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Mrs Jayne Taylor
Head of School
Hirst Wood Nursery School and Children's Centre
Clarence Road
ShIPLEY
West Yorkshire
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Dear Mrs Taylor

Short inspection of Hirst Wood Nursery School and Children's Centre

Following my visit to the school on 6 November 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 October 2014.

The school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education at Hirst Wood. Governors took the decision to federate with Saltaire Primary School and cited many examples of ways in which Hirst Wood has benefited from the skills and knowledge of the executive headteacher. Governors are passionate in their commitment to the school and have taken appropriate decisions to improve it. Together, you have created a bright, clean and vibrant learning environment, where children are encouraged to explore and learn safely. Hirst Wood is a warm, friendly school, where children are well known by staff and parents feel welcome.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to sharpen up your evaluations of the school. With the executive headteacher, you have introduced more precision into the way you monitor the quality of teaching. As a result, you have identified and addressed areas where teaching has been less than good, and you are now confident in the skills and abilities of your team. You are presenting your school improvement plan in a clear, unambiguous way so that all staff know what they need to do to improve the setting and governors can check on the actions you are taking.

You were also asked to refine the quality of your assessment of what children know and can do. You have put considerable resources into providing staff training. The executive headteacher has supported this process by facilitating regular visits by staff to your partner primary school. You have introduced frequent meetings within school to ensure that the information staff are collecting accurately represents

children's learning. Because of this very focused work, assessment procedures are fit for purpose, accurate and effective. Children enter your setting with skills and abilities broadly typical for their age, and you can show that boys and girls now make at least good progress from their starting points.

You were also asked to share records of achievement with parents to enhance the ability of parents to support their child's progress. In response, you introduced a 'focus child' system to collect more meaningful information, and you share this information with parents on a regular basis. Parents spoke highly of this system and really appreciate the termly meetings and written reports that are providing them with a concise view of the stage of development and achievements of their child. However, some of the events you are providing for parents are demanding of the school and not well attended by parents.

Safeguarding is effective

You have successfully implemented a new system for capturing your concerns about children. All staff and governors have been recently trained in basic awareness of child protection and on spotting signs of radicalisation. Many staff are trained to deliver paediatric first aid, and you have several staff who are trained to handle safeguarding concerns and to escalate concerns to the next level. You have instigated some effective routines that help to keep safeguarding uppermost in the mind of staff, for example by posting a safeguarding 'question of the week' on the staff notice board.

You have anticipated the risks involved in the use of all resources and activities in the nursery, and health care plans are being used effectively to support the safe serving of food. You have ensured that statutory welfare requirements are met.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I wanted to find out the extent to which you have maintained a good quality of education, and also the impact of your work to improve the accuracy of assessment. In addition, I wanted to check how well you are helping children to acquire early skills in reading, writing and mathematics and the impact of your choices regarding spending funding for disadvantaged children. I also wanted to understand how effective your work is to involve parents in the education of their children.
- Staff undertake regular observations of children's learning. Staff are using this information to good effect when planning future learning. Observations showed that staff use their planning fluidly and respond quickly to adapt the provision to reflect children's own interests. Staff are adept at providing resources that will interest children and enhance their learning.
- The quality of adult interactions with children is strong. I observed several adults skilfully asking questions that provoked children's thinking and helped children to sustain their concentration when interacting with resources. Relationships between all adults and children are warm and nurturing.

- You are intent on providing opportunities for children to develop across the whole curriculum, and you are determined to ensure that children leaving you are well prepared for the demands of their next school. I observed staff expertly sharing carefully selected books with children, and successfully encouraging participation in the repetition of rhymes and key phrases.
- Your staff have carefully chosen and organised resources that support the effective teaching of phonics. Staff knowledge of phonics is secure, and they have a good awareness of what children will need to learn when they transfer into the next key stage. All staff are ambitious in this area and are keen to facilitate deeper learning. In response to adult prompts, I saw most-able children forming letters accurately and using their phonics knowledge to write simple words.
- You are successfully promoting children's early mathematical skills through the deft selection of resources, and through proficient adult questioning that exploits every opportunity to count one-to-one in order to establish ordinal and cardinal numbers and to match shapes, for example.
- You and your staff work hard to meet the needs of every individual, and you effectively meet the needs of children who need extra help to overcome barriers to learning. For example, you have used the early years pupil premium to employ an external dance specialist. This intervention has proved very successful in helping more vulnerable children to develop their confidence and gross motor skills.
- Staff are acutely aware of and are successfully providing for those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. You can show that this group of children is making appropriate progress. Parents spoke very positively about the work of staff to support them in accessing support from other agencies, and also about the willingness of staff to provide additional support within school.
- You have recently overhauled the way you plan and provide for learning outdoors. You have created a stimulating and safe outdoor environment, but planning for outdoor learning lacks precision, so that opportunities to really extend and challenge children across all areas of learning are missing.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- outdoor activity is planned with precision, with a clear focus on what children will learn
- they consult with parents and act on the findings to establish the most effective ways of supporting parents in contributing to their child's 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 Bradford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Butcher
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, I was able to discuss the work of the school with you and the executive headteacher. We visited classrooms together to observe teaching and learning. I was able to look at the children's work in their records of achievement and spoke to children throughout the day. I shared lunch with the children. Discussions with the school improvement partner and six members of the governing body helped to provide me with additional information. School documentation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school's website were also considered. Eight staff responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire. I met with 12 parents to talk about the school. I also took into account the views of parents through the school's own questionnaire and via a letter sent into school on the day of the inspection. There were too few responses on the online questionnaire, Parent View, to register.