

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Ms Angela Dixon
Headteacher
Woodfield Nursery School
Sefton Street
Brierfield
Nelson
Lancashire
BB9 5BE

Dear Ms Dixon

Short inspection of Woodfield Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 8 February 2018, 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 March 2013.

You joined the school as headteacher in September 2016. Since the previous inspection, provision in the school has extended to include two-year-olds in a kindergarten class.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You are aware that addressing the recommendations of this short inspection does not predetermine the outcome of the next inspection. There continues to be other aspects of the school's work identified by leaders for improvement. Leaders should address all of these priorities successfully as part of the school's ongoing development.

Leaders are thoughtful and patient in their work to develop the school. They give a calm steer to the work of staff. Leaders understand how young children learn. They use their deep knowledge of education to increasingly challenge themselves, staff and governors. As the new headteacher, you bring fresh insight and direction to the work of the school.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have taken many successful steps to improve the quality of teaching in the school. Staff now have better links with other local schools and more helpful training. Leaders check the quality and impact of staff's work carefully. They give teachers and teaching assistants more precise and individual help to improve their skills in observing, supporting and extending children's learning. Staff confidence and their ability to teach is blossoming.

This is a school where staff and leaders are interested genuinely in what children do and say. Staff make frequent use of children's individual interests to plan exciting learning activities. Children gain from learning in classrooms and outdoor areas which are enticing and well arranged. Two-year-olds, as well as their older peers, arrive at school calm, happy and keen to learn. Parents told me that their children even want to come to school at the weekend. Staff celebrate children's comments, model making and writing very positively in attractive displays in classrooms and corridors.

Children's progress has improved rapidly since inspectors last visited the school. In the kindergarten and the Nursery, children make stronger progress across subjects. This is because of skilful teaching and staff's more precise, ambitious expectations for what children can achieve. Currently, governors understand children's overall achievement but less so their progress in individual areas of learning.

Leaders are correct that improving children's attainment in mathematics is a current area for improvement. Staff and leaders take numerous actions to improve the quality of teaching and children's learning in this subject. For example, staff identify and support quickly those children who need extra help to count. As a result, children's counting skills are much improved. You continue to take steps to improve mathematics further.

Classrooms are a calm oasis of learning. All staff, including each child's key person, support learning expertly. This helps children to improve their confidence as learners. Children, including those who speak English as an additional language, communicate happily with one another because of the skilled, sensitive support they receive. Children manage their feelings and behaviour very positively because they understand school rules. Staff help them to listen, think and act thoughtfully. This shows that leaders are maintaining an important strength of the school, as identified at the previous inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

Staff are vigilant. They have regular, open discussions with parents and carers about their children's well-being. Staff and leaders are knowledgeable about child protection because of their frequent training. Staff remain fully up to date about local and national safeguarding issues. Three trained, senior staff share the leadership role for safeguarding. This means that high-level expertise is always available on site to review any staff concerns about children's care and protection. Leaders link fully to other agencies. They know when to seek advice about possible safeguarding issues and when to chase referrals. Leaders know the local community

well and the main local risks to children and their families. Leaders check how the school responds to these challenges. They make sure the children have regular opportunities to learn about keeping themselves safe, including when they are online.

Leaders make sure that the school's safeguarding arrangements keep children, families and staff safe. You research national developments. You are already informed about proposed changes to the statutory guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education'. Governors are trained in safeguarding. They maintain an appropriate overview of the school's work. Even so, leaders continue to strengthen governors' knowledge and skills to check and challenge the school's safeguarding arrangements more thoroughly.

Inspection findings

- I saw clear evidence that the quality of teaching is improving significantly. Staff support children's language and communication skills ably. Staff demonstrate patience, genuine listening and just the right amount of new and familiar language to help children to speak. Staff seize any opportunity they can to carefully extend children's understanding of the sounds that letters make. Staff participate in children's play skilfully. They encourage and extend children's learning through their use of good questioning. Teaching assistants' and teachers' skills are improving rapidly because leaders are sharpening arrangements to review and develop the work of individual staff. Over several years, leaders have strengthened the school curriculum. Children, including two-year-olds, gain from a broad and fascinating range of activities. For example, children learn to make fires safely, and find and identify shapes in the environment, as well as learning to clear overgrown bushes from the school garden.
- From starting points well below what is typical, children make rapid gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum. Children are confident to explore, investigate and try out new experiences. Children, including those who speak English as an additional language, flourish in their skills and confidence to communicate. Leaders and staff use assessments of children's learning much more successfully than in the past to identify aspects for improvement. Leaders are undertaking extensive work to identify the achievement of different groups of children. You acknowledge that governors need to understand even more the information you give them about children's progress.
- Provision for two-year-old children in the kindergarten class is a strength of the school. Staff working with this youngest age group have a detailed understanding of child development. They make sure the classroom for two-year-olds is very attractive and comfortable. Staff set out high-quality resources thoughtfully. These capture children's attention and they are eager to learn. Staff arrange links with parents thoughtfully. Children develop their confidence and ability to communicate and play cheerfully with others because staff provide carefully planned support. This assists the youngest children to settle very happily and to love their days at school. Leaders make sure that a qualified teacher supports

colleagues' work frequently as part of the kindergarten team.

- Your prompt and precise reviews of children's learning in 2017 led you to prioritise mathematics as an area for improvement. You are giving staff more high-quality teaching resources, training and support. Staff are becoming more skilled and confident in their teaching of mathematics. They gain from their discussions with colleagues in other schools, including when recently visiting an outstanding school where the teaching of this subject is a strength. Staff seek and use as many opportunities as possible to develop children's mathematical understanding and their vocabulary. They present children with better opportunities to solve problems. Staff assist children to explain and justify their choices in tasks and games. Staff help children to understand mathematics in real-life situations, such as which sticks in the nursery garden are the longest. As a result, children enjoy mathematics and are starting to achieve more strongly in their skills and knowledge. You continue to act to strengthen staff's understanding of mathematics in the early years and to review in greater detail how to refine teaching and learning further.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- planned actions to strengthen mathematics build on the recent marked improvements in teaching and the stronger progress of children throughout the school
- governors develop a full understanding of the achievement of children in different 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 Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tim Vaughan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and both classroom teachers to discuss improvements since the previous inspection. You and I jointly observed children's learning in the kindergarten and the Nursery class. I spoke with some parents as they dropped their children off at school. I reviewed the 12 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I looked at school information about the progress made by past and current children, including a number of books showing their recent learning activities. I considered an example record of an individual child's learning. I looked at examples of children's work on display around the school.

I considered information from surveys of parents conducted by governors at the school. I met with three governors, including the chair. I discussed the school's work with a link adviser from Lancashire local authority. I considered information from leaders' reviews of the school and your plans for improvement. I checked information about the school's arrangements to protect children.