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Ms Evelyn Abram
Headteacher
Sharrow Nursery, Infant and Junior School
Sitwell Road
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
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Dear Ms Abram

Short inspection of Sharrow Nursery, Infant and Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 6 February 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 June 2014.

The school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous 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 certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Following the last inspection, leaders were asked to increase the proportion of pupils at key stage 1 who reach above-average standards. You were also asked to improve the effectiveness of middle leadership and iron out inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. To your credit, these aspects have been tackled successfully. Indeed, over the past three years, the school has built an enviable track record of academic improvement, which has led several schools to seek your counsel and support. Your leadership has been highly effective and you are ably supported by a very capable team of senior leaders and expert teaching and support staff. Clear direction and cultivating a collective responsibility and shared ambition among staff and pupils have created a culture of success. Your strategy has been simple: to empower pupils to recognise and realise their full potential. The vehicles for this are high-quality teaching, an engaging and diverse curriculum and excellent levels of care, guidance and support, which promote pupils' personal development well.

You and your team have fostered a caring, inclusive and welcoming atmosphere in the school. Pupils' behaviour is impeccable and they are a credit to their families. Pupils love coming to school and value the effort staff put into helping them develop as individuals and learn lots of new things. They know they are doing well because of the regular feedback staff provide and their ever-increasing knowledge, skills and understanding. One child said that the best thing about the school is the chance to get to know children from different backgrounds and cultures. Pupils and staff get along really well. Parents and carers value the school's caring ethos and appreciate the school's tireless work on behalf of their children. They welcome the workshops you offer and the time staff invest to help them better support their children's learning and development. The school really goes the extra mile to ensure that pupils receive a high-quality education. None of this would be possible without your very talented and dedicated staff, who embody the school's core moral purpose of working to ensure that every child reaches their potential, regardless of any barriers to success that exist.

Your evaluation of the school's current effectiveness is accurate. You have taken highly effective actions to address aspects that were less than good. You are not complacent and you recognise that there is room for improvement in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, particularly those who are taken out of school for extended periods at a time. You also accept that there is scope for higher standards to be attained in certain regards. Indeed, you already have some plans in place to address this.

Collectively, governors have the skills to monitor and evaluate rigorously the effectiveness of school leadership and the school's performance. They are astute and discharge their duties diligently. They know the school well and are committed to, and ambitious for, the school. They have produced a constitution with the onus on strategically supporting and challenging the school's ongoing development.

Because of the school's success, the local authority has only needed to offer light-touch support. This has centred on some bespoke review and moderation activities and some leadership development work, which the school has valued.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team ensure that the school's safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are comprehensive and of a good quality. Thorough checks are undertaken to ensure that all staff are safe to work with children. Your safeguarding team has worked effectively to embed a culture of vigilance among all staff.

Records show that you regularly provide staff with safeguarding training and updates. This ensures that they are aware of and can apply the latest guidance and thinking in their daily work. Among other things, you have ensured that staff have a good understanding of the 'Prevent' duty and can recognise the potential signs of child abuse, neglect or sexual exploitation. You have robust systems to record concerns about pupils and make referrals to the appropriate authority should it be

necessary. As designated lead, you have forged effective links with external agencies, which support the work you do to keep pupils safe. Positive feedback from parents and pupils endorses the current effectiveness of your strategy. Pupils told me that they feel safe in school. They are aware of different forms of bullying and the harm it can cause but do not think it is a problem in the school. They know there are risks and dangers they might face online and in other situations but are confident they know how to stay safe, partly as a result of what you and visitors to the school, such as the fire safety and community police teams, have taught them. Pupils are confident that if they need help or guidance any member of staff would support them.

Inspection findings

- There is unequivocal evidence that over the past three years pupils' attainment and progress have risen sharply. The percentage of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the early years foundation stage has increased year on year. Year 1 phonics scores have improved from well below to above average. At key stage 1, the proportion of pupils working at a greater depth has moved from below to in line with national averages in mathematics and writing. The icing on the cake, however, is the exceptional progress scores for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2, which were in the top 11, three and two per cent respectively of all schools nationally. Pupils' attainment in all subjects was also significantly above average. This is all the more remarkable given the typical starting point of the majority of pupils, which is well below expected levels on entry to the school.
- We saw many features of exceptional teaching. This was characterised by the high expectations staff had of what pupils could achieve, vibrant and engaging learning climates and environments and expert teaching, which motivated pupils, stimulating their curiosity and creativity. Very effective questioning and progressively challenging activities, accompanied by excellent support and guidance, gave pupils the confidence to really push themselves and excel. This culminated in significant gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. My discussion with pupils, scrutiny of their work and evaluation of your credible assessment information confirm that this is typical of the experience current pupils receive. We agreed that, on occasion, in Year 3 pupils could become disconnected from their learning.
- Your provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is outstanding; it allows them to make rapid progress. The case studies of pupils who started school unable to speak English and who are now reaching high standards, pupils who have complex needs and troubled pupils transferred from other schools who are now thriving in the nurturing environment you have created are inspiring.
- The very effective development of children in Nursery and Reception is the foundation stone of the outstanding progress pupils go on to achieve by the end of Year 6 and should not be underestimated. Children benefit from excellent teaching, a rich curriculum and exceptional care, guidance and support.

- Pupils enjoy the curriculum and relish the opportunities you provide them with to immerse themselves in their learning. They highlighted a space project, Spanish, art, and studying Romans as some of their favourites. They talked animatedly about the residential experiences on offer. Pupils are confident, fluent readers. They have a broad vocabulary, good comprehension skills and good phonics awareness. Your curriculum prepares pupils well for living in multicultural Britain.
- We agreed that, if you are able to increase the percentage of children who exceed expectations by the end of the early years foundation, further raise pupils' attainment by the end of key stage 1 and ensure that all groups of pupils reach the highest standards by the end of key stage 2, these improvements would add further credibility to the school's assertions that it is an outstanding provider of education.
- The overall rate of attendance has improved from below to higher than average since the previous inspection. Although improving, the attendance and persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils requires further improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all groups of pupils reach expected standards in mathematics, reading, writing and science by the end of key stage 1, and more pupils work at a greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics, especially disadvantaged pupils
- more pupils reach the high standard in reading and in English grammar, spelling and punctuation by the end of key stage 2, especially disadvantaged pupils
- more children meet and exceed expectations in key areas of learning by the end of the early years foundation stage, so they are even better prepared for key stage 1, especially in mathematics and literacy
- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils improves further, and their persistent absence reduces further so that they are at least in line with national averages.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the executive director people services for Sheffield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Young
Senior Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I focused on the effectiveness of the curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment in securing pupils' good or better achievement and the effective promotion of their personal development and well-being. I evaluated the effect of leaders, governors and other responsible bodies in sustaining and/or building on the good quality of education reported at the previous inspection. I assessed how well leaders had tackled previous areas for improvement. I reviewed attendance and persistent absence rates and evaluated whether safeguarding arrangements were suitable.

During the inspection, I met with you and your senior leadership team to discuss your self-evaluation of the quality of education the school provides. We jointly observed teaching and learning in each of the school's 12 classes and saw staff delivering sessions to boost the literacy and numeracy skills of targeted pupils. I scrutinised pupils' books to consider the progress being made by pupils currently in school. I listened to pupils read. I read documentation such as policies, curriculum plans, vulnerable pupil case studies, pupil progress files, behaviour and attendance records and your school development plans. I met with four governors and spoke to pupils in meetings and informally at social times. I spoke to teaching and support staff about their work. I met with a local authority representative. I also discussed the school's provision with the mathematics and English leads, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and her deputy, and three early years foundation stage staff.

I reviewed the six responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I took account of the 225 responses to the school's own parent survey. No staff or pupils registered a response to Ofsted's online questionnaire during the inspection.

Since the previous inspection, the school has formed a cooperative learning trust with four local schools. The other members are Broomhill Infant School, Lowfield Community Primary School, Springfield Primary School and Netherthorpe Primary School. A new chair and vice chair of the governing body have been appointed.