language skills and understanding. They work well with parents and other professionals to meet the needs of the individual children.

The nursery is caring and inclusive. This was evident during the inspection: without prompting, even the youngest children were helping others to put on aprons to play in the water, and the children displayed confidence in using sign language to communicate with other children. The local authority has recognised and values this inclusivity and is currently designating the nursery as a special needs resource base.

The children know routines well, and are polite and courteous as they move around the school. When breaking away from a whole class activity to take part in small group work, they do so efficiently, and without disturbing their friends' learning. They are prepared for life in modern Britain through activities such as voting when answering a question with their parents while self-registering. This then provokes further discussion such as, 'Have you ever been to Ghana?'

Children are always engaged in learning because staff are very accomplished at following the children's interests when planning activities. Children are actively encouraged to become independent learners. For instance, they know how to operate the interactive whiteboard to replay their favourite stories. Children are focused on learning during child-led activities because staff inspire them effectively, during group times, to follow up and extend their learning. For instance, when seeking out spiders in the outdoor area following the reading of 'The Very Hungry Spider', they search across the space without needing adult intervention.

The nursery has continued to progress. You have effectively addressed all the recommendations from the last inspection. You delivered training to enable staff to develop their confidence in knowing when to ask children challenging questions, and they have clearly taken this on board. You do this, for example, by asking children why fish are moving up and down a bubble tube, and challenging the children to describe the movements using words to describe position and place.

Opportunities for writing are readily available across the curriculum. You accessed high-quality professional development for staff to support them in developing children's physical skills in both large and small movements. This has helped the children to develop their writing skills, such as when recording their trip out on the steam train the day before the inspection. However, you recognise that the next step to improve progress is to embed writing into everything the nursery does.

Phonics is taught very well. Children enjoy the activities, and are skilled at knowing the sounds letters make. The most able blend these sounds when reading simple three-letter words. They are beginning to use this knowledge in their wider writing, such as when they sign in at registration times, or when writing simple sentences.

Partnership working with parents is very strong. Parents who made their views known say how useful they find the workshops organised by the nursery staff, and particularly those about how young children learn through play. They find the ideas and suggestions on how they can support their children at home extremely helpful. They also noted that the adult classes delivered by the family and community team in the nursery have helped them in developing their knowledge of English, and so help them support their children.

You have continued to develop the governance of the nursery. The recently appointed chair of the governing body is clearly passionate about the nursery. He consistently links everything you and the governors do to the impact on outcomes for the children. The wealth of data you now hold has assisted the governing body to develop a clearer understanding of the nursery and to challenge you from a position of knowledge. However, you all agree that there is more to do to further refine the analysis of this data, so that plans for improvement include more targets that are measurable and against which the governors can check the impact of the nursery's work even more precisely. This will enable you to focus on the actions needed to increase the numbers of children who make rapid progress during their time with you, and to further enhance the knowledge of the governing body.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safety is the first concern of the nursery. Checks that the nursery makes on adults before they come to work in the nursery, or have regular contact with children, are extremely well evidenced. All procedures are effectively implemented and staff files are kept up to date. Staff have updated training in all aspects of safeguarding and are aware of the procedures to follow should they have any concerns about a child or a member of staff. This means that overall safeguarding processes are fit for purpose.

You maintain detailed records of any changes observed in a child's behaviour, which may then build into a picture of more serious issues impacting on a child or their family. You monitor and follow up referrals and ensure through weekly formal meetings, and more informal contact, that actions are taken and tracked. These are accurately recorded in the paperwork held by the nursery.

Your robust partnership working with the family and community team on site enables swift access to family and parenting support. Through the team, strong professional relationships are maintained with relevant agencies such as the police or housing. This means that the safeguarding of any child who is at risk of suffering harm is secure. Parents say how much they appreciate this support.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I looked particularly at the quality and impact of the planning undertaken by staff. I saw that planning displayed in the rooms is referred to often by staff. It is now of high quality, and is clearly based on observations and assessments. Staff plan activities which develop children's interests and effectively address the next steps in children's learning.
- Your monitoring and accurate observations of teaching effectively identify areas for individual improvement which staff act upon, and you always check to ensure that suggestions are implemented. This means that teaching over time is at least good and is often better than this.
- Staff consistently ask searching questions of the 'how?', 'what?', 'why?' variety and skilfully model language to develop children's understanding and vocabulary. During the inspection, a member of staff was observed reflecting on and describing children's play while the children were working on an alphabet mat and identifying similarities and differences in letter shapes.
- Opportunities for writing are beginning to be embedded across the curriculum and children's writing is seen to be highly valued in the displays around the nursery. You are ensuring that this is integral to all the work the nursery does.
- Those children in the two-year-old provision make as good progress as the older children. By carefully checking and comparing planning, staff ensure that there is progression from the two-year-old activities to those accessed by the three-year-olds. Robust monitoring is undertaken through regular observations of practice, and random sampling of short term planning ensures that the provision is meeting the needs of the different age groups.
- The children's good progress can be seen in the recently introduced electronic learning journals. These mean that parents readily and easily contribute online to these records

of their children's learning, and say that they find this a very effective way of being able to see how their children are progressing.

- Leaders and managers have used the wealth of data they collect to successfully identify areas of learning to be targeted each year. The weaker areas identified are thoroughly addressed by skilled staff in day-to-day teaching. Specific barriers to learning for disadvantaged children centre on their language development and the additional funding is successfully targeted on this area. These children catch up with their peers by the time they leave the nursery. This is because of the high-quality interventions and extension activities which secure language development by setting just the right amount of challenge to move children on in their learning.
- You have recognised that further analysis of this data would enable you to develop more measurable targets for pupils' outcomes and actions in the school improvement plan. You also identify that an external review of the school would help you and the governors to enhance your self-evaluation. You are working on developing a closer partnership with two other local nursery schools, which may go some way to address this.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans for improvement include more targets which are measurable and against which the governors can check the impact of the school's work more precisely
- they secure an external review of the nursery to support an even more robust challenge of the nursery's self-evaluation
- systems of recording and tracking children's progress are developed further and enhanced, so information is easy to review and use when assessing the impact of teaching on groups of children across individual areas of learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Dorrity
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, your deputy headteacher and the class teacher. I also held meetings with the chair of the governing body and spoke on the phone with a representative of the local authority.

I observed teaching and learning with you and your deputy in the two-year-old and three- and four-year-old rooms. I observed several sessions of child-led learning both indoors and outside and analysed extracts from the electronic learning journals.

Together, we discussed the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan and scrutinised the assessment data you hold on attainment and progress.

As there were insufficient responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire, I spoke with several parents. I considered the six responses to the online staff questionnaire.