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**Bradley Simmons HMI**  
Regional Director

Carolyn Godfrey  
Corporate Director and Director for Children's Services  
County Hall  
Wiltshire Council  
Bythesea Road  
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Wiltshire  
BA14 8JN

Dear Ms Godfrey

### **Wiltshire early childhood focused inspection outcomes**

I am writing to inform you of the outcomes of the eight inspections completed between 16 and 27 March 2015 during Ofsted's early childhood focused inspection event in Wiltshire; the findings from the telephone survey completed during the same period; and the information gained from the focus group of local authority staff and its partners.

Please pass my thanks to all those who made time to talk to Her Majesty's Inspectors, Early Childhood Regulatory Inspectors and Early Years Inspectors during the period of the early childhood focused inspection.

This focused inspection event was prompted by an initial review of data revealing that the gap between the poorest young children achieving a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the rest of their more affluent peers is too wide. Across Wiltshire, only 36% of children known to be eligible for free school meals achieved a good level of development in 2014, making it the third worst local authority area in the South West region.

The focused inspection has given Ofsted a clearer view of the quality of early childhood provision in disadvantaged areas in Wiltshire.

The information in this letter is intended to assist the local authority to fulfil its legal duty to secure information, advice and training for early years providers in its area (Section 13 Childcare Act 2006). It will be of particular benefit to the local authority when considering how best to secure information, advice and training to providers on meeting the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable children (Regulations 3 and 4 of the Childcare Providers (Information Advice and Training Regulations) 2014).

## **Summary of inspection judgements**

Too many of the settings inspected as part of this focus in Wiltshire were judged as requires improvement or inadequate.

- Overall, four of the eight settings inspected were judged as less than good.
- Two of the settings were judged to be inadequate and two to be requires improvement.
- No childminders were judged to be inadequate.

## **Summary of inspection activity**

The early childhood focused inspections included childminders, private, voluntary and independent full-and part-time settings and an after-school club. All were due for inspection during the spring term 2015, and scheduled during the two-week window of the focused inspection.

During the inspections, Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), Early Years Inspectors and Early Childhood Regulatory Inspectors obtained information on local authority-secured information, advice and training to early years settings which since September 2013 has been focused on new or weaker providers. They also evaluated how settings help the children in their care to make good progress so that they achieve a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspectors explored three additional areas with leaders in each setting:

- What measures are in place to support and challenge your setting and how do these meet the needs of your children who live in the most disadvantaged areas? How effectively do you monitor the progress made by individuals and groups of children including those most disadvantaged, for example funded two-year-olds? How well do you use this information to improve the quality of teaching and, therefore, children's progress?
- What is the impact of local authority support and challenge over time to help your setting/provision to improve the levels of development for children who live in the most disadvantaged areas?
- How well do you work in partnership with other agencies, such as the local children's centre, in order to ensure that children make good progress?

## **Inspection outcomes**

The outcomes of all inspections are included in Annex A.

Eight inspections and 11 telephone surveys were completed. Three of the telephone surveys were with providers approved by the local authority to receive funding for two-year-olds and that are part of the local authority's 'vulnerable two-year-olds' project. A focus group was held with representatives from the local authority and its partners.

Four childminders were inspected: three were judged to be good and one was judged as requires improvement. Three nurseries were inspected: one was judged to be good, one as requires improvement and one as inadequate. One after-school club was inspected and was graded as inadequate.

## **Strengths**

- Inspection evidence shows that there is a clear strategy to improve early childhood provision in the area. There are well established partnerships with a wide range of providers to support early years improvement activities.
- The recent focus on supporting disadvantaged communities by increasing provision for funded two-year-olds is well directed.
- Children's centres are used well to develop and improve outcomes for young children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Good links between settings and the local children's centres, such as training events and opportunities to attend activities and outings enable targeted support for funded two-year-olds within their reach areas.
- Settings that were judged as requires improvement at a previous inspection confirmed that they received good information, advice and training from the local authority through regular visits from the early years advisory teachers and the childcare officers as appropriate. Many of these settings were judged as good at their subsequent inspection.
- Settings involved in the Bristol Standard quality assurance scheme have found the training and support from the local authority particularly helpful in developing and maintaining consistent early years practice and effective quality systems.
- The local authority provides some helpful training and additional funding to enable settings to further develop their provision for funded two-year-olds. A number of settings have initiated activities to focus on the developmental needs of two-year-olds and to enhance their progress; for example setting up outdoor space dedicated to this group, creating helpful booklets for parents to use when settling their children into nursery and purchasing specific resources.
- The use of planning tools such as 'my plan' and 'my support plan' to enable a good transition from nursery to school for children with special educational needs is proving valuable to settings. By following the plan they are able to better prepare children and their parents and carers for the next steps in their child's learning.

## Areas for improvement

- Half of the providers inspected as part of the focused inspection event were judged to be inadequate or requires improvement.
- In the weaker settings, children made insufficient progress in their learning and development. In those settings, the quality of teaching and learning were not effective enough.
- The recent training provided by the local authority to private, voluntary and independent settings receiving funded two-year-olds has yet to have an impact on improving the quality of teaching in some settings inspected. This training is not yet available to childminders.
- Providers are not using locally available information on children's outcomes to identify how they can provide extra help and support in order to close potential gaps in the learning and development of subsequent cohorts of children.
- Effective practice is not routinely shared between providers including between schools and early years settings sharing the same site.

## Recommendations

The local authority should consider:

- continuing to offer information, training and advice as required to settings to help practitioners further their early years knowledge, skills and experience
- using Ofsted's inspection evidence to encourage providers to strengthen their monitoring of teaching and of the progress made by groups of children, so that settings have clear evidence of what they do well and what they need to improve; further developing tools such as the Bristol Standard quality assurance scheme to enable providers to check the quality of teaching and drive their own improvement in these areas more effectively
- targeting high quality information, advice and training to new and weaker providers to ensure that young children in the most disadvantaged areas access the best provision
- encouraging providers to access Early Years Foundation Stage performance data so that: they understand where the gaps are in the development of children from different groups to help benchmark performance; and rapidly take action to remedy any potential inequalities in outcomes for subsequent cohorts of children
- encouraging providers to identify more opportunities to share good practice with weaker providers in order to help them find new ways of working that improves

the quality of their provision and outcomes for young children; helping to broker support for early years settings close to or located on school sites.

I hope these findings are useful to you and help you to continue to improve outcomes for all young children in Wiltshire.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bradley Simmons". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

**Bradley Simmons HMI**  
**Regional Director South West**

## Annex A

### Inspection outcomes

	Provider URN	Name of setting	Inspection date	Date previously inspected	Previous OE grade	Current OE grade
1	EY398093	Childminder	17/03/2015	04/01/2010	2	2
2	145600	Childminder	17/03/2015	12/03/2010	2	3
3	161828	Childminder	23/03/2015	01/10/2011	2	2
4	161741	Childminder	25/03/2015	15/06/2011	2	2
5	EY416627	Bowerhill Pre-school	19/03/2015	17/02/2011	2	4
6	EY447319	The Larks Out of School Club	19/03/2015	Not applicable	3	4
7	199402	Moonbeams Pre-school	24/03/2015	05/06/2014	3	3
8	EY280956	Brown Bears Community Nursery	24/03/2015	06/07/2010	2	2