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26 April 2018

Mrs Julie Plumstead
Headteacher
Tarnerland Nursery School
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Dear Mrs Plumstead

Short inspection of Tarnerland Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 21 March 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 outstanding in December 2013.

This school continues to be outstanding.

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

You are an inspirational early years leader. You demonstrate a vision for excellence, not only in your own school but also in the wider community. You take responsibility for working with others to develop high-quality early years provision within the local authority, using this work well to further raise standards at Tarnerland. Your unrelenting quest for excellence, in the quality of provision and care that you and your team deliver, is clear to see. You have worked very well to limit the impact of unavoidable staff absences during this past year. You are drawing steadily upon the individual strengths of staff to further develop the curriculum. For example, qualified teachers now plan activities for all classes. As a result, children continue to thrive and the school continues to improve.

Leaders have successfully addressed the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. You have the trust and respect of your parental community and all parents and carers are welcomed into school to be a part of their children's learning. Almost every parent who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire would recommend the school to others. As one parent put it, 'My daughter has received consistently high levels of quality care and education, which are reflected in her excellent development and progress.'

Leaders and governors are relentlessly focused on improving outcomes for children. Provision is managed exceptionally well for the high number of children in the

school who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and disadvantaged children. You have ensured that adults are well trained, so they provide high-quality support for these children, very successfully meeting a range of diverse needs. Well-tailored individual or group interventions, including one programme especially developed in consultation with a speech and language specialist, have a positive effect on children's learning. As a result, all children make sustained progress from their individual starting points in all areas of learning, with the majority making rapid progress. This ensures that children leave the nursery well prepared for the challenges of the next stage of their education.

Staff collect detailed evidence of each child's progress in all of the areas of learning. This information is used effectively to identify individual children's needs and to build on their particular interests and abilities. The proportion of children making rapid gains from their starting points, in all areas of learning, is excellent. Nevertheless, you recognise that gaps between the outcomes for some groups of children could be even smaller. These groups, in particular, include those who have SEN and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language.

Along with staff and governors, you gather clear evidence to support your judgement that the nursery's overall effectiveness is outstanding. However, you also value the work of another nursery headteacher, in the role of external adviser, in checking that your judgements are secure and accurate. You, along with the nursery manager, have a precise understanding of the strengths and areas needing development in the school. Leaders' plans for improvement are based securely on the wealth of assessment information you collect. You work closely with the governors to identify further areas for development. For example, a main focus this year is to tackle any gender stereotyping within the nursery. This work is being supported by a working party from the governing body.

Governors have a very clear and well-informed understanding of the school, including children's progress, school finance, the future vision and risks for the school. They challenge you appropriately and regularly; they aim to tease out, understand and help shape the improvement of the school. They have a deep-seated confidence in you as the headteacher.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are of high quality and are effective. Much attention has been given to making sure staff understand current national issues about child protection and how this relates to their work with young children. Consequently, staff hold a clear understanding of the different types of risks faced by children and families. Staff know how to identify possible warning signs and how to report their concerns. Leaders act quickly when issues are brought to their attention. Staff are all vetted carefully prior to appointment and all of the statutory checks are made to ensure their suitability to work with children.

Systems for tracking the absence of children are robust. Attendance remains high.

This is a result of leaders' strong relationships with, and knowledge of, families and also because children want to come to nursery. You work closely with a variety of external agencies to ensure that families receive the help they need should problems arise. Documentation, including individual child protection case files, is kept in very good chronological order so that important information can be retrieved easily.

A strong ethos surrounding children's safety and well-being exists within the school community. Leaders ensure that all areas, including outside, are safe and appropriate for the age and needs of children using them. Effective health and safety checks are carried out regularly. You and your staff ensure that you assess the risks of the activities you provide so that children are safe from harm. This ethos of care ensures that very young children can explore and test their own limits safely, within the physically challenging outdoor area for example.

Inspection findings

- Leaders continue to ensure that children make outstanding progress. Provision for children to learn through purposeful play, in all areas of learning, both indoors and outside, is outstanding. Staff nurture children with great sensitivity, lending confidence to their learning. Children learn and play together harmoniously. For example, I saw two children working together, sustaining focus, to solve the problem of why water was not running in the right direction down a pipe, until they found a solution.
- Your ethos of caring and sharing has a profound impact on the children's social skills, behaviour and progress. Children eat lunch together, at tables, in a calm atmosphere, supported by an adult. Children are all taught to use cutlery correctly and to have good manners. They learn to wait their turn and to talk together with the adult in a calm manner. Adults' engagement with children is extremely good. They use language and conversation expertly to develop children's speaking and listening skills. Leaders and teachers have high expectations of children's behaviour. Children listen attentively, show feelings and are sensitive to others. If their behaviour falters, adults intervene quickly, managing the situation calmly and with kindness. Staff are excellent role models for the children to learn from.
- A high proportion of children that attend the nursery are eligible for the early years pupil premium. This funding is used to great effect and has significant impact, for example in the development of a specialist programme for children with delayed speech and language skills. Disadvantaged children close any attainment gaps in comparison to their peers. You continue to focus on further improving attainment, so that there are no gaps between any groups of children.
- Staff and leaders have created excellent relationships between home and school. Parents told me how much staff pay very close attention to helping children to settle at school. They welcome the advice they receive about how to extend their children's learning at home. All parents are welcomed into the school regularly to 'stay and play' and to make contributions to their children's learning journal. As a result, parents and carers, including those who speak English as an additional

language, feel well informed about their children's learning and progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the gaps in attainment between all groups of children continue to reduce.

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

Yours sincerely

Marcia Goodwin
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

In addition to nursery classes for two- and three-year-olds and also three- and four-year-olds, the school provides childcare from 8.00am to 6.00pm for children from the age of three months. This provision is registered separately with Ofsted and was not part of this inspection.

During the inspection, I met with you, the nursery manager and a senior teacher. I spoke with the chair and other representatives of the governing body. I also talked to another headteacher in the role of local authority representative. I toured the school, visiting all of the learning areas to observe teaching, to speak with children and to look at the activities available. I observed children's behaviour both indoors and outdoors around the school. I considered a range of school documentation, including assessment information, the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation documents. I took into account 28 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text responses, and met with two parents. I took into account the 16 staff responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire and the nine responses to the children's questionnaire. I checked the single central record of recruitment checks and other documentation relating to safeguarding.