

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



18 June 2018

Mrs Helen Masaun
Headteacher
Marsh Hill Nursery School
275 Marsh Hill
Erdington
Birmingham
West Midlands
B23 7HG

Dear Mrs Masaun

Short inspection of Marsh Hill Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 22 May 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, your leadership team and governors have addressed the priority for improvement identified at the previous inspection and now all staff, including supply staff, are well briefed before working with children at your school.

You have recently undergone significant building work to increase the capacity of Marsh Hill, including the development of provision for two-year-olds. This has been completed without impact on the excellent standard of education you offer your children. You described the school as an 'oasis', and parents, carers and children unanimously agree.

Partnerships with parents are extremely strong. All staff demonstrate a strong commitment to promoting the well-being of every child. This was clearly shown by the very positive responses by parents during the inspection. One parent commented, 'All three of my children have now attended this nursery and Marsh Hill have helped to bring the best out of them.' Another parent, following a transition day at the school, remarked, 'I immediately told my husband this was the nursery I wanted for my son and second best would not do!'

The characteristics of the school population have changed since the last inspection. There are now more than 20 languages represented at the school. A significant number of children speak English as an additional language, many of whom speak

little or no English when they join the school. You have arranged regular language support for these children. Staff are adept at encouraging early language development. For example, in the water play area, staff gently encouraged children to explore the activities on offer. Through adults' well-focused support, children talked about what they wanted to do and as a result were more considerate of others as they took turns using the equipment.

The proportion of children who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities has also increased. The new SEN coordinator is highly knowledgeable and effective in ensuring that children get the best start to their education. Good links with external professionals and support agencies, as well as working closely with parents, are helping these children to make the best progress they can. Staff are skilled in assessing children's different needs and abilities. They quickly identify children experiencing difficulties and provide appropriate, focused support.

You have established an impressive programme for staff development. All staff at Marsh Hill are given opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills. Many have taken this opportunity and have gone on to complete degrees in early childhood education and have achieved their qualified teacher status. As a result, staff are highly skilled and adapt quickly to the needs of children.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Safeguarding is a high priority within the school. Leaders and staff place significant importance on making sure that the nursery is a safe environment. Risk assessments are in place for activities where children might hurt themselves. However, there is still suitable challenge for the children. In the outdoor areas, where they can run, climb, slide and ride, they learn how to manage risks. Off-site visits are planned thoroughly so that potential risks to children's safety are assessed and minimised.

Staff and governors have completed all statutory training and meet together regularly to discuss and share information about the children. Leaders follow up on any concerns rigorously. The school works exceptionally well with other professionals to meet the needs of all children, particularly the most vulnerable, and ensures that parents are involved in the process.

The school is a UNICEF Rights Respecting School, and this helps to develop children's understanding of their diverse community. The school uses NSPCC materials to talk to children and parents about staying safe.

Governors take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. The governor assigned to oversee safeguarding makes regular visits to examine the school's work in this area. Leaders responsible for safeguarding work closely with external agencies to ensure that children who are of concern receive the support they need.

Inspection findings

- Children make rapid progress in all areas of their learning from starting points that are lower than typical for their age. They make particularly fast progress in developing their language, their physical skills and in their personal, social and emotional development. This is because you recognised these as areas of focus unique to this cohort of children. As a result, by the end of their time in nursery, most children reach the standards that are typical for their age. The school is very successful at ensuring that all the different groups of children it caters for achieve equally well. As a result, children are well prepared for the next stage of education.
- Disadvantaged children make the same excellent progress as their peers and achieve very well, routinely catching up quickly from lower starting points. You and your staff are acutely aware of children who are eligible for the pupil premium grant. These children are carefully monitored throughout the day to ensure that they are being challenged appropriately. You are quick to adapt teaching to meet an ever-changing cohort. However, sometimes this success is not clearly reflected in your evaluations and development plans.
- Governors are passionate about the school and the community it serves. They provide a good level of support and challenge. Governors have been instrumental in ensuring the growth and sustainability of the nursery school within the local area. They have carefully considered constraints on the school budget and planned cutbacks where necessary, in parallel with consulting and pursuing ideas to generate additional funding. Governors regularly reflect on their knowledge and skills and tailor training to ensure that they continue to contribute fully to the strategic direction of the school.
- Children's learning journals are thoughtfully added to by staff. They clearly illustrate the wide range of exciting learning experiences that the children enjoy and show evidence of children's strong progress. Practitioners ensure that targets and measures of success within plans are well thought out and regularly reviewed. They use what they know about what children can do to take children's learning forward at pace.
- You have forged excellent partnerships with other local nursery schools across Birmingham. This collaboration of nurseries has been effective in sharpening the moderation of children's learning goals and supporting the development of outstanding practice. You have also developed strong relationships with a number of local primary schools. This has helped the arrangements you make when children are ready to move to primary school to be highly effective.
- You plan a wide range of opportunities to extend the curriculum you offer the children of Marsh Hill. For example, during the inspection children experienced an interactive theatre performance based on 'The Little Red Hen'. Through this they developed skills of listening, speaking and taking turns. A group outdoors went on a bug hunt. The adult leading the activity used questioning very effectively to enhance the learning experience and develop communication and language. However, we agreed that across the setting more opportunities could be considered to encourage children's development of the early problem-solving skills of trial and improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- more opportunities are planned for problem-solving to be embedded across the curriculum
- the outstanding support the school gives children through the adaptation of its teaching and learning is reflected more clearly within its development plans.

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

Yours sincerely

Max Vlahakis
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and four members of the governing body, including the chair. I discussed the work of the school with you and the processes and procedures in place for safeguarding, including the single central record. I visited your provision for two-year-olds, and the main nursery provision for three-year-olds and four-year-olds. In both classrooms, I observed and spoke with four children and looked at their learning journals. I looked at a range of school documents, including the school's information about children's achievement and records relating to the monitoring of teaching and learning. I also reviewed the school's own evaluation of its work, together with the school's development plan. The school's own survey of parents' views was also considered, and additional information collected from parents as they dropped off their children during the school day.