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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Ms Christina Vecchio
Headteacher
Cippenham Nursery School
St Andrew's Way
Cippenham
Slough
Berkshire
SL1 5NL

Dear Ms Vecchio

Short inspection of Cippenham Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 9 October 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 November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Leaders at Cippenham Nursery School have built on the rich learning environment identified in the previous report to provide children with an exceptionally well-structured curriculum. Consequently, children make rapid progress in the development of key skills, knowledge and understanding. Leaders have also developed very skilfully the high-quality pastoral support identified at the last inspection to ensure that children have positive attitudes towards learning through play. As a result, children have an infectious curiosity about the world around them and are kind, resilient and sociable. Through your strong leadership, staff share your tenacious focus on developing children's learning and their well-being. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the high-quality care and education that you provide for their children. This was clear in the numerous responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, describing the 'amazing progress' that children make and the 'nurturing and caring staff'. One parent's comment that the nursery school provides a 'fantastic foundation to my child's learning' was typical of many.

In collaboration with the governing body, leadership has improved the quality of education and pastoral support significantly. Drawing pertinently on evidence-based research, you have embedded highly effective teaching and learning approaches to ensure that children feel confident and secure in learning about new concepts and acquiring new language. Consequently, staff feel very well supported and are positive about the developments at the nursery school since the last inspection.

Governance is strong at Cippenham Nursery School. The governing body knows the nursery school very well. Governors bring appropriate expertise to their roles, enabling them to support and challenge in equal measure. Through frequent visits to the nursery school, governors gather a breadth of information to inform their questioning and understanding of key priorities.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. Children are kind and empathetic towards each other. They understand the importance of taking turns and sharing toys and books. Children also listen to instructions very well. One parent's view, that the children 'thrive' at the nursery school, was echoed by many others. Throughout the curriculum, children gain a strong understanding of different cultural celebrations, such as Christmas, Diwali and Eid.

You correctly judge children's personal, social and emotional development to be a strength of the nursery school. Children told me how much they enjoyed coming to the nursery school because they liked the breadth of activities and loved their teachers and friends. You have embedded evidence-based research about fostering young children's attachment to adults and their peers throughout the curriculum. Children develop high levels of confidence and resilience and are able to articulate their feelings very well.

You and your leadership team take effective action where you consider that improvement is needed. For example, the previous inspection report noted that children did not develop their mathematical knowledge as well as they developed their knowledge in other areas of the curriculum. You and your staff have successfully established well-structured indoor and outdoor activities to strengthen children's understanding of number and measurement. As a result, children make rapid progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, are vigilant about the importance of checking safeguarding arrangements in school. The single central record is well maintained and kept secure. It is compliant with statutory requirements, including checks on adults who work at the school.

All parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children are safe, well cared for and happy in their learning.

Inspection evidence demonstrates that leaders and staff are tenacious in their work to safeguard children. Safeguarding leaders ensure that children receive timely and appropriate support when required.

Inspection findings

- This inspection's first line of enquiry focused on how well leaders ensure that the children who attend the nursery school for the full five terms make as much progress as those that start later. This was an area for improvement from the last inspection. Leaders have worked very hard to ensure that these children make at least the same level of progress as other children. Through careful restructuring of the curriculum, leaders have ensured that children have developed their skills, knowledge and understanding very well through having access to small groups led by key workers. For example, I observed children listening attentively and responding with sophisticated understanding to stories narrated by their key worker. Key workers used a range of resources, such as puppets and masks, to engage and enthuse children to help them develop empathetic responses to the stories.
- The children who attend the nursery school for thirty hours have also developed a very strong understanding of how to use language effectively in different situations. For example, at lunch, lunchtime staff are very skilful at developing children's use of talk through activities and discussion. Consequently, the children make rapid progress in all areas of the curriculum.
- My second key line of enquiry was about the ways in which teaching and learning meet the needs of all children, particularly in mathematics. The previous inspection identified that, sometimes, teachers missed opportunities to measure children's mathematical skills. The curriculum is very well constructed to develop and extend children's mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding. For example, children have many opportunities to practise their number skills, such as counting steps in the outside area and counting animals and food in storybooks such as 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. Staff monitor and measure children's mathematical development very closely through targeted questions and daily evaluations.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very strong. Leaders and staff plan collaboratively to ensure that play-based activities, alongside focused teaching sessions, meet the needs of all children. Staff receive high-quality training regarding language acquisition and development. Consequently, staff use targeted questions to extend children's talk about the world around them. Most children use language very well to articulate their understanding. For example, I observed children discussing the importance of using mobile telephones to call the police to catch 'bad pirates' in a pretend office created by staff.
- As a consequence of training about how children form attachments to adults and other children, leaders and staff revised the ways in which children form social bonds. Staff focus very closely on extending children's language acquisition through close, nurturing relationships, resulting in children making strong progress in their language development. Staff also adapt their use of teaching to meet the needs of children who speak English as an additional language. Staff

restrict their use of language to one or two word utterances to support children's acquisition of spoken English. Consequently, these children learn English rapidly.

- Daily oral storytelling is embedded in the curriculum, enabling children to hear high-quality language and to engage in the storytelling. For example, I observed children retelling the story of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' with great enthusiasm and articulacy. Although the teaching and learning of language is strong across the curriculum, the systematic teaching of vocabulary is not completely embedded in all areas of the curriculum.
- Children who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged children, make rapid progress across the curriculum. Through well-structured activities, such as mark-making, painting and cycling, children engage very well with learning and make strong progress. Staff adapt their teaching very well to ensure that the needs of all children are met.
- My final line of enquiry focused on how well the children are taught to keep safe, both physically and emotionally. Through the curriculum, children learn about the importance of kindness and support for others. For example, children explained emotively to me the sad plight of 'baby bear' in the story 'Goldilocks and The Three Bears'. Through careful adult guidance, children learn how to navigate social and personal relationships with success. Consequently, children are very well prepared for the Reception class.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching of vocabulary is further embedded throughout the curriculum, so that children make accelerated progress in their acquisition and development of language.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Aykin
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I had meetings with you, other senior leaders, and middle leaders. I also met with three governors and representatives from the local authority. I spoke with children informally in the indoor and outdoor areas. I visited a range of activities to look at children's learning across the curriculum and carried out a separate scrutiny of children's learning journals.

Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, along with the record of recruitment checks carried out on all adults working at the school. A range of documentation was looked at, including the school's self-evaluation; improvement plans; information relating to pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour; the minutes of governors' meetings; and curriculum plans. I considered the views of the 21 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text comments. I also considered the views of the 16 members of staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey.