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Mrs Jan Goatley
Headteacher
Maytree Nursery and Infants' School
Derby Road
Southampton
Hampshire
SO14 0DY

Dear Mrs Goatley

Short inspection of Maytree Nursery and Infants' School

Following my visit to the school on 5 October 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 May 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

Parents like the work that you and your team do. They say that staff go out of their way to help. Parents like the care you show their children. They say that teachers work very hard and pupils make good progress. Many parents said that the Nursery gave their children a great start.

Parents value you as the headteacher. They say you listen to them and handle everything with a bright smile.

Pupils enjoy being at school. They feel safe and well looked after. They work and play well together. They say teachers always sort out their problems.

The school has changed since the last inspection. More pupils now arrive and leave the school during the school year. Also, many teachers are new since May 2013.

You want all of the pupils to do well. You have high expectations of the quality of teaching. You have rightly focused on this since the last inspection. You have worked hard to ensure that pupils make good progress in lessons. Performance management is clearly linked to pupils' progress. Leaders support and encourage staff to improve continually.

You and other leaders have successfully addressed the issues from the last inspection. Together, you have also changed how you work to meet the changing needs of the pupils. You have developed the spoken language and communication of pupils. There have been improvements to the way that phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is taught. The teaching of mathematics is stronger than it was at the time of the last inspection. Now pupils develop the basic skills and language in English and mathematics that they need to succeed. You are right to continue to focus on these improvements so that more of your most able pupils can achieve greater depth in English and mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

Parents say that their children are happy and well looked after. Children feel safe and parents and staff agree. Staff are well trained and have a good understanding of the issues facing pupils in the school. Pupils behave well in the school. They look after their school. Pupils respect staff and each other.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of high quality. You and your team know how important this work is. You work hard to keep children safe. You work closely with other agencies to ensure that pupils receive the support they need. You have very thorough processes to monitor the quality of this work. Governors have an effective overview of the culture of safeguarding in the school.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look in particular at the following aspects of the school's work:
 - the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements
 - how well leaders have addressed the recommendations of the previous inspection
 - the progress of pupils who remain in the school from Nursery to Year 2
 - how well disadvantaged pupils are supported to make good progress
 - how effectively the school promotes the good attendance of pupils.
- At the time of the last inspection, the school population was quite stable. This has changed now as a significant number of children arrive and leave during the school year. Many new arrivals speak little or no English. Some pupils have little experience of formal education. From their starting points, these pupils make good progress. However, the majority of them are not able to achieve the expected standards by the end of Year 2.
- Developments in the teaching and assessment of mathematics in Years 1 and 2 have resulted in improved outcomes for pupils. As a result, more of the most able pupils are achieving greater depth in mathematics. However, this is still below national averages.

- Pupils enjoy their time at school. They start school in Nursery with skills that are well below those expected for their age. Those who progress through the school until the end of Year 2 make good progress from their very low starting points.
- Leaders and governors closely monitor the progress that pupils make. They rightly look more closely at groups of pupils and those who are not making enough progress. However, they are not looking closely enough at the progress of pupils who arrive during the school year, particularly those who speak English as an additional language. Consequently, leaders and teachers are not being held sufficiently to account.
- The teaching of phonics has improved. Results are now broadly in line with national averages for all pupils and for disadvantaged pupils. Middle leaders have built on these improvements. As a result, work is now taking place to ensure that pupils fully understand what they are reading. As we discussed, this work needs to continue. At the moment, the most able pupils do not always make sufficient progress to achieve the higher standards in reading and writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils do well in the school. They make good progress and achieve as well as or better than other children in the school. This is because support is carefully planned and rigorously monitored. The most able disadvantaged pupils do not always make sufficient progress to achieve the higher standards.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection but remains lower than national averages. Parents are aware of the school's drive to make sure pupils are always at school. Leaders have taken a range of actions to reduce absence and promote good attendance. For example, the presence of Edi the 'attendance bee' on the gate discourages lateness. Leaders are very clear with parents about the importance of good attendance at school and work hard to reduce the number of extended holidays which some parents take. Persistent absence remains higher than the national average. This slows the learning of some pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching enables the most able pupils to make more rapid progress, increasing the likelihood of them achieving greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics
- pupils who arrive part way through the school year, particularly those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress from their starting points and are ready for the next stage in their education.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Minns
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and other leaders to discuss a range of issues including pupils' progress and attendance. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and talked to children at breaktime and during their lessons. Together, we visited classrooms and looked at pupils' work. I met with two members of the governing body and had a phone conversation with a representative from Southampton local authority. I met with a group of pupils to look at their work and talk about their learning. I reviewed school documentation, including the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding. I took account of 102 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including five written comments. I considered 27 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.