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Mrs Patricia Lord
Headteacher
Otley Street Community Nursery School
Otley Street
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Dear Mrs Lord

Short inspection of Otley Street Community Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 12 March 2019, 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 nursery was judged to be outstanding in March 2015.

This school continues to be outstanding.

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

In response to the recommendation from the previous inspection, you extended children's learning even further, particularly in the use of technology. Your leadership skills are well respected by all staff. They feel highly valued, and this shines through in their collegiate approach to working. Your regular observations of teaching practice accurately identify strengths and areas for improvement. Where appropriate, this helps you to identify further training. This is welcomed by staff, so that they can continuously improve their teaching skills. However, staff do not have much opportunity to observe each other to enable them to reflect on their own and others' teaching. Staff have excellent access to training courses and consistently share any learning across the team, including with part-time and supervisory staff.

Leaders are very open to any ideas for improvement and have swiftly acted upon the recommendations from the external review that was undertaken by fellow headteachers. You have reciprocated by reviewing early years teaching in their settings, thereby sharing your good practice more widely. Leaders undertake a wide consultation when developing their plans for the future. This includes talking with staff, governors, children and their parents. As well as analysing how well children progress, this means leaders are secure in their judgement of how well the nursery is responding to the needs of children and their families. They ensure that their actions are effectively focused on addressing these needs.

Partnership with parents is very strong. The school ensures that all parents contribute to the continuous assessment of their child's learning, with evidence from home to inform and support the accuracy of staff judgements.

The governing body fulfils its role well. Governors are passionate about the nursery. They have excellent knowledge of how well the nursery is performing through a wide range of evidence. This includes evidence from data and observations and through consultations with parents. This means that they can effectively support and challenge you and the rest of the staff.

Staff are highly skilled. Their exceptionally informative and detailed observations clearly identify the focus for learning for each individual child. This means that the children's existing knowledge is continuously built on and extended. Your research-based approach to learning shows through in the questions children have posed for themselves. Staff follow the interests of the child. They seize opportunities to challenge children. For instance, I observed a child wanting to fill a squeeze bottle with water in order to 'write' on the wall. Staff carefully questioned the child about how this could be successfully completed. They only intervened to help in tilting the water container to keep it safely balanced. They skilfully stretch the most able children to tell their own versions of stories or, for example, in researching designs for a castle, setting the problem of how to make a working drawbridge.

Support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is excellent. Support staff know precisely when to intervene and when to stand back and observe. For example, as a child was playing with some crates, a member of staff stepped in to suggest that they used a plank to bridge a gap. The child thought about this, and after a brief discussion, effectively modelled by the member of staff, decided that they would take a big step instead. In another instance, a child was playing with an umbrella, reinforcing their own learning from the previous session about how an umbrella works. The member of staff working with the child knew to stand back and observe.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. Children know the routines to follow and they learn these very quickly. For example, I observed children who have only recently joined the nursery lining up, ready to move to another area of the building, without being reminded. They know to listen to adults and each other. I saw how well they work together during discussions with each other about what they have been doing during the morning. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and the children respond extremely well to this. They willingly and proudly take on responsibilities, for example being the 'light saver' or 'water saver' for the day, reminding others and checking that lights are switched off and taps are not left running.

Children are beginning to develop an understanding of other cultures, often through the everyday resources around them. For example, they look at books about boats, showing how shops may be floating in Thailand, or books that show that mums may come from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Children understand how to stay safe, for example knowing what the 'no entry' notices outdoors mean and why they are there. On the day of the inspection, it was extremely wet, so some equipment had

become slippery and was closed off.

Most children enter the nursery with skills and knowledge typical for their age and stage of development. The effective teaching and learning they receive during their time in the nursery mean that the vast majority leave with skills and knowledge above or well above those typically expected for their age. You ensure that staff assessments are accurate. You confirm this by comparing your judgments with what the main feeder school thinks about children's capabilities as they enter mainstream schooling. This shows that children leave exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Safeguarding is effective.

The safeguarding policy is reviewed annually and is available on the website. You ensure that staff are always up to date in their knowledge and training. You regularly present them with scenarios to discuss. This means that, although there are no current issues, staff are continually aware so that children's safeguarding is secure. Governors ensure that all paperwork and procedures meet requirements through regular checking and monitoring.

Inspection findings

- The recommendation from the previous inspection was fully discussed by leaders, managers and staff. A parent survey was undertaken effectively to identify how children were exposed to technology at home. As a result, the school took a clear decision to enhance this through using information technology for research and learning. For example, a display of children's work described what they had found out about what the heart looks like. This learning had come from experiencing technology in a wider sense, for example through listening to their heartbeat using a stethoscope. Children are now given opportunities to design programs to control programmable toys. They are encouraged to record their work using cameras. Children themselves have identified that they would like to see more real tools in the outdoor area, and staff are currently responding by developing a woodworking area and bringing in real building materials.
- Staff keep detailed records of any actions taken when any concerns are identified about any children. These records show that staff take swift action and seek advice and guidance from relevant professionals, while always keeping parents well informed. This means they protect children they are concerned about. Parents I spoke with said how safe they and their children felt in the nursery.
- Most of the children who enter the nursery with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age have SEND. The support for these children and their parents is of the highest quality. Each child's daily diary ensures that their parents can sustain this learning at home. Parents of children with SEND said how well the school has supported them in getting their children diagnosed, as well as guiding them through the process to secure this. All these children receive appropriate levels of support and are progressing well towards their individual targets. Parents are secure in knowing that support will continue as they move to

their next school.

- Parents who expressed a view were exceptionally positive about how they can become involved in their child's learning. The workshops you run are very informative and help parents to understand child development and progress better. The focus meetings are highly valued, as are the weekly and termly newsletters. Parents spoke of how, by receiving good notice of events, they can manage their worktime and attend. They also spoke of their appreciation of how flexible you and the staff are in being available to meet with them. You make yourselves available before sessions start or in the early evening, working around their availability. Staff identified how they share any learning from their training, for example about how the different rates of bone growth can impact on when boys and girls take up writing. Parents said that this had given them a great insight into the development of writing skills.
- The highly accessible website holds excellent information for parents. It is regularly reviewed by the governing body, both in terms of content and to ensure that it meets requirements. It is currently being updated with policies as new versions become accepted by the full governing body.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to develop staff skills in observing each other in order to enhance the quality of teaching and learning outcomes.

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

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Dorrity
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held a variety of meetings with you and your staff. I observed several sessions with you in the nursery. I considered a range of evidence, including the school improvement plan and leaders' self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I also reviewed other documentation. I met with three members of the governing body and spoke with a representative of the local authority. I considered the 44 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and I spoke with 10 parents. I also spoke with three members of staff.