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Miss Gail Murphy  
Headteacher  
Taywood Nursery School  
Accrington Road  
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Lancashire  
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Dear Miss Murphy

### **Short inspection of Taywood Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 23 May 2017, 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 outstanding in January 2013.

#### **This school continues to be outstanding.**

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. This is the second time that the school has been graded as outstanding, an achievement that you, your staff and parents should be very proud of.

As a result of your highly effective leadership, outstanding provision and the highest outcomes have been maintained. Learning at your school is a magical and fun experience, which all children relish. You and your staff are uncompromising in your efforts to ensure that each and every child achieves to their very best ability.

All staff have an excellent understanding of the principles of early years education and of the importance of learning through play. Staff have very high expectations of the children. In addition, a highly effective key person system ensures that staff have an excellent understanding of children's capabilities and family circumstances. Strong links have also been established with the children's centre to ensure that the needs of parents and children are very well met.

You are constantly looking for ways to improve, and swift action is taken to address any underperformance. For example, you have successfully integrated two-year-olds into the provision. By working with other nursery schools and providing training for staff, outcomes in number have significantly improved. You recognise that the school's next task is to further improve attendance and outcomes in reading. Outdoor learning is exceptionally well promoted and contributes significantly to the

excellent progress that children make, particularly boys. The outside area is a labyrinth of exciting places for children to learn and play, whatever the weather. The learning environment indoors is just as appealing, and children enjoy the freedom they have as they move freely between both.

You have the full support and backing of your staff. Staff feel valued and told me that they work very well as a team. They describe you as 'very fair, firm and approachable'.

Parents are equally resounding in their praise of the school. They talk avidly about the 'amazing support' that you and your staff provide. They believe that the quality of the education provided by the school is 'tailored to meet the needs of each individual child'. A testament to your school is expressed eloquently in the following comment: 'a truly outstanding place for little ones to learn'.

As we toured the school, I saw children who were very happy, highly confident and independent. For example, I observed children selecting their own plates, preparing their own snacks and washing up afterwards. Visitors cannot fail to be impressed by the family atmosphere that you have created in the school. Children are delightful and relationships at all levels are very respectful. Squabbles are rare because children are so busy.

Children's passion for learning is further ignited by a wide range of trips and visitors to the school. For example, outings to the butchers, chemist and library give children an appreciation of the differing roles that people have in society. Musicians, dancers and storytellers visit the nursery to work with the children to develop their creativity.

You clearly recognise the importance of working with other local nursery schools to support and challenge each other. Your expertise has helped schools in another local authority improve their early years practice. On top of this, you have recently been appointed as a local associate primary adviser for the early years to support and develop early years provision in Lancashire.

Following the last inspection you were asked to provide more opportunities for children to develop their fine motor skills. This issue has been addressed. Children have regular opportunities to manipulate malleable materials and use small tools, such as scissors. Mark-making opportunities are now more physical. For example, boys make marks outdoors using water and paint brushes. Such effective practice has improved outcomes in writing, particularly for boys.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Everyone accepts their responsibility to ensure the safeguarding of children. All staff have completed safeguarding training and are aware of procedures to follow should they be concerned about a child's welfare. Some staff also talk with confidence about being vigilant for the indicators of radicalisation and extremism. Leaders who have responsibility for safeguarding and recruitment have completed

training at the appropriate level. All recruitment and vetting checks are thoroughly undertaken to secure the safety of children. Entrance to the nursery is secure and visitors' credentials are checked. A filtering system is in place to ensure that children are safe when using computers. All documentation relating to safeguarding is of the required standard and fit for purpose.

## **Inspection findings**

- From their different starting points, all groups of children make rapid gains in their learning and are very well prepared for their transition into Reception. Many children start at the nursery with poor communication and language skills. As a result of high-quality teaching and a stimulating learning environment, the progress that children make in this area of their learning is a real strength of the nursery.
- Your self-evaluation is accurate and honest. You have correctly identified that outcomes in reading have dipped slightly and are not as high as other aspects of the early years curriculum. Already the wheels have been put in motion to put this right. For example, additional training has been delivered to new staff and the type of books available to children is being reviewed. In addition, books are now prominently displayed in all areas of the learning environment, both indoors and outside, to help foster children's love of reading. However, we agree that at present it is too early to fully assess the impact of these initiatives.
- You monitor the quality of teaching with rigour to ensure that it is of the highest standard. This is done through formal lesson observations, learning walks and planning reviews. You ensure that feedback given to staff after lesson observations focuses sharply and succinctly on the progress that different groups of children are making. You meet with staff regularly to review the progress that individual children in key groups are making. This ensures that children who are racing ahead in their learning are consistently challenged and those who are at risk of falling behind are very quickly identified and supported. All staff access training which is linked to school priorities to ensure that they have the necessary skills to ensure that their teaching is of the highest quality.
- It was very clear to me that governors want the very best for the children who attend Taywood Nursery School. They regularly visit the school to see for themselves how well the school is performing and to check on specific aspects of the school's work. For example, during the inspection the chair of governors was in school conducting a safeguarding audit. Governors know the school well and are aware of the progress that differing groups of pupils are making. They act as a critical friend, offering you very good levels of challenge and support in equal measure.
- You ensure that the early years pupil premium money is very carefully targeted to meet the needs of disadvantaged children. You have a very good understanding of the barriers to learning that this group of children face. The money is spent wisely to ensure that these pupils are very well supported academically, socially and emotionally. As a result, this group of children flourish and take part in all that the school has to offer.

- Although not statutory, you ensure that all parents are made aware of the importance of sending their children into the nursery on a regular basis. Good levels of attendance are regularly celebrated and there are stringent procedures in place to follow up any unexplained absences. Although attendance figures are improving, there is still a small group of children who do not attend the nursery as frequently as they should.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- outcomes in reading continue to improve
- attendance improves for those from a small group of families who are more reluctant to send their children to school on a regular basis.

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

Yours sincerely

Sheila Iwaskow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I held meetings with you, a representative from the local authority and the chair of the governing body. I also had informal discussions with staff. I went on a tour of the school, accompanied by you, to see the learning that was taking place. Behaviour was observed at different times of the day. I reviewed a range of documentation, including the single central record, the school's self-evaluation and development plans. Account was taken of the responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire completed by parents and the school's own questionnaire to staff.