

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mr Peter Gerrard  
Head of Centre  
Rawmarsh Nursery School and Children's Centre  
Barbers Crescent  
Rawmarsh  
Rotherham  
South Yorkshire  
S62 6AD

Dear Mr Gerrard

### **Short inspection of Rawmarsh Nursery School and Children's Centre**

Following my visit to the nursery on 15 November 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 March 2014.

#### **This school continues to be outstanding.**

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have not been complacent; you have continued to raise the bar and to improve the nursery further. You and your deputy have been highly successful in using the best of educational research and your own strong sense of what will work to develop outstanding learning opportunities for children.

You and your staff form a strong and dedicated team, determined to provide the very best possible start for children and their families. The vast majority of children start with you with levels of development below those typically seen for their age. Excellent teaching is ensuring that almost all children leave Rawmarsh Nursery with skills and abilities at or above those typically seen, ensuring that they are very well prepared for their transition into Reception.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to develop the quality of outdoor learning. You, and your governors, have invested wisely, and together, staff have created an exciting and versatile learning environment that you use very effectively to develop children's skills and confidence across the whole spectrum of learning. Your deputy headteacher is experienced and innovative in her approach to developing teaching. Led capably by her, staff have developed highly effective teaching in order to enhance children's understanding of the world. The 'World Explorers' put on their wellies and outdoor weather suits and get stuck in to exploring the environment. Staff are exceedingly skilled in modelling mathematical

and scientific language, and children are responding through chatter and involvement in these outdoor activities. In one group, children were observed mixing dry soil with buckets of water. Their progress in personal development and communication and language was tangible as they happily counted the buckets of water and described the mud generated as 'dry', 'wet' or 'wetter'.

You regularly seek the views of parents and use these to provide a personalised curriculum for children, using their interests to great effect to boost children's confidence. Parents contribute hugely to the information you collect on a child's development. You invite parents to an extensive range of activities, such as 'potty parties', that help them to get their child ready for school. You encourage regular participation from parents through 'stay and play' and use this opportunity to show how you are helping children to learn. You explain all aspects of teaching carefully to aid parents in supporting their child at home, producing leaflets on 'developing talk, early reading and writing' and 'developing confidence, resilience and self-esteem through nature', for example. It is no surprise, then, that 100% of parents responding to Parent View were happy with Rawmarsh Nursery and all would be content to recommend the school to others.

Relationships between children and staff are natural and warm. All staff have very high expectations of children's behaviour. Staff were frequently observed reminding children about 'good sitting', 'good listening' and 'good talking'. Staff maintain high expectations at lunchtime, when all children are encouraged to sit together, to serve themselves and to eat with a knife and fork. These occasions are sociable and happy times for children and staff. Children are kind to each other because staff do not miss opportunities to help children to resolve problems or conflicts with others. Children rise to the challenge and do not disappoint, showing that they feel happy and safe in the nursery.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured that safeguarding is of paramount importance at Rawmarsh. All staff have been trained to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and know what to do if this occurs. You ensure that staff maintain up-to-date knowledge by issuing regular quizzes to test their knowledge. Governors also check staff on their understanding during their visits to school.

You have made sure that safeguarding is underpinned by a raft of policies, that procedures are robust and you have assessed the risks to children for all aspects of the school's work. Staff hold appropriate food hygiene and first aid certificates. The statutory welfare requirements are well met. Risk assessments clearly identify the needs of more vulnerable individual children. For example, staff are clear about the steps they need to take to protect children with medical needs, including food allergies.

You recognise your role in promoting children's regular attendance, pulling no punches in showing parents that below 91% is 'inadequate' and will lead to a month away from school each year.

## Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I wanted to find out the extent to which you have maintained an outstanding quality of education, the effect of your work to improve outdoor learning and the impact of your work to meet the needs of children who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and who are new to English.
- You have a crystal-clear view of the work of the school and ensure that this informs your very considered actions. You have regularly sought external validation for your work and have recently acquired the Basic Skills Quality Mark for the fourth time. You have used consultants and the school improvement partner to help you form an accurate view of the effectiveness of what you do. This precision and clarity has enabled you and your staff to continue to improve this stunning setting.
- The deputy headteacher has a deep knowledge and understanding of learning in the early years. She uses this to great effect when deciding how to further enhance provision and teaching. Your procedures to manage the performance of staff are extremely rigorous and link closely to your development plans. This means that staff know exactly where they need to focus their efforts so that together you continue to maintain and improve your high-quality provision.
- You have put into place very precise systems to measure accurately children's progress. Staff collect a very comprehensive range of information, including that provided by parents, and record this against the different areas for learning. Staff are skilful in their use of this information and swiftly plan further activities that enable children to plug gaps in their learning. All key workers are extremely clear about the next steps the children in their care need to take and make sure that children receive targeted teaching or activities that will help them to learn new things. Consequently, children make rapid progress throughout the setting.
- Your work to help children acquire early language is exemplary. Teachers have devised a comprehensive set of focused activities, including 'talking tigers' and 'Mr Tig Tog', that help children to hear initial sounds and rhymes and to talk freely. In one snapshot of learning, children were observed handling and matching objects with similar sounds; they were excited to cross the 'river' and escape the crocodile (puppet) with the jug and mug, or van and man they had collected. All children are responding well to this approach, but it is also enabling you to very successfully meet the needs of children who are new to English.
- All staff, without exception, understand the importance of encouraging children to speak. Staff ask frequent and well-conceived questions, promoting children's understanding and developing their confidence. Staff sensitively rephrase children's words, accurately modelling speech, leading to children's rapid progress in communication and language. Children were observed in focused teaching 'talk boost' and 'Charlie chatters' groups, planned carefully to ensure that all make the swift progress you expect.
- Your work to promote equality and diversity is very successful. I saw much evidence of children taking part in activities to celebrate a range of faiths and cultures. You display different images and languages around the centre and

sensitively recognise children's different heritages. For example, staff and children enjoyed looking at and talking about Persian New Year, using resources brought in by a parent.

- This is a very inclusive setting where children with a range of SEN and/or disabilities play easily alongside other children. The leader for SEN is well qualified and experienced in supporting this group of children. She has a thorough knowledge of the needs of children and works highly successfully with external agencies to ensure that children get the best deal possible. Because of her meticulous attention to detail, children who have SEN and/or disabilities are making rapid progress from their starting points.
- Governors are keen to challenge and support school leaders to enable them to continue to improve. Although governors visit the nursery to check that what leaders tell them is actually happening, there is little evidence that they robustly question and challenge. Governors carried out an audit of their skills in order to determine what they need to do differently. They acknowledge that not all are fully conversant with changes in education.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- continue to develop and share the high quality of teaching that characterises the nursery
- further develop governors' knowledge of educational practice and use this to challenge school leaders more robustly.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Butcher  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

This letter records the findings of the inspection of Rawmarsh Nursery. A separate inspection of the provision for 0- to 2-year-olds took place at the same time.

During this one-day inspection, I was able to discuss the work of the school with you and the deputy headteacher. With the deputy headteacher, I visited classrooms and spent time in the outdoor area to observe teaching and learning. I was able to look at children's work in their early learning journeys and to speak with children throughout the day. I shared lunch with the children. Discussions with the school

improvement partner and three members of the governing body helped to provide me with additional information. School documentation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school website were also taken into account. The views of 35 parents were taken into account through the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. I also took into account the views of 26 staff through online questionnaires.