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24 November 2010

Ms Hartill
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Hartill

Ofsted 2010–11 survey inspection programme: early learning

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and children during my visit on 10 November 2010 to evaluate the provision and outcomes for children in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff; scrutiny of relevant documentation, including assessments of children's learning; and observation of sessions in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The effectiveness of meeting the children's communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional learning and development needs is outstanding.

Achievement

- Children's attainment at the end of the Reception year has improved over the last four years. The improvement has been most marked in early reading and writing skills. Personal, social and emotional development has been above average consistently.
- In 2010, attainment was above average in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy. These standards represented outstanding progress for the children, many of

whom started Nursery with a lot less ability than most children of their age.

- Children enjoy learning greatly through the imaginative and appealing activities that the staff organise for them. Children gain in confidence in the supportive atmosphere of the Early Years Foundation Stage unit and play purposefully. They have excellent relationships with the staff. They work and play together harmoniously and are very well-behaved.

Quality of provision

- Staff have a very good understanding of the requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage and of how young children learn most effectively. They provide a very rich diet of learning activities that is closely matched to all children's learning needs, rooted in children's interests, and adapted promptly should their interest wane.
- A good range of learning activities is provided outdoors, despite the limitations of the school site. These are supplemented thoughtfully with outdoor provision off-site. The school has very recently extended the outdoor facilities, providing a second canopied area which can be used in inclement weather. It plans to develop the use of this area.
- A great strength is the way in which early reading and writing are incorporated into practical activities. This helps to ensure that all children progress in these skills as, for example, those who are loathe to sit for extended periods write on sticky notes or clipboards as part of their play.
- Direct teaching, for example of phonics, is highly effective because staff provide practical activities that help to reinforce new learning in a variety of ways.
- Findings from thorough assessment of children's progress on a daily and weekly basis determine future planning.
- The school has an outstanding partnership with parents and carers which enables them to make a strong contribution to their children's progress in learning and promotes children's well-being.

Leadership and management

- Highly effective leadership and management are evident in the improvement in children's attainment and progress; the quality, coherence and consistency of the provision; and the high aspirations for children's achievement.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is at the forefront of whole-school development and staff have led in-house training about a practical curriculum based on children's interests.
- Plans for developing the Early Years Foundation Stage cover relevant priorities and are integrated effectively into whole-school improvement planning.

- The use of assessment at a strategic level is under review. The school recognises the need to adopt streamlined procedures for tracking children's progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage and using analysis of data to underpin long-term planning of the curriculum.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- strengthening the use of assessment data by:
 - developing more streamlined systems for tracking children's progress from entering Nursery to the end of Reception, in all aspects of personal social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy
 - using assessment data more strategically to underpin adjustments to the curriculum
- developing the use of the recently extended outdoor area.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop the Early Years Foundation Stage in the school.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Pat Kime
Her Majesty's Inspector