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Mrs Ruth Campbell
Headteacher
Chichester Nursery School
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Dear Mrs Campbell

Short inspection of Chichester Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 11 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 February 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Previously as deputy headteacher and, more recently, as headteacher, you have focused on maintaining and improving provision. Since September, you and the new deputy headteacher have sustained staff and governor confidence during the leadership transition, working closely with colleagues and maintaining strong communication. Consequently, all at the school share your aspirations and determination to provide the best possible learning experience for children.

Each teacher leads an area of the curriculum. In their leadership roles, teachers check planning, adults' questioning and children's progress in their specific areas. This distribution of responsibility and sharp focus on each area have improved children's learning and achievement. As a result, children do well across the curriculum.

Senior leaders and governors know the school well and accurately identify the strengths and areas for improvement. However, assessment information and documentation are not quite as precise as they could be in order to build further on the school's many current strengths.

Parents and carers appreciate the high levels of care provided by all staff. They say that the key-worker system works well for communication but that they can speak to anyone if they need to raise a concern, because staff know all the children so well. Parents say that their children really enjoy coming to school. One commented:

'My child loves attending nursery. He even asks on the weekend if he can go to nursery.'

The many strengths that were identified at the previous inspection have been maintained. Leaders continue to be ambitious for what children can achieve, staff skilfully plan children's learning and development, children behave well and the excellent relationships between staff and children promote consideration and respect for others.

At the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve provision for boys and the most able children, and increase opportunities for children to understand the world. Robust action has been taken to tackle these areas. Attainment and progress for boys are now as strong as for girls, and children achieve as well in understanding the world as they do in the other areas of learning. Challenging activities are provided for the most able children, but progress information does not always enable leaders to be clear about whether children make strong progress.

The percentage of children who achieve a good level of development is much higher than the national figure. Attainment for boys and girls is similarly high and learning across each of the areas is fairly consistent.

Safeguarding is effective.

Governors have a strong understanding of safeguarding and check that school staff and leaders do everything required to keep children safe. All appropriate checks on staff are carried out and recording of these is managed carefully.

Timely and relevant training ensures that staff understand what to do if they have a concern. Staff record detailed and relevant information, and this is followed up very well by designated safeguarding staff, who speak to parents and outside agencies whenever necessary. Risk assessments are detailed and useful so that risks are reduced and managed well.

Inspection findings

- In order to evaluate the school's effectiveness, we selected some key areas to explore in detail. These included safeguarding, how well the curriculum meets the needs of all children, and how leaders ensure that children make good or better progress, particularly the most able.
- The curriculum meets the needs of children very well. The 'in the moment' approach to planning ensures that children's interests are the main driver in children's learning. The indoor and outdoor organisation is carefully planned. The areas of learning are located in separate spaces both in and outside. However, wherever children choose to learn, the resources in each of the locations promote learning across each of the seven learning areas. Consequently, children who frequently focus on one area, for example expressive art, still have opportunities to develop their skills in other areas, such as communication and language or physical development.

- Leaders and teachers provide a range of exciting and motivating learning opportunities, through which children develop strong problem-solving skills and resilience. An example of this is woodwork, which is carefully risk assessed and supervised. I observed a number of children of differing ages and abilities independently use nails, hammers and saws, demonstrating their confidence and determination.
- Daily assessment of children's learning enables teachers to identify what children have learned and their next steps. Where children are making less progress in an area of learning, teachers take immediate action to plan additional opportunities and provide further support. When teachers, in their leadership roles, identify that less progress is being made across an area of learning, they deliver useful training to all staff. They monitor the teaching and learning to ensure that provision is improved and that progress in the area is in line with other areas. As a result, children learn skills across the range of learning areas and there is strong consistency.
- Leaders and teachers record and collate assessment information and carry out some analysis to identify areas for improvement. However, this information is not currently presented in a way that enables leaders and governors to check children's progress precisely. Consequently, some opportunities are missed to identify areas where children could make more progress. Leaders have sensible plans in place to refine how information is presented, to refine their work further.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- their current development of how progress information is presented enables them to identify exactly how well children are doing and use that information to identify specific areas where children could do even better
- documentation to support school improvement is precise and helps leaders to drive improvements.

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

Yours sincerely

Louise Adams
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I looked at provision for three- to five-year-olds only. I met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, teachers, support staff, governors and a representative from the local authority. I observed the breakfast club and teaching and learning both inside and outside. I reviewed teachers' planning and information about children's progress and attainment. I also reviewed other documentation linked to safeguarding, governance and school improvement. I spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day and took account of the 11 responses to Parent View.