

14 December 2018

Mr Brian Lee
Executive Headteacher
Ham Drive Nursery School and Day Care
Ham Drive
Ham
Plymouth
Devon
PL2 2NJ

Dear Mr Lee

Short inspection of Ham Drive Nursery School and Day Care

Following my visit to the school on 4 December 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 May 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You provide strong strategic leadership and have an accurate understanding of the strengths at the setting, along with areas that require further work. Consequently, your self-evaluation of the school and action plans for improvement are focused on the right aspects.

The many parents spoken to during the inspection value the specific and caring support that you and your staff provide. Staff are successful in fostering strong relationships with families and children. Consequently, children settle quickly and enjoy attending. Children particularly appreciate the large and well-developed outside space, which provides a safe haven for them to develop their skills and knowledge. Children are also confident in exploring the learning environment inside. They select activities with independence and play alongside others cooperatively. The large and well-equipped role-play area enables children to become quickly absorbed in imaginative play.

At the last inspection you were asked to ensure that leaders and governors evaluated the effectiveness of the provision by making better use of data and information about children's achievement. This aspect of the school's work is effective. You were also asked to develop the use of mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance learning. Children enjoy a broad range of equipment. For example, remote-controlled equipment enables them to develop their positional language. However, mathematics is still in development.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff training is up to date. The school's recruitment checks are in line with national requirements to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children. Staff provide strong care and support for children and their families. Staff talk confidently about how to refer concerns should they consider a child to be at risk.

Leaders work in close partnership with external agencies to ensure that children's risk of harm is minimised. They are swift to follow up concerns and ensure that children get the ongoing support they need. However, some aspects of the school's safeguarding record-keeping require strengthening.

Leaders and governors have ensured that all welfare checks are in place and statutory safeguarding requirements met.

Inspection findings

- My first key line of enquiry examined how well leaders and governors ensure that the setting continues to improve and prepares children for their onward schooling. When children arrive into Nursery, staff use all the information they have to ensure that transition is successful. Strategic leadership systems in the school are strong. The way that leaders check children's progress over time is precise and enables governors to hold leaders to account for the progress that children make in every aspect of learning. Comprehensive professional discussions with key workers ensure that all staff have a strong understanding of children's knowledge and understanding. Children who have skills and knowledge lower than their age are supported precisely to catch up. As a result, the difference between boys' and girls' attainment diminishes steadily across their time in Nursery.
- Leaders provide timely training so that staff keep up to date with new initiatives. However, leaders' practical support and their checks on teaching are not always as precise as they could be. Some adults do not receive sufficient practical advice about how to improve their interactions and questioning with children. However, on occasions, advice that is provided is not implemented by staff well enough and leaders do not challenge this or follow it up swiftly. So, the relative weaknesses in teaching that have been previously identified continue. This is a priority for improvement.
- I also examined how leaders, teachers and key workers use their assessments of what children already know, to plan work that meets their needs. Key workers conduct very regular and detailed assessments of children's achievements. Assessments are recorded in children's learning journals and staff records. Children enjoy reviewing their learning journals and they show pride in the progress they are making. Staff use their detailed records to plan the curriculum on offer. Staff consider children's interests and use good-quality stories and texts to support their planning. Documented assessments are more focused on personal, social and emotional development and expressive arts, designing and making, than on some other aspects of learning, such as early reading, speaking

and developing language in mathematics. Leaders report that children have lower attainment in these aspects of learning.

- Another aspect I looked at was the use of additional funding for disadvantaged children and the support provided for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Additional funding for disadvantaged children is used successfully to broaden children's experiences in the setting. For example, additional musical provision strengthens the school's curriculum offer. The leadership of SEND is strong. Leaders work closely with external agencies to ensure that children's academic, therapeutic and social and emotional development is good. Consequently, children are well cared for in Nursery and their individual needs are met well.
- Finally, I looked at the extent to which teaching is ensuring that children develop their speaking and early literacy skills. Senior and middle leaders oversee the planning of the curriculum. There are opportunities to develop early reading and phonics and for developing children's fine motor skills. However, even more could be done to provide planned opportunities to help more children gain skills and knowledge at or above their age.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- senior and middle leaders provide staff with practical and timely advice, so that adults know how to improve their teaching so that more children make strong developmental gains in their speaking, early writing, physical development and language development in number
- staff improve the learning environment so that it supports an ambitious literacy curriculum and allows children to develop their core strength and fine-motor skills consistently well
- the teaching of early reading and phonics enables children to experiment regularly with sounds and words, discriminate speech sounds in words and orally blend and segment phonemes.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Carrington
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I spoke with you, your assistant headteacher, the leader of special educational needs and the chair of governors. I also met with a

representative from the local authority early years team. I met with Nursery staff at the beginning of the school day.

We observed children's learning and scrutinised their work. I reviewed assessment information and children's learning journeys from all teaching groups.

I considered a range of documentary evidence, including: development plans; external reports of the school's effectiveness; school performance information; monitoring records; governing body minutes; and safeguarding documentation.

In addition, I talked to parents to gather their views at the beginning of the school day and during a parent open morning. I took account of two responses to the Parent View online survey and the free-text messaging service.