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Mr Andrew Shimmin
Headteacher
McMillan Nursery School
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Dear Mr Shimmin

Short inspection of McMillan Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 13 September 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have continued to place children's well-being and happiness at the centre of your decision making and ensure that the school is a caring and inclusive place to learn. All staff are proud and happy to work at the school and this creates a positive climate for learning for children. It is testimony to the skill of your practitioners that although my visit was at the start of the academic year, the children were very settled and were confidently exploring their surroundings.

Strong relationships are a hallmark of your provision and are evident in all classrooms. As a result of the respectful attitude of staff towards children and the modelling of good manners, children's behaviour is excellent. Children accept each other's differences and learn to work cooperatively alongside each other from a young age.

The key workers quickly establish highly effective bonds with the children in their care, and are respectful of their needs; because of this, children settle very quickly and enjoy coming to school.

You have an extensive outdoor learning environment that offers interesting learning activities. Children quickly gain confidence to explore and learn how to play safely and negotiate with their peers. This has remained a consistently strong and highly effective feature of the school's practice, since the last inspection. As a result, children are successful in their learning and curious to explore their surroundings.

Many children arrive with skills that are at a lower level of development than those typical for children of their age. A small minority of pupils demonstrate skills that are well below typical. All groups of children, including the most vulnerable and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their starting points. This is because adults know the children well, plan activities that stimulate their interests and help them interact with one another.

You know your community well and use this information to signpost some of your more vulnerable families to additional support and advice. Since the last inspection you have appointed a dedicated development manager for families and well-being, who is relentless in her drive to engage with parents and encourage greater involvement from them in their child's learning. She organises a raft of school events and parenting courses to support families. Since her appointment, the number of events offered and participation rates have increased from 20 to over 100 in the last academic year. The results of your own parent questionnaires are overwhelmingly positive and are representative of almost all parents. The parents I talked to during the inspection shared how much they value the support and advice received from your staff in knowing how to better support their children at home. This is contributing well to children's good progress rates.

While you have tackled many of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection successfully, your development plans do not identify consistently and precisely the gains in children's skills and development you wish to see. This means that while your plans are detailed and purposeful, leaders are not able to fully and accurately evaluate the impact of all actions.

Safeguarding is effective.

The safety of all the children who attend school is paramount to you and your staff. The culture of safeguarding permeates strongly across all classes. All staff receive high-quality safeguarding training, which enables them to be knowledgeable about keeping children safe. You have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and actions timely.

You and the deputy designated child protection officer use your extensive knowledge and established partnerships to ensure prompt support for the most vulnerable children and families. You have accurately identified that domestic violence is a concern within your community and take prompt action if you identify any child at risk.

You ensure that activities are planned to encourage children to keep themselves safe and be considerate of each other's needs and feelings. For example, in reading the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', the teacher talked about Little Bear's feelings when he discovered his broken chair and missing porridge. The children were quick to respond and eagerly gave Little Bear a cuddle to make him feel better.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors have continued to ensure that the quality of teaching remains good. You invest heavily in undertaking research to inform your practice and provide extensive training for staff. Children benefit from an exciting environment which is responsive to their interests and motivates them in their learning. Staff use 'talk' well to underpin learning with prompts and praise and to support children. Occasionally, staff do not extend children's learning by asking further stretching questions.
- In order to strengthen the capacity of the school, you have developed a system of distributed leadership, which enables all staff to contribute to whole-school improvement planning and to be actively involved in analysing children's achievement. As a result, all staff are fully aware of the areas for improvement and are keen to lead whole-school initiatives. However, actions in your improvement plan, although well considered, are not linked precisely enough to the gains in children's achievement to accurately evaluate their impact.
- One of the areas for improvement at the last inspection was to develop children's writing skills. You have worked hard to provide increasing opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills and provide a purpose for them to write. Teachers model the process well and encourage the most reticent writers to record their thoughts. As a result, children's outcomes in writing have improved over time. In 2017, the vast majority of children who transferred to primary school left with skills that are typical for their age. This represents good progress from their starting points.
- You continue to work closely with parents and run various initiatives to encourage family reading and instil in children a love of books. You offer books to families who are unable to access a library. As a result, children are eager listeners to their favourite stories and teachers are skilled story-tellers. Books are easily accessible in all areas of learning and are there to support the planned activities. While improvements have taken place, you recognise that there is still more to do. For example, a group of boys had collected a crop of windfall apples from the apple tree. Although there was a book called 'The Apple Tree' readily available, it was not used as effectively as one would have expected to stimulate the boys' interest and extend their knowledge.
- Since the last inspection, you have extended the age range of the school to include two-year-olds and I was keen to measure the impact of this on children's achievement. Although it was only the second week of term, it was clear that the key workers had already established strong and effective relationships with their children, who were already demonstrating great confidence in their new surroundings.

- Staff rightly prioritise the prime areas of learning and this is enabling the long tail

of underachievement to be reduced considerably and thus reduce the proportion of children entering primary schools with skills below those typical for their age. This year's primary school starters provided the first tranche of comparative assessment information for you. While that was very pleasing for you and your staff, you recognise that there is still more work to do to ensure that more disadvantaged children can achieve skills and knowledge to a standard above what is typical for their age by the time they leave your school.

- You are managing a changing context in your school, with increasing numbers of children arriving who speak English as an additional language. Staff adjust their provision sensitively and carefully to meet the needs of those whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable. As a result, children who speak English as an additional language make the same good progress as their peers and have full access to all learning and are settled and confident.
- You continue to find new ways of encouraging parents to be involved with their child's learning, and last year piloted a new system using computer tablets and email to capture those seminal moments of learning. Although only recently established, such is its success that both staff and parents are enthusiastic about its use.
- A focus for the inspection was the role of governors in holding leaders to account for spending additional funding targeted at disadvantaged children (pupil premium funding). Governors are committed to the school and to raising children's achievement and ensuring children's safety. They know how the early years pupil premium funding has been used in the previous academic year. They have checked its impact on the quality of teaching and learning, ensuring that disadvantaged children achieve as well as their peers and make equally good progress from their starting points. However, governors have not ensured that the statutory requirements for information on the school's website, in relation to the use and impact of this additional funding, are met in full.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- actions in the school's improvement plan are evaluated more precisely against the impact they have on raising children's achievement and supporting children's development
- staff readily seize opportunities, including in free play, by asking challenging questions, to extend children's learning so that more children, including disadvantaged children, are able to develop skills that are above those typical for their age
- the school's website is fully compliant with statutory requirements in relation to the pupil premium strategy.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kingston-upon-Hull. This

letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Diane Buckle
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I had discussions with the senior leaders about their improvement work. I met with representatives of the governing body and I also spoke with a representative of the local authority. With the headteacher, I observed provision and learning in classrooms and in the outside learning environment. I talked with children and with parents. I scrutinised a range of documents relating to the school's self-evaluation and safeguarding. I analysed minutes of governing body meetings. There were too few responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to provide an analysis. However, I reviewed the school's own questionnaire and parent commentaries and spoke to parents as they collected their children at the end of the morning and afternoon sessions.