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Mr Peter Catling
Woodlands Park Nursery School and Children's Centre
Woodlands Park Road
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Dear Mr Catling

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 3 February 2010 and for the information which you provided during my visit. Please thank the governors and parents who made time to meet and talk with me.

As a result of the inspection on 16–17 September 2009, the school was asked to:

- ensure that statutory requirements are met for recording and maintaining information from staff vetting procedures
- improve the consistency of provision by sharing existing good practice in relation to adult engagement in children's play, observation, and assessment, and planning
- strengthen self-evaluation at all levels of leadership and management through a more in-depth analysis of available data, in relation to setting targets for individuals and groups of children, and evaluating the impact of extended services on outcomes for children in the Nursery.

The key inspection judgment that led to a notice to improve was related to safeguarding, judged to be inadequate. Other key judgments, relating to children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning, to aspects of personal development, and to the quality of teaching and the curriculum, were at least good. This monitoring visit considered not only the progress made in urgently addressing the safeguarding issue, but also the progress made in addressing the other areas given for improvement.

There have been no significant changes in the context of the school since the last inspection.



Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising children's achievement.

Following the last inspection, the school immediately worked with the local authority to create a fully up-to-date, single central record of the checks made on staff and volunteers working at the school. It also wrote to parents and held meetings to reassure them that these checks had nevertheless been made. A meeting with a group of parents during my visit confirmed their confidence in the school and its safeguarding arrangements.

The school has introduced new procedures for assessing and recording children's progress throughout the Nursery. This has heightened staff's awareness of children's progress in the different areas of learning, and where planning needs to be modified for both groups of pupils and individual pupils. Key workers keep detailed ongoing records of the group of children assigned to them. These groups, in turn, are closely observed by all staff. Weekly meetings of all staff now assess the progress made by each group and planning is adapted accordingly to meet the next steps in children's learning. Parents also contribute to planning by providing regular information about what their children are doing at home and about their particular interests. Staff have received further training on talking with children when engaging in their play and activities. A session observed during this visit showed that all adults were fully involved, particularly in helping to promote and develop children's vocabulary, language and counting skills, and enjoyment of learning. This greater consistency of provision and sharing of good practice is helping to raise achievement, reflected in the good progress now being made by boys who are new to speaking English in both their language and counting skills.

Through their closer analysis of data on children's progress, leaders are now well placed to look further ahead and to set targets for individuals and groups of children. Case studies presented on children who have attended the Children's Centre show that they have benefitted in the Nursery from the extended services offered, particularly in the areas of social development and language acquisition. Assessments on children starting in the Nursery are now enabling leaders to consider how the range of extended services offered could be of further benefit to children and the progress they make.

Despite the effective support of the local authority regarding the safeguarding issue, a statement of action has only recently been supplied. A support plan was supplied during the visit which is judged to be appropriate and fit for purpose.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely
Peter Thrussell
Additional inspector

