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Mrs Karen Collins
Cruddas Park Early Years Centre
Brunel Terrace
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Dear Mrs Collins

Short inspection of Cruddas Park Early Years Centre

Following my visit to the school on 12 December 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 December 2014.

This school continues to be good.

You, with the support of the playgroup leader and your governors, have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have led with passion and commitment to enable children to achieve a high standard of education. At the heart of your work are your high expectations and boundless determination to ensure that the school's performance is strong. You and the staff have an attitude of 'we will do our best for the children and their families'.

Since the last inspection in 2014, you acted quickly to make improvements to the outdoor area to provide better opportunities for children to learn to read, write and use their mathematical skills. Your leadership ensures that the children will learn through an exciting and highly engaging curriculum. Throughout the day, children were fully absorbed by the wide range of interesting experiences. They were inspired by the building site in their view counting how many scoops of soil were needed for their building mixture and working out how many more they would need. They were making marks on the walls with paintbrushes. They were fascinated by their dinosaur shadow puppets projected on the wall and thought about how different their necks and tails were.

You and your governors have this year had to address smaller numbers of children in the nursery and a reduced budget. This has affected staffing particularly for the playgroup, where they are not regularly employed at the school and so know the children less well. This means that they are less equipped to provide bespoke support to the children.

Through your focus this year on working with parents you have maintained excellent relationships with them. Parents and carers hold the school in high regard. One

parent summed up the views of many by describing the school as 'a family school where you can talk to the staff who know the children so they progress. My children love the nursery and the teachers are brilliant.' Parents also value highly the range of activities they can be involved in with their children at school. Making reindeers from waste materials was a great success. Parents talked about how well the staff listen to them and act quickly to support them when necessary. They commented on the high level of care that all staff provide and how quickly children settle into the nursery. Relationships are warm; all parents say that they are made to feel very welcome. Your improvement plans rightly include continuing to help parents understand how their children learn so that they can support them even more confidently at home.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding remains a strength. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff keep a very caring watch over each child. Staff know what to do if they see any signs that a child might be experiencing difficulties. Staff receive regular training about a wide range of safeguarding matters, most recently concerning female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation and the government's 'Prevent' duty. There is a strong emphasis placed on promoting respectful and tolerant attitudes towards different religions and cultures. Staff provide children with opportunities to learn about how to keep safe, including when using modern technology. Inside and outdoor areas are well organised to ensure that children can move about freely and safely explore. Leaders and governors make regular checks to make sure that this remains the case. Governors take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. The governor assigned to oversee safeguarding makes regular visits to examine the school's work in this area. Leaders responsible for safeguarding work closely with external agencies to ensure that children who are of concern receive the support they need. All required checks are made when staff are recruited and new staff receive safeguarding training when they join the school.

Inspection findings

- Children make good progress in all areas of their learning from starting points that are much lower than typical for their age. Because the majority of pupils are second language learners they join nursery with weaker skills in speaking and understanding and in their personal and social development. Children respond well to the exciting experiences of the playgroup and the high-quality teaching in the nursery provision. As a result, by the end of their time in nursery, most children reach the standards that are typical for their age and those children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) progress well from their low starting points. The school is very successful at ensuring that all the different groups of children it caters for achieve equally well.
- Plans to use additional funding to help disadvantaged children achieve better are very successful. You have ensured that children with delay in their speaking have high-quality intervention to accelerate their progress. As a result, disadvantaged children are making good progress and reaching standards that are close to those of the other children in the nursery.

- Teachers have had access to a wide range of training and development opportunities to enable them to develop continually the quality of their teaching. Leaders make a range of checks to make sure that pupils are making the necessary progress. Leaders have made effective use of staff meeting time to involve teachers in collectively reviewing the progress made by a sample of pupils. This has helped teachers develop a better understanding of how to support pupils to make as much progress as possible. You have identified the children's particularly low starting points in literacy and mathematics. Staff develop children's mathematical understanding by providing lots of interesting opportunities in classrooms and outdoors. Children enjoy counting, learning to use mathematical words and investigating the properties of shapes. Writing skills are also well promoted inside and outdoors and, as a result, children make fast progress in this area. Children are encouraged to develop their skills in forming letters and enjoy interesting opportunities to write independently. Staff in the nursery teach phonics well and provide plenty of opportunities for children to listen to stories. You are aware that new staff to the playgroup, because they know the children less well, are less effective when they observe children to identify how they can move learning on. Progress of the children in the playgroup, therefore, while good, is less strong than the rapid progress seen in the nursery class.
- Governors regularly review the work of the school. A recent visit provided you with their view on whether the curriculum for the most able children gave them engaging learning experiences. This ensures that actions in the school improvement plan are making a difference for the children.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is a secure staffing structure so that teaching is consistently good or better to support the youngest children's thinking and learning
- they continue to enhance their engagement with parents to help them better understand how to support their children's learning at home

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

Yours sincerely

Ann Muxworthy
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you, and spoke to a range of staff at the school. I talked to children when they were playing and learning. I met with three governors and spoke to a representative from the

local authority. I conducted a learning walk with you during the day. I looked at learning journeys and records of children's progress and attainment. I scrutinised the school's self-evaluation and development plan, the early years pupil premium plan, information about the school's performance, and safeguarding and child protection records. I met with six parents and considered the three responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and the Ofsted questionnaire for staff.