

Bishop Martin C of E Primary School
Church Road
Woolton
Liverpool
L25 5JF
11th October 2018

Dear Mrs Aspinwall,

Thank you for inviting me, along to visit your school on 10th October 2018 to discuss the Early Years Basic Skills Quality Mark. I would like to extend my thanks to all school colleagues, pupils and parents for making the visit so purposeful and pleasurable. The preparation and presentation of evidence to support the process and show impact was exemplary and embracing. I am delighted to recommend the school for the Early Years Quality Mark and congratulate you on your success. The award will last for 3 years.

The process was conducted over the course of a day and involved:

- Examination of key evidence
- A focus on all 10 key elements
- A thorough learning walk throughout the school focused on basic skills.
- Discussions with yourself
- Discussions with key stakeholders including governors and senior leaders

I have summarised below key judgements that have supported my decision based on the evidence provided prior to and on the day:

- Parents interviewed spoke highly of the reception provision. They feel well informed about what their children are learning and the ways in which children are taught. Parents feel that they were supported well on transition into school. Some parents have older children in the school and were able to describe changes that have taken place over the last 3 years to improve early years provision. The parents talked about the quality of outdoor provision and the impact that this has had on their children's attitude to school and their enthusiasm for learning through play.
- The children interviewed spoke articulately about their favourite books and about the ways in which they are taught to read and write. The children were confident to describe resources that support their development in literacy including working walls, writing equipment, books and phonics games. The children could also describe their maths area and the type of equipment that they use to support their development in mathematics.
- Children were also keen to point out resources in their classroom that help them to develop the basic skills needed to become competent readers and writers. During the learning walk the children completed adult directed activities linked to their current theme (autumn) before moving into child initiated activities. The children were focused and settled. The children were

supported by an adult when needed. The children were excited to explore the autumn objects that they had themselves brought into school. They talked about the objects, drew and wrote about them. The children were encouraged to mark make, begin to form letters and apply recently taught phonics.

- There is a well-resourced maths area in the classroom as well as an investigation area which is stocked with interesting and engaging natural objects for children to explore, group, sort and count. There is also a wide range creative resources which support children's developing fine motor control as well as writing equipment that is easily accessible to the children.
- The School Improvement Plan details key actions for the school as a whole. Early years actions are based on school priorities. Current priorities include raising standards in reading and to embed a rich and varied curriculum that will fully support the progress and attainment of all children. The EY lead has a clear vision for ways in which to incorporate these priorities into early years practice and is confident that actions set will support improved outcomes in the basic skills, including reading.
- The headteacher and EY lead/assistant headteacher are fully committed to providing quality provision and practice for children in the early years and appreciate the value that strong early years practice will have on children's well-being, progress and attainment. The headteacher talked passionately about staff development and has worked hard to develop a coherent approach to staff training. All members of the early years team attend staff meetings and training sessions in order that are as skilled and knowledgeable as they can be about their roles and the best ways to support all children. Support staff are encouraged to be active members of the early years team and their contributions are valued by the senior leadership team.
- The outdoor environment offers children opportunities to explore, talk, socialise and learn in a well-resourced, tranquil space. Children came to the outdoor provision calmly and moved between areas of outdoor provision confidently and without the need for adult direction. The outdoor area has been well planned and is used effectively to support children's development.
- Vibrant wall displays celebrate children's work and demonstrate ways in which children are taught basic skills. Children's writing/mark making, photographs and interactive resources are used to create an exciting and engaging environment for the children.
- Data shows that children make good progress from their starting points. GLD has been above the national average for 2 years and is likely to be above the national average for 2018 once national data is released.
- Where children are not working at age related expectation within the basic skills staff are quick to act and a range of strategies to support children in making rapid progress are put into place. These include the use of communication and language app Chatta, Tales Tool Kit, Dough Disco and differentiated phonics activities. The impact of these interventions is documented.

- Data analysis over 3 years shows no particular attainment trend in terms of gender. Boys' attainment has been lower than girls' some years but was most recently higher than girls' by the end of the reception year (2018). There is a very small percentage of children in receipt of pupil premium funding. The use of this funding is documented and impact is observed. The data analysis as a whole demonstrates that all children make progress that is at least good. Most children leave EYFS at age related expectation.
- The early years team collect a wealth of evidence to support their assessment judgements. Literacy books, maths books and learning journals all contribute to the staff being able to identify clear next steps for children and ensure that assessment judgements are accurate. In house and external moderation sessions also take place regularly to ensure that evidence is useful and supports precise gathering of information about each child. Children's books very clearly demonstrate the good progress that children make, particularly in relation to their writing.
- Children with SEND are supported well. The school SENCO works closely with the early years team to ensure that early identification of SEND and early intervention take place. The EY team, headteacher and SENCO are committed to providing an environment that is fully inclusive and takes account of the needs of all children within the reception class. As a result children thrive and are supported well to reach their potential.
- Reception staff spoke enthusiastically about the ways in which they foster children's love of reading. Staff encourage children to read for pleasure by offering a range of quality books to freely access within continuous provision as well as access to reading books and school library books. Children are encouraged to share books with their parents/carers at home and are offered rewards in the form of stickers and certificates if they read frequently and return their books.

The behaviour of pupils during the learning walk was exceptional. Children were enthusiastically involved in their learning and keen to share what they were doing. Once again, I would like to thank everyone on behalf of School Improvement Liverpool for your strong and continued commitment towards improving pupils' basic skills. I will leave you with the following recommendations that I hope will support you in further enhancing your existing high quality practice:

- Continue to involve parents/carers in their child's learning as per own school priorities.
- Consider annotating evidence of child initiated writing to help support planning of next steps for each child/group of children

Yours sincerely,

Kim Salisbury

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Quality Improvement Officer (EYFS)

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