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### Taken from Ofsted inspections of Schools in Gloucestershire - Spring Term 2017-2018

The statements are ordered under general themes and some statements could go under more than one heading.

#### **Leadership and Management - staff development, supervision, self-evaluation, staff deployment**

- Leadership of the pre-school and early years classes is good. Children enter the pre-school setting with a wide range of skills and experiences. However, some children enter with skills that are well below those expected for their age, especially in communication, literacy and language and personal, social and emotional development. Overtime, children build their learning and achieve well. The proportion of children achieving the expected standard at the end of the Reception Year has typically been above the national average.
- Leaders are reflective and continue to make ongoing changes to improve provision, teaching and assessment in the early years. These include, for example, the recent introduction of an online assessment system. They are determined to work as early as possible with children and families to diminish differences. This includes provision for two-year-olds and, most recently, 'stay and play' sessions run by school staff at the children's centre.
- The early years leader has created a cohesive staff team. She ensures that staff are well trained, for example in developing language skills. She monitors their work closely, making the necessary improvements to maximise the impact of teaching on children's achievement. Staff pay good attention to safeguarding and children's welfare.
- Transition into the school from a wide range of nursery providers is strong. Leaders take a proactive approach to identifying need early. Teachers visit children in their homes before they start school. This helps to build a picture of the child and their interests. As a result, parents told inspectors, 'Our children can't wait to get to school. The school provides a safe and nurturing environment for them to learn in.'
- Leaders' self-evaluation of the early years is not sufficiently accurate. As a result, the impact of provision is not reviewed systematically and progress is not as rapid as it should be, particularly in the Nursery.

#### **Routines/Independence/Behaviour**

- Children's behaviour is impeccable and children are very enthusiastic about their learning. Routines are well established and consistently applied by staff. The safety of every child is paramount and this is clearly reflected in the vigilance of the well-trained staff.
- Children are keen to engage in a range of activities and are increasingly able to manage their own behaviour and self-regulate in the classroom. However, on occasion, adults do not manage children's feelings and behaviours well enough. Sometimes children become restless and distracted when adults are teaching them. This is not picked up quickly enough.
- Children's independence and resilience are promoted through access to high-quality resources during learning activities. Team building and collaboration are central to purposeful play. There is a lack of opportunities for children to apply their writing and mark-making skills in some classes during play-based learning.
- Children show respect and positive behaviour, supporting independence and self-confidence. Staff have established effective routines and children respond well to teachers' expectations of conduct. There is a positive climate for learning.

## Observation, Assessment and Planning

- The inclusion leader tracks the progress of children who have SEN and/or disabilities. In addition, she uses her skills to identify children with individual and complex needs so that they can be met effectively.
- Teachers have assessed children carefully so that they know their starting points. Many children arrive in Reception with skills, knowledge and understanding that are well below the national average. During their time in Reception, teachers and teaching assistants continually assess children's progress and share this well with parents.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to assess children's needs and plan activities that help children to make good progress. Children are encouraged to improve their work with feedback from the teacher or teaching assistant, for example, when practising number formation or sounding out words in writing.
- Careful assessment of progress enables staff to adjust teaching to provide suitable challenge for the most able children. For example, during a mathematics activity, children worked successfully on number bonds to 10, and were then further challenged to work up to 20. This ensured that they were fully stretched in their thinking.
- Teachers check children's progress precisely, enabling them to adjust the learning to better suit individual needs. Disadvantaged children and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are nurtured well and make progress in line with others. Carefully targeted activities ensure that the most able children achieve their potential.
- Teachers ensure that assessment is robust. Teachers and teaching assistants carry out frequent assessments which enable them to plan activities to meet children's needs and interests effectively. The early years leader is closely involved in local authority moderation of early years development stages and shares her expertise with other teachers in pre-school and key stage 1. This work supports the continuous professional development of staff effectively.
- Assessment does not routinely take account of what children can already do. Consequently, teachers do not always plan activities that have sufficient challenge. This means that children, especially those who are more able, achieve tasks easily. This hinders them from achieving what they are capable of.

## Teaching and Learning

- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers ask children questions to develop their language skills and give them time to think and respond. As a result, children, regardless of ability, are able to process their thoughts and succeed. Teachers plan lessons and activities well to engage and motivate children.
- The teaching of reading sits at the heart of the early years curriculum. Children show a genuine interest in sharing books and sequencing the main events in stories. This engenders a love of reading. High-quality texts are used as a springboard to stimulate the curriculum. The teaching of phonics is regular and systematic. This, along with careful checks on children's early reading, is enabling children to decode simple words well. As a result, in recent years the proportion of children reaching the early learning goal in reading has increased so that it is above the national average.
- The teacher leads much of the children's learning, and expectations of what the children can do and know are too low. Tasks and activities are not tailored to the needs of different groups of children, especially those who are most able. Therefore, children lack independence in their recorded work.

## Environment

- Early years is a well-resourced environment, which promotes children's safety, welfare and social skills effectively. Staff in the Nursery and Reception classes ensure that children are happy and get on well together. Expectations and routines are well established.
- There is a calm and orderly environment. Children generally behave well. The headteacher has dealt with any behavioural issues sensitively in collaboration with parents.

## Outdoor Learning

- In the Reception class, children are ready to learn and fully attentive. Child-led learning is effective in developing confidence and independence. Children enjoy a spacious outdoor area with equipment to motivate and inspire their learning.
- Teachers ensure that both indoor and outdoor areas are enticing and are very well planned. They make good use of children's interests to plan activities to help them to develop. Consequently, children are inspired and excited to learn and explore.
- Relationships between adults and children are positive. Children respond well to the adults and they play well together. They cooperate with and help each other during activities. The school uses the limited environment as best it can. However, there are too few opportunities for children to learn outdoors.

## Partnership

- As the transition to Year 1 approaches, teachers share work between Reception and Year 1. Children learn more formal practices so that transition to the next key stage is seamless. It is a similar picture when children move from nursery provision to Reception. Several parents spoke of the high level of communication prior to their children starting school.
- The early years is extremely well led and managed. Leaders begin every day by greeting children and their parents at the gate; this ensures that a very strong bond develops between home and school. Children are encouraged to come into school by themselves, soon becoming independent learners.
- The school's approach to actively engaging parents begins in the early years. The transitions to Nursery and from Nursery to Reception seek to build and develop this partnership.
- Parents are appreciative of the way staff 'make a real effort' to get to know their children as individuals and they value the daily contact with leaders. They are increasingly involved in supporting their children's learning through workshops and regular 'learning together' sessions.
- Parents are delighted with how quickly their children settle into school and with the excellent progress they make. They find staff to be friendly and approachable. As one parent put it, 'My child is making amazing progress and I couldn't ask for more of a school.'
- Leaders' effective arrangements for children starting at the school enable children to integrate well and settle into school routines quickly. Leaders make visits to pre-school settings and organise events to support a smooth start to school. Parents use the school's online assessment and communication tool well. They told inspectors that they valued the opportunity to follow up at home what their children are learning in school.
- The pre-school leader and early years leader work together effectively and plan learning activities. For example, children from both classes play and go on nature walks together. Cross-phase transition from early years to Year 1 is strong. This enables children to make progress at appropriate rates for their age and stage. Consequently, children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Parents are regularly involved in their children's learning and partnerships between home and school are strong. Regular 'family fun' sessions take place and the vast majority of parents take part. During the inspection 'mad modelling' sessions were held. Children had planned their ideas at home and family members enjoyed coming into school to work alongside their children.