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2 November 2017

Ms Sylvia Anne Humble  
Headteacher  
Monkchester Road Nursery School  
Monkchester Road  
Walker  
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Dear Ms Humble

### **Short inspection of Monkchester Road Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 18 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 November 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your leadership has continued to inspire staff to give of their very best and put children at the centre of the nursery. Your relationship with parents is a strength. They say how friendly and approachable you and your staff are, and they are confident that any issues they may have will be swiftly dealt with. You are constantly looking outwards into the community, and working with partners to improve the lives of children and their families. Truly every child really matters as an individual. 'Being in Monkchester Nursery is like being part of a huge family, for both parents and children,' is typical of what parents feel and say about the nursery.

Skilful staff are extremely well supported in developing their professional knowledge and the quality of their teaching. You have successfully maintained and further developed a team approach. Staff say, 'We support each other and value everyone's contributions. Children are at the centre of our care and we support their families in supporting them. We are encouraged to constantly review our practice and are well supported through changes.' You value staff and understand how difficult it can be sometimes. Staff comment, 'Leaders are approachable if we need extended deadlines or support.'

The nursery continues to go from strength to strength. The newly formed federation between yourselves, Newburn Manor Nursery and Ashfield Nursery will enable you

to build and share the strong practice in all these nurseries and further enhance your leadership skills.

Your evaluation of the nursery is succinct and precise. It is very clear in detailing what needs to be done, how and by when to further enhance the progress and attainment of the children in your nursery. It is very ambitious in the targets you have set yourselves.

You know that the attendance rate is only slowly improving and that there is more work to be done to improve this. You have included this in your plan and linked it further to developing healthy lifestyles to decrease absence because of sickness. You always review any regular or longer term absences and identify any help you can give to support those individual families. This has resulted in some success in improving absenteeism.

You have accurately identified writing as an area for development to embed the successful work now being delivered by staff for the most able children. This area is also highlighted in your robust data analysis of progress and attainment across the nursery.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The safeguarding ethos of the nursery is evident in all areas of work. For instance, in walking to the woodland area, the two-year-old children hold hands and are counted in and counted out. Parents know that arrangements mean that their children are safe and secure on the nursery site. They are reassured that if other friends or relatives are picking up their child, the nursery must be informed and will check out their identification. All staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding and are vigilant about the potential risks children may face. Governors ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met and regularly monitor policies and procedures.

The family support work the nursery undertakes with families and children is highly effective. You and your assistant headteacher are tenacious in ensuring that children and their families receive the support they need and are entitled to. The most vulnerable families are exceptionally well supported. Parenting skills are effectively developed through targeted delivery of courses such as baby massage and Healthy Eating and Nutrition for the Really Young (HENRY). Parents say how much they appreciate and learn from this.

### **Inspection findings**

- Staff development continues apace. The role of subject leader has been enhanced and embedded, with staff monitoring and moderating their own subject areas. Peer-to-peer observations have strengthened staff's understanding of what makes effective teaching. This has led to a continuous pattern of improvement in teaching, learning and assessment.

- The school regularly welcomes visiting practitioners to share the outstanding practice, locally, nationally and globally. Leaders and staff willingly approach other schools and settings to learn and improve their own practice.
- On entry, around half of the children are now assessed to be below age-related expectations. This is improving every year due to the impact of the high-quality provision for two-year-olds you now directly manage. This has a positive impact on the children's progress and achievement over the whole time they spend in the nursery.
- There is effective consistency and progression across the provision, with staff now working and planning across the two-, three- and four-year-old age groups. This means that when children leave the nursery, the vast majority are at or above age-related expectations in most of areas of learning. Therefore, their progress is outstanding.
- The children all make at least twice the expected rate of progress, which means that they are rapidly closing the achievement gap with their peers. This is because of the exceptionally strong teaching and highly effective use of assessment to identify the next steps in learning. While progress in writing for the most able is showing improvements, you know that this is an area of work to focus on because progression and attainment are generally less strong in this area.
- In an improving picture over the past three years, there is now a higher proportion of children who have attended this nursery achieving a good level of development than nationally. This means that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Children who benefit from the early years pupil premium make accelerated progress, because the additional funding is spent effectively, targeting any individual barriers to learning, particularly communication and in using expressive arts and design. These areas are accurately identified through robust assessment on entry to each year group.
- Those children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are quickly identified and supported in school, and any additional services are rapidly put into place. These children make similar rates of progress from their differing starting points as the rest of the children in the nursery. Parents really appreciate the support they and their children receive.
- The support to all parents is a strength of the school: from 'stay and make' sessions and homework, to family learning, parents are successfully encouraged to engage in both their children's and their own learning. Many parents have returned to education and some have become valued members of staff at the nursery.
- Governors are assured through a variety of processes and consultations that by federating with the two other nursery schools they are ensuring the longer term sustainability of the nursery. The expanded governing body will mean that there is a wider skill-set to draw on. Governors are therefore in a strong position to move forward.

- Governors know that a culture of continuous development is secure. They have a truly accurate picture of the nursery's strengths and areas for improvement. The high-quality reports received from the headteacher and other leaders, plus robust data, and their own focused monitoring visits, mean that they know the nursery extremely well.
- Governors are aware of the missing information on the current website. However, this is being rebuilt following the federation and all information will be up to date and completed during this process.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- continue to work with parents in improving attendance
- embed the recent improvements in outcomes in writing for the most able.

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

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Dorrity  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

The focus of the inspection was to check whether the highest standards identified at the previous inspection had been maintained and to find out how well particular groups of children were progressing. I held a variety of meetings with you and the deputy headteacher. I observed adult-led learning jointly with you in Nursery classes. I observed a group of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. I undertook further observations of the youngest children by myself. I considered a range of evidence, including the school's latest assessment information about children's learning and development, the school improvement plan, leaders' self-evaluation and children's work. I also reviewed minutes from governing body meetings, records of observations and other documentation. I met with four members of the governing body and with the school achievement partner. I considered the 25 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and spoke with nine parents. I also took account of the 22 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.