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Mrs Kathryn Firth & Mrs Claire Curtis
Interim co-headteachers
Childhaven Community Nursery School
13 Belgrave Crescent
Scarborough
North Yorkshire
YO11 1UB

Dear Mrs Firth and Mrs Curtis

Short inspection of Childhaven Community 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 nursery was judged to be outstanding in January 2015.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You acted effectively in response to the recommendation from the previous inspection to extend children's learning even further, particularly using technology.

Since your appointment as interim co-headteachers, you have shown that you both know the school, families, staff and children extremely well. Following a turbulent year, you swiftly identified that a priority was to bring the staff together and improve their motivation. You have effectively succeeded in this by developing a whole staff project, seeking to improve children's learning and outcomes through a curiosity approach. Staff I spoke with said how they feel completely included in all your decisions, and now feel fully part of the nursery and are excited to come to work each day. This enthusiasm was seen throughout the inspection activities and clearly rubs off on the attitudes of children towards their learning. Staff I spoke with talk of the respect you show to them. They say how the broad range of development opportunities they now access is improving their confidence and practice even further. They could not praise the leadership team more highly. You have clearly started your interim co-headship with a bang! In reviewing the information for parents and other documentation, you and the governors recognised that your website did not meet requirements in its current form. This has been acted on and is due to be relaunched in the immediate future.

All the teaching and learning we saw together during the inspection was very strong. Your consistent approach to driving high standards is exemplified in your

feedback to staff. Staff are thoughtful practitioners and regularly reflect on what went well and what could have been better. This means that the quality of teaching and learning and outcomes for children always remain high. Staff are highly skilled at questioning and prompting children to reflect on their thinking. For instance, when the children were playing in the water outdoors, staff consistently asked what the children could do to make sure the water did not spill out of a funnel when pouring into a container. Staff then followed this by further exploration of the children's thinking, posing the problem of how they could do it.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. They are consistently engaged throughout the day as curious and independent learners. They have a good awareness of the needs of others, and staff stress this aspect of their work throughout the day, for instance, when we observed a story making session. The letter sent to the children by the 'nearly good baby' identified the caring actions children had taken during the morning, for example fastening each other's shoes and checking if someone was all right after they had fallen over. They know the high expectations of staff, who begin every adult led group session with a review of the rules of sitting and listening to each other. They know to follow rules for their own safety, such as not carrying anything when moving up or down the stairs and holding on to the handrail. Parents I spoke with talked of how the older children take on the responsibility of guiding the younger children in these situations.

While a significant number of children attend nursery on a regular basis, you have identified that for some there is more to be done on improving attendance so that all children in your care get the maximum benefit from the high-quality provision you deliver.

Children enter nursery with skills and abilities generally below those typical for their age. The vast majority leave at least in line with other children nationally, and some above this. This shows rapid progress. Parents of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and carers of children who are looked after, spoke of the highly effective support you provide to both them and their children. They say that their children have made sustained progress during their time at the nursery and this is supported by the evidence I saw during the inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

You ensure that staff are always up to date in their knowledge and training. You regularly present them with scenarios and random quizzes to complete. Staff say this promotes excellent levels of discussion and awareness. This means that staff are confident in their knowledge and that children's safeguarding is secure. All staff are trained in paediatric first aid, so they know what to do in the case of any accidents. Governors ensure that all paperwork and procedures meet requirements through regular checking and monitoring.

Inspection findings

- Following the previous inspection, technology is now embedded in the activities and resources available to the children. During the inspection, I saw children using microphones when telling stories, and smart boards when drawing owls. They used hammers, nails and saws when building bird boxes, and information technology for research purposes, for example when trying to discover how to make 'slime' following an activity exploring ingredients to make playdough. Governors have effectively monitored the actions taken to address this recommendation through their regular visits to the nursery and from the co-headteachers' reports received at governor meetings.
- Staff consistently ensure that the right number of adults to children are always maintained. They are alert to where children are indoors and outside and either move themselves, or sometimes close areas off, to make sure that children are constantly supervised. Children understand this and know that the 'red face' sign means closed. Staff regularly assess the safety of the environment and make sure anything serious is quickly and effectively addressed. The governing body have ensured that the building is as accessible as possible, and they review their accessibility plan every year. In response to this, they have funded ramps for the outdoor area, toilets and new doors.
- Information held by the nursery about the most vulnerable children in your care meets requirements. Children and their parents' views on any plans are carefully recorded. Actions you take are always written down, and you have successfully reduced the risk to children on several occasions. You are relentless in your pursuit of services and other professionals to address the needs of these families. Within the nursery you are always available for staff to talk to and share any concerns they may have. You act swiftly on these to secure the children's safety and welfare. You make sure you are always present to effectively support staff who work with the most vulnerable children. Staff told me how you have their welfare at the heart of what you do as managers.
- The governing body has ensured a highly effective transition to the interim headship arrangements. They robustly researched the model of co-headship and visited other schools where this arrangement had been implemented. They looked closely at the positives and the difficulties that could have occurred. Overall, after much discussion, they correctly identified that the continuity of staff, and the place of the nursery in the local community was better protected by the effective use of the joint skill set of the two existing deputy headteachers. Governors have ensured that the new co-headteachers are well supported through the appointment of an experienced external mentor, and through effective support from the local authority. Staff and parents I spoke with all commented positively on the leadership of the nursery, and staff felt it was a strength having the skills and knowledge of both of you to draw on.
- Most children make rapid progress during their time with you. Your incisive analysis of information gathered about children's progress, means that you can intervene quickly if any child's progress falters. You also look to see if there are any groups, or areas identified where progress is less rapid, and you tweak

activities to address these issues. The additional funding you receive for the most disadvantaged children in your care is wisely spent. You have effectively identified any barriers to learning for these children and have successfully addressed these, such as through small group work to develop children's communication and language. You have also used the additional budget to enhance staff skills in delivering these interventions. You make certain that the most able children are given more stretching opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge at greater depth. This means that children are extremely well prepared for school. As one parent I spoke to said, 'Children want to come here because it's inspiring.'

- Parents who expressed a view were very confident in the co-headteachers and staff. The strength of this relationship is perhaps epitomised by the comment of one parent, in discussion, and agreed by all, who said that, 'Staff aren't strangers; they are part of the community.' Parents know that any issues can be discussed and that staff will take swift actions to remedy those issues. They expressed admiration of how well all staff know all the children. They stated that no matter which member of staff was at the door at the end of the day, each child was given words of praise for successes achieved. Parents said that there were plenty of opportunities for an information exchange at the beginning or end of the day. The electronic learning stories meant that they were continuously informed of their child's progress and could add further evidence if they wished to. However, they knew that they could make an appointment to see any member of staff if they wanted to have a meeting. Parents I spoke to identified a wide range of ways they were helped to support their children's learning at home. Information leaflets on aspects of learning, the parent café, where they could regularly drop in and learn with their children, 'play and read' bags full of resources to borrow, and newsletters giving ideas of activities, particularly for during the holidays, were a sample of the support you make available. As one parent said, 'They teach us!', mirroring the feelings of others about the quality of support they receive. Parents felt involved with the development of the nursery, and they appreciate that you consult with them before any major changes.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the rate of attendance improves to ensure that all children get the most from their early learning opportunities while at the nursery.

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

The focus of the inspection was to affirm the standards identified at the previous Section 5 inspection and to find out how well children and the nursery were progressing. I held a variety of meetings with you and your staff. I observed several sessions jointly with you in the nursery. I considered a range of evidence, including the school improvement plan and leaders' self-evaluation. I also reviewed other documentation.

I met with three members of the governing body and spoke with a representative of the LA. I considered the 19 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and I spoke with 11 parents. I also took account of the 12 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and spoke with six staff.