

20 November 2018

Mrs Joanne Budge  
Blagdon Nursery School  
Blagdon Road  
Whitley  
Reading  
Berkshire  
RG2 7NT

Dear Mrs Budge

### **Short inspection of Blagdon Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 8 November 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 outstanding in October 2014.

#### **This school continues to be outstanding.**

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

You and your team ensure that children thrive at this school. You make learning a magical experience. Children were fascinated, for example, when a scientist showed them how to make raisins dance with lemonade! You develop children's independence very well. For instance, some three-year-olds are proficient at laying the table on their own at snack time.

Visitors cannot fail to be impressed by the warm, family atmosphere at your school. Children are happy and confident. They behave extremely well and show respect and courtesy to each other. For example, three-year-olds hold open doors for each other.

Your staff have an excellent understanding of the principles of early years education. You recognise the importance of developing excellent communication skills. Language development is an integral part of the school day. You employ a specialist speech and language assistant to ensure that all children make good progress.

Your school is an integral part of the community. It has provided early years education in the area for over 80 years. The local authority values your commitment. You share outstanding practice with a range of other providers, such as the Reading Nursery School Alliance. Your membership of the Whitley Excellence

Cluster has ensured that staff develop their expertise even further. You provide valuable work placements for students, including those from Reading University.

Your school has been through a period of change recently. This has resulted in some changes for staff. In August 2017, the on-site Willows Day Nursery closed. The provision for two-year-olds was integrated successfully into your school. The on-site Blagdon Children's Centre closed in September 2017.

At the last inspection, you were asked to review the school's website. This was to ensure that parents and carers could access the information more easily. You have now done this. Parents can access a wide range of policies and information.

Your school has recently introduced an online system to record children's learning. The system has the option for parents to share 'milestones' about how their child is achieving at home. Currently, however, the school has not encouraged enough parents to use this system to celebrate their child's home learning achievements.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The safeguarding of children is paramount in your school. It is at the heart of everything you do. Parents say that they feel that their children are very well looked after. Your staff form strong and trusting relationships with the children.

You ensure that there is no area of the school where children can come to harm. Staff assess carefully the potential risks for all indoor and outdoor learning activities. Children learn how to stay safe when dealing with possible minor hazards. For example, when using toy hammers and screwdrivers in the construction area, they understand how to use the tools safely.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

### **Inspection findings**

- During the inspection, we agreed to check the impact of leadership on improving the school. I found that strong leadership has made sure that the school has continued to flourish. You have created a school with an enthusiastic and committed staff. They are always striving to make the school even better. Staff support your high aims and aspirations for the children. All who answered the staff questionnaire said that they are proud to work at this school.
- Governors want the very best for the children at this school. They have a wide set of skills that they use to good effect in holding leaders to account. During my visit, I examined the impact of the early years pupil premium funding on disadvantaged children's progress. I found that governors have made sure that the funding is spent wisely. These children make excellent progress in their academic, personal and social development. Last year, disadvantaged children attained better than others at the school.

- We considered the impact of the curriculum on children's development. We agreed that you provide a rich and varied range of experiences. Adults never miss an opportunity to develop children's imagination and wonder about the world. Every new day brings a fresh set of surprises. Children enjoy making their own discoveries and exploring the environment. They like the dinosaurs found around the school, such as the 'explorosaur,' which encourage good learning habits.
- We checked on how children progress at your school. Evidence showed that those who are two years old flourish. Children get off to a wonderful start because adults provide caring support. They help children to feel confident enough to explore their surroundings. Activities provided are exciting. During the inspection, children delighted in singing along to a song.
- Those who are three years old make very strong progress. Staff encourage children to start to make marks on paper and to develop their pencil control. Many children can recognise the first letter of their name. Skills in number are well developed. Children learn about measurements by engaging in real-life experiences, such as when measuring liquids in the mud kitchen.
- All parents who were spoken to at the start of the inspection, or who responded to the Ofsted survey, Parent View, would recommend the school to another parent. They value the fact that they can come into school on a regular basis. Communication with parents is strong. You have recently developed a new online system for parents to share information about their children. As yet, few parents have been successfully encouraged to use this. Transition arrangements are excellent. Those children who are about to join the school are helped to settle quickly. They learn to follow school routines during the regular 'stay and play' sessions with their parents. When children leave your school, they go on to a variety of different primary schools. You and your staff work hard to ensure that these children have a smooth transition.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they increase parental engagement in using the school's new online system, so that children's learning at home can also be celebrated.

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

Yours sincerely

Liz Bowes  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, meetings were held with you and governors, including the chair of governors. There was a meeting with the local authority adviser. Informal discussions were held with children. I also spoke to a few parents at the start of the school day and took into consideration the nine responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View. Together, you and I visited classes and looked at the online learning journals. Views expressed by 21 staff who had responded to the staff survey were also considered. A range of school documentation was checked including: leaders' evaluation of the school's performance and plans for improvement; assessment and behaviour records, the single central record of pre-employment checks; policies and procedures; and minutes of governors' meeting.