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Ms Helen Ruffles
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Ruffles

Short inspection of Netherton Park Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 12 September 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. This nursery school continues to be a centre of excellence, where children feel safe, secure and grow in confidence. Whatever their abilities and needs, all children are supported and guided to develop positive attitudes to learning and to do their best. Excellent levels of supervision, well-managed resources, bright lively classrooms and highly effective teaching enable all to achieve and experience feelings of success. Consequently, children are exceptionally well prepared for their move up to primary school. Parents say they are very happy with the school and feel well informed about school life. Your work with families and attention to the well-being and welfare of children shine out as major strengths.

You and your staff team have built further on the many strengths identified by the previous inspection. Furthermore, the one recommendation about making greater use of technology to support children's learning has been tackled with informed judgement and common sense. You are open to new ideas, quick to learn from experience and ambitious for continued school development.

Governors, parents and staff are rightly proud of the school's successes to date. Together, you are now looking for ways to strengthen further the role parents can play in using new technology to supply information about children's achievements

outside of school.

Children and their parents get a fabulous experience at your school.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. In fact, the arrangements for keeping children safe are excellent. Your systematic and well-organised approach to statutory requirements and record-keeping means that all checks on staff are completed and paperwork is in order. Furthermore, the culture in the school ensures that all are fully aware of their duty of care. When staff have needed to act on a concern they have done so swiftly and appropriately. Similarly, routines for managing medicine, first-aid treatment, fire-safety, site security and cleanliness operate with well-practised efficiency.

Your staff are very well trained and are alert to any signs that a child may be at risk of harm or that a family may need extra support. You and your team anticipate situations in advance and are able to manage whatever arises with calm and thoughtful care. Again, your attention to detail means you have found simple ways to share key information and make sure that safety always comes first.

As with other aspects of school practice, you also exercise wise judgement. Through the school's curriculum, children learn how to manage everyday risks in sensible and proportionate ways. Outside in the forest school area for example, children can gain a real sense of adventure as they explore, climb and test out their abilities. Similarly, the well-resourced play areas provide children with plenty of scope to exercise their bodies and imaginations. In all situations, you provide plenty of attentive, but not over-powering, supervision so that children are kept safe but are not held back from challenging themselves. Consequently, children develop confidence, resilience and self-esteem.

Inspection findings

- This is an excellent nursery. Adults act as inspirational role models and keep children busy with plenty of purposeful tasks and activities to choose from. Children feel valued and gain a sense of achievement because activities are worthwhile and they get plenty of encouragement.
- Your work to promote and develop positive behaviours and raise aspirations are notable strengths. Staff are attentive to children's ideas and respect their rights and choices while also steering them to act with consideration and show care for others. In all your dealings with parents, you make it clear that you are ambitious for their children. You and your team make sure everyone makes the most of their time at Netherton Park Nursery.
- Children who find it hard to cope in school or to manage certain situations benefit from some expert support. In addition, the calm solution-focused attitude of the staff team means that any problems are often solved quickly and without fuss. Your focus on how to get the best from every situation and everyone's talents is

a key driver of continual school improvement.

- Your partnership with parents has continued to go from strength to strength. Parents who spoke with me were full of praise for the nurturing attention given to their children. Parents also appreciate the different workshops that you provide. These workshops, which help parents to learn about ways to help their children at home, happen frequently. On top of this, parents are able to attend various informal or drop-in sessions. All of which helps to maintain healthy and constructive links between home and school.
- Children's move from kindergarten to nursery is managed in a well-thought-through way. In some instances, staff move up with the children in order to provide continuity. In all cases, accurate assessment and excellent communication between staff means that no time is lost. Consequently, children's progress continues to forge ahead at impressive rates. By the time they leave, they are very well prepared for their move up to primary school.
- Staff are skilled at capitalising on children's interests and their previous learning. As a result, teaching is pitched perfectly to children's needs. During this inspection, for example, children used toy telescopes while listening to a story. This simple and fun device focused their attention, generated lots of purposeful conversation and helped to develop listening and comprehension skills. This simple, yet highly effective approach is typical.
- In addition, children regularly work with an artist on projects drawn from their own experiences. Trips and visits to local places such as the fire station or a garden centre are used to inspire conversation and develop children's communication skills. In all instances, staff consider the purpose and relevance of activities to children's particular needs and children respond exceptionally well. The quality of work they produce is superb and they make excellent progress across different areas of learning.
- In response to the recommendation from the previous inspection, you have examined ways to make the most of computer technology to support learning. You have made sure its use is balanced carefully with other ways of learning. Your long-standing focus on basic literacy and numeracy skills, children's creativity and relationships with one another, for instance, continue to be key priorities that colour every school day. Nevertheless, you recognise that technology can be used to capture key information about children's achievements. Alongside the high-quality learning journals kept in class, staff are now using electronic handheld devices to record children's work and progress. Parents, too, can make use of the same technology at home in order to provide information about out-of-school achievements. At this stage, parents are still finding out how to use this.
- Since the previous inspection, you have continued to strengthen the quality of leadership across the school. You and other senior leaders work with local schools to share good practice. Your newly formed link with a teaching school has brought more training and expertise into school. All of this has helped your senior staff to take on more responsibilities and develop their leadership skills.
- You trust your staff to take charge of key aspects of the school's work. You expect them to do their best and make sure they are accountable for their

actions. Similarly, governors have high expectations for the school's performance while also being mindful of everyone's well-being. Staff clearly value the support and challenge they receive. In their responses to Ofsted's staff survey, 97% of staff felt they received effective training and that the school leadership had created a motivational and supportive culture in the school. Almost all staff thought the school had continued to improve since it was last inspected. I agree.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- Build further on the strong partnership with parents to improve parents' understanding of how to use technology to share information about their children's achievements at home.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Pye
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders. I also met with the school's business manager, two governors and an external education adviser. I carried out short observations in different areas of the nursery, looked at children's work and records of their progress.

I paid particular attention to several key lines of enquiry. These included: progress since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching and supervision, how well the nursery prepares children for their next school, and children's welfare, safety and behaviour.

By the end of the inspection, there were two recent responses on Parent View, which were not enough to generate a report. However, there were two free-text responses and I spoke with some parents when they came in to school to collect their children at lunchtime. There were 25 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. I took account of these responses.

I looked at a number of documents, including: the school's own evaluation of its performance, improvement plans, records of checks on the quality of teaching, analysis of attendance patterns, information provided for parents, and several school policy documents. I also checked the school's website and the procedures for keeping children safe. I asked members of staff and parents about safeguarding

matters.

This section 8 inspection of Netherton Park Nursery School took place at the same time as an inspection of the registered early years kindergarten provision.