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David Aldworth
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Aldworth

Short inspection of Shenley Fields Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 26 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 school was judged to be outstanding in November 2014.

This school continues to be outstanding.

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

You, your head of school and senior leaders are completely dedicated to ensuring that the school continues to build upon previous best performance. You all work tirelessly to provide high-quality care and early education for the children in your care. All children make excellent progress from their individual starting points and are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps in learning.

The very tight assessment system that has been introduced enables practitioners to provide bespoke support for every child. Parents know exactly what they need to do to help their children learn, because of the high-quality workshops that are provided on the teaching of early reading and mathematics.

The enabling environment for learning is receiving international recognition and you have been asked to share this good practice with colleagues in Barcelona and Frankfurt.

Staff are proud to work at the Nursery, because, through high-quality coaching and training, you have helped them improve their practice. All practitioners at the school see their work as a vocation, not a job. Parents and carers say that you and your staff cannot do enough to help their children.

The school improvement plan rightly identifies speech and communication as a focus for the school's work. Practitioners work very closely with speech and language therapists and incorporate their guidance into focused activities. However, there are some missed opportunities for the most able children to deepen their learning in early reading due to the lack of visual prompts.

The quality of teaching is very strong and results in the excellent progress that all groups of children make. Staff see every minute as a potential learning opportunity and make the very best use of time to enhance the children's potential further. In the outdoor area, led by the practitioner, children were acting out and repeating the refrains of the story 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt'.

Leaders regularly review the quality of provision. The school's self-evaluation is both precise and backed up with clear evidence. The views of parents are regularly sought. In addition, excellent links with other professionals have been made, including through the school's membership of the Birmingham Federation of Maintained Nursery Schools. This enables best practice to be shared. This was the area for improvement from the previous inspection, which you have addressed.

In addition, you and your staff have recently undertaken training to ensure that the well-being of staff is as important as that of the children in your care.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of keeping children safe in the school. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There are five designated safeguarding leads in the Nursery, who work closely with families. Parents have a good understanding of the systems and processes and say that they trust leaders to do whatever is best for their children. Records relating to child protection are detailed, well organised and securely stored. Training for staff and governors is regular, with a weekly focus on issues pertaining to aspects of safeguarding.

'Prevent' duty training and safer recruitment training have been undertaken. As a result, all adults understand their safeguarding responsibilities well. They readily report any concerns they have, secure in the knowledge that that these will be dealt with speedily.

Senior leaders involve outside agencies for support when needed and have no fear in sharing concerns with parents. Staff consistently update and implement a robust range of policies to promote children's safety and well-being.

Regular fire drills and risk assessments are undertaken, resulting in staff being able to identify any potential risks to children.

The excellent work on introducing children to being global citizens has gained the school the Unicef 'Rights Respecting Schools' award. Children are very aware that everyone has the right to be heard, and this has contributed to creating a culture of

safety across the Nursery.

Inspection findings

- When looking at the provision for two-year-olds, we discussed the progress that all groups of children make from their starting points. Observations of children who have been with you for over four terms show that they make excellent gains in all areas of learning, exceeding the expectations for their age. This is largely due to the very strong emphasis that practitioners place on ensuring that children feel safe, modelling language for them and providing them with a wide range of excellent activities to stimulate their senses. We saw children making scented dough using herbs, filling containers with glittery sand and planting colourful pansies outdoors.
- Practitioners plan from children's interest levels, and we saw children absorbed in playing with dinosaurs and painting on easels using a variety of textured paint. Children's interest levels are considered, and staff squeeze every opportunity to interact with the children, so that they can go over what they have learned using 'floor books'. These are revisited time and time again, giving children time to practise the new language that they have acquired during the day. This practice has a very positive impact on remembering learning.
- Particular care has been taken to ensure that all the resources are age appropriate. For example, tables and chairs are of the correct height for children, beanbags are available for quiet reading time and a host of excellent books fill the library.
- The warm and trusting relationships between staff, parents and children result in children being naturally curious and having a thirst for learning, because they know that they will be supported. Staff keep very detailed observations of children's learning, their interest levels and their performance in relation to developmental stages. This information is regularly shared with parents, who say that their children come on in 'leaps and bounds'.
- In our observations of older children, we found them to be deeply engrossed in learning. In the outdoor area, they were making mud pies to be sold in the café. Children were planting seeds and, in the forest school, they were making a fence to ensure that everyone felt safe. In teacher-led activities they were making models with clay and painting flowers with differently textured paint. Their observational skills were remarkable as the teacher guided them to look closely at the different shades of yellow in a daffodil.
- In a lesson seen with the most able children, they were answering questions about the days of the week and identifying numbers up to 10. There were some relative weaknesses, reflecting some children's typical experiences. Some children did not make the progress they were capable of, because they could not see the names of the days. This meant they could not practise early reading skills.
- As executive headteacher, you are very proactive in ensuring that you have excellent relationships with all the leaders of the other 11 nurseries in the newly formed federation. This enables you to use resources innovatively and share best practice, enabling staff to get a wider perspective as a result of being involved in

other settings.

- You and the head of school are doing all that you can to ensure that parents and children have access to the help that they need. Your reputation for inclusion is well known in the community.
- Governors support the Nursery well. They fulfil their roles as critical friends and hold staff to account for the progress of all groups of children. They ensure that money is spent wisely, by checking the impact that resources have on the learning of different groups of children.
- Excellent systems are in place to ensure that the children make outstanding progress in learning. Practitioners plan daily to ensure that children's needs are met and share their meticulous and effective observations with each other. This ensures that everyone is clear about what children need to learn next. You and the head of school rigorously monitor the practice of all practitioners. Any pointers for development are turned into whole-school training, so that staff can learn from one another.
- The funding allocated for disadvantaged children has been spent wisely, for example, by prioritising early help for developing language. This has ensured that these children make excellent progress. Staff know the barriers to learning these children may face and ensure that parents are encouraged to read to their children. Children are delighted with the wide range of books that are available and enjoy sharing them with each other.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all staff help the most able children deepen their learning in early reading.

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

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the head of school and the chair of governors. I met with five parents and discussed the work of the school and the processes and systems in place for safeguarding. Together with school leaders, I observed teaching in key groups and looked at the work in children's books, displays and floor books. I looked at a range of school documentation, including the school's own information about children's achievement. I reviewed the school's

evaluation of its work and reports from external reviews. I took account of the 24 responses to Ofsted's on-line questionnaire Parent View, including the 23 free-text responses from parents during the inspection. I also analysed the 22 responses from staff to the Ofsted online questionnaire.