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Karen Clark
Interim Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Clark

Short inspection of Walbrook Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 10 October 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.

You provide innovative, imaginative and inspirational leadership. Your high expectations are reflected in every member of the staff team. As a result, children thrive at Walbrook Nursery. An exceptionally nurturing and caring ethos, which values each child as special and unique, is tangible. You have maintained excellence in all areas of provision since the last inspection. The school goes from strength to strength. It is highly deserving of its excellent local reputation.

Every day is full of fun, laughter and learning as you encourage children to 'reach for the stars'. The nursery environment is a magnet for learning. An immensely rich curriculum successfully embraces the children's own ideas and interests. It encourages children to experiment with managed risk and gives a high prominence to outdoor learning. Wherever I went, I observed highly motivated children. I saw readers, writers and mathematicians, as well as gardeners, explorers and detectives. Children make outstanding progress. They leave Walbrook Nursery as confident and independent learners. They are well prepared for school life.

School records and children's learning journals confirm that teaching is outstanding. Staff pay very close attention to observing children's learning. This means that all adults have a detailed knowledge of the children's interests, skills and progress. As a result, staff plan learning activities that are always precisely matched to each child's needs.

Children enjoy countless opportunities to share their thoughts and their learning. A 'sea of talk' pervades their environment. Children who are in the early stages of learning English are superbly supported by highly skilled bilingual staff. As a result, children's acquisition of language skills is exceptional.

The area for improvement from the previous inspection has been tackled successfully. You have invested in a wide range of technology equipment. This includes headphones, electronic tablets, microphones, cameras and interactive whiteboards. Children love to take photographs of each other as they play and learn together. They manoeuvre remote control toys accurately. As a result, children are confident in using a range of technology.

The curriculum is rich and varied. It has a sharp focus on promoting literacy and numeracy skills. Purposeful play is at the core of the curriculum and there are endless opportunities for children to explore and experiment. Staff bring a wealth of experience and expertise. These vital ingredients ensure that children enjoy learning. They have exceptional learning experiences, indoors and outdoors, every minute of the day.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They hold you in high regard. All parents whom I spoke with would recommend the school to others. This is because parents value the high standards of care, support and guidance which the school provides to pupils and their families. Parents told me that no concern is too small to share. They know their views will be listened to carefully and issues dealt with swiftly. One parent said, reflecting the views of many, 'It is a magical place for children to learn.'

Safeguarding is effective.

You ensure that the safeguarding of children is a high priority. All the required checks are made to ensure that staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children. You ensure that staff receive the required training. This includes training relating to protecting children from extremism and radicalisation. The school site is secure, safe and welcoming.

At the heart of the school's work is a deep commitment to finding out what is important for each child. You and the staff team know the children exceptionally well. You are alert to the things that make them vulnerable. You work closely with children's families. You use a wide range of professionals and services to support each child's physical health and emotional well-being, as well as their learning. Parents are confident that you do everything possible to ensure that their children are safe, happy and healthy.

Inspection findings

- You and other leaders have a deep commitment to every child achieving their best at Walbrook Nursery. Crucially, all staff share your high expectations,

passion and resolve. They work tirelessly to understand and meet each child's needs. As a result, children receive an outstanding start to their education.

- The governing body is highly effective in carrying out its role. Governors know the school well and are rightly proud of its excellent reputation. Governors have a strong commitment to equality of opportunity. Consequently, all groups of children make outstanding progress. No discrimination is evident in the school.
- Children develop a love of the outdoors and the natural world through 'forest school' activities. They enjoy an exceptional range of stimulating activities in the outdoor area. Children love to be outdoors in all weathers. They relish the weekly visits to Elm Wood. Photographs show children learning about seasonal changes, hunting for mini-beasts, building dens and toasting marshmallows on an open fire. Staff show a genuine interest in the natural world. Children love this area of learning and talk enthusiastically about it. For example, children squealed with delight as they dug for worms, observed them moving and described whether they were long or short. Children develop high levels of resilience during outdoor activities while they work together to learn new things. Parents notice the positive impact that outdoor learning has on their children's confidence, independence and physical development. For example, one parent said that her child was previously reluctant to participate. Now, he is confidently exploring all the paths in the wood and jumping on the trampoline.
- The provision for two-year olds in the 'Wings' group is excellent. Staff are highly skilled and have a deep understanding of the needs of very young children. Resources are accessible for children to choose. They are as open ended and flexible as possible. This ensures that children are not constrained but can explore their own ideas with support from adults. The priority areas of communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development are skilfully woven into learning throughout the day. For example, in one activity a group of children were playing with plastic animals. The teacher carefully reminded the children of animal names such as 'penguin' and 'giraffe' and introduced new words like 'alligator' and 'crocodile'. The children then talked enthusiastically about their recent visit to the zoo. Children make rapid progress in the prime areas of learning. We agreed that print resources, including books, do not fully reflect the language diversity in the setting.
- All children learn to behave outstandingly well, work independently, share resources and play fairly. Adults act as excellent role models for the children in how to behave and get along with others. Children are exceptionally thoughtful and considerate to each other.
- You are extremely successful in the way you work with parents. You engage them regularly in their children's learning. For example, parents thoroughly enjoy the 'family wood days'. Parents told me that these opportunities give them confidence to take their children outdoors. One parent told me, 'We go out now together and have great fun walking and exploring in the park.' This is successfully consolidating and extending children's knowledge and skills. Consequently, parents are making a positive contribution towards their achievement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the display of books and other printed material is enhanced to reflect the language diversity in the nursery.

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

Yours sincerely

Dorothy Bathgate
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, other senior leaders, two governors and a representative of the local authority. I visited all areas of the school to see children and staff at work. I observed children's behaviour around the school throughout the day. I met a number of parents informally at the beginning of the school day and considered the views of 49 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I evaluated a range of documents, including safeguarding records and policies.