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Mrs Brenda Hargreaves
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hargreaves

Short inspection of Reedley Hallows 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, and all your staff, should be very proud that your school remains outstanding for the second inspection in a row. You and your team are highly committed to early years education. Complacency is not an option. You never stand still and are continually seeking ways to develop the quality of education and care that you provide. This ensures that children get the greatest start to their education in this nurturing and highly inclusive school. At your school, each child is treated as an individual and their uniqueness is respected.

Since the last inspection, you have successfully integrated two-year-olds into the provision. You have revised the planning of activities to ensure that they are securely linked to children's interests. Data is now scrutinised in much greater depth to identify, swiftly, any gaps in provision. Any underperformance is addressed with vigour. For example, to improve outcomes further in mathematics, the learning environment has been revamped to provide a more extensive range of mathematical opportunities for children. In addition, stories have been introduced which have a mathematical focus. Furthermore, you are working with other nursery schools on a mathematics project, with a focus on promoting mathematical language in the early years.

Partnership working is a strength of the school. You work with local schools to support each other with training and the moderation of children's work. Support is also given to local private day nurseries to help them improve outcomes for two-

year-olds.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of your school. They were queuing up at the end of the school day to express their positive views to me. They talked avidly about the 'excellent' progress their children make and the highly effective key-person system that is in place. Parents told me that the transition arrangements into the nursery and onward to Reception meet the needs of individual children very well. Some parents described them as 'seamless'. Parents took great delight in telling me how they are kept exceptionally well informed about their children's progress. There is no doubt that parents appreciate the advice and guidance that you and your staff provide to help them develop their children's learning at home.

Staff, at all levels, hold you in the highest regard. You have their full support and morale is very high. Staff, typically, commented, 'We are like a family. We look out for and support each other.' Your staff are highly reflective practitioners. They share your aims and ambitions for the school.

As we toured the school, I observed young, confident children with beaming smiles who showed high levels of independence and were very keen to learn. Children from different faiths and cultures mix exceptionally well together. There is no hint of any discord. Behaviour is impeccable. Children are a credit to the school and their families. Reedley Hallows Nursery is a happy and harmonious place for children to learn and play. Squabbles are rare because children are totally engrossed in their learning.

The local authority is proud of your achievements. They provide your 'outstanding' school with 'light touch support'. Your achievements were summed up eloquently by the local authority in the following quote: 'Since the last inspection, the headteacher has taken the school to an even higher level.'

You have addressed successfully the area for improvement identified at the last inspection. The outdoor and nearby woodland area have been enhanced further to provide children with a wider range of wonderful opportunities to develop their language skills and explore their interests.

We both agree that attendance for some pupils is an issue that the school needs to address. You also recognise that the small number of new governors need to become quickly familiar with their roles.

Safeguarding is effective.

Top of your list of priorities is keeping children safe. Parents are unanimous in their view that their children feel safe in school and are well looked after. You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. A culture of safeguarding is firmly embedded in the nursery.

All staff understand that the safety and well-being of the children is everyone's

responsibility. The single central record is compliant and there are comprehensive procedures in place for the recruitment and selection of staff. They are well trained and vigilant in noticing any signs that children may need help. They know exactly what procedures to follow if they are concerned about a child's safety or welfare. The school site is safe and secure and the credentials of any visitors are checked closely.

Children are supervised very well throughout the day. You, and your staff, are always visible, offering parents and children a warm welcome when they start in the morning or afternoon session. This gives parents an opportunity to talk to staff about any problems or concerns their children may have. Children are taught about personal safety as part of the daily routine and through visitors to the setting.

Inspection findings

- Children come into your school with varying starting points. For some children, these are significantly below those typical for their age. As a result of high-class teaching and innovative planning, all groups of children make rapid gains in their learning. This ensures that they are well prepared for their transition into Reception.
- Children relish the time they spend at your school. Learning is magical and fun. Firm friendships are being formed and conversation flows freely as children learn and play. Staff spend all of their time interacting with the children, developing and extending their learning. No learning time is wasted. Language skills are very well promoted and questioning is used effectively to probe and deepen children's learning.
- The quality of the learning environment, both indoors and outside, is superb and contributes significantly to the excellent progress children make. Children move around their environment with ease and confidence. Many resources are made of natural materials, providing children with real-life experiences. For example, children wore goggles and used real child-sized hammers to bang golf tees into a pumpkin. The excitement on their faces as they did this was a joy to see.
- You know your school intimately and keep a close eye on the quality of the teaching. Staff really do appreciate the feedback you give them after learning observations to help them keep their teaching skills fresh and up to date. Opportunities are also available for staff to learn from each other and to observe best practice at other schools in the locality. You realise the importance of all staff accessing regular training to ensure that high-quality teaching is maintained across your school.
- Although non-statutory, you ensure that parents are made aware of the importance of children attending school on a regular basis. Good attendance is celebrated and any unexplained absences are followed up in a timely manner. However, attendance is still a thorny issue. We both agree that the school needs to look at the whole issue of attendance again with fresh eyes to think of more innovative ways of encouraging and supporting those families whose children do not attend school regularly.

- Disadvantaged children flourish at your school. You have an excellent understanding of the challenges that this group of children face. Funding is spent exceptionally well to support children academically, emotionally and socially. Such highly effective practice ensures that this group of children can take part in all that the school has to offer.
- Overall, governance is very strong. Most governors know the school very well and offer you high levels of support and challenge. However, a small number of governors are very new to their roles, which they have taken on with energy and enthusiasm. We both recognise the importance of embedding their roles so that they very quickly gain the knowledge and skills to rigorously challenge you as other members of the governing body do.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- more children attend school on a regular basis
- the small number of new governors, very quickly, become effective members of the governing body.

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

During the inspection, I met with you, staff, a representative from the local authority and three members of the governing body. I also had discussions with parents to seek their views of the school. We went on a tour of the school to see the learning that was taking place. I looked at some examples of children's work and observed their behaviour in class. I reviewed a range of documentation, including the single central record, the school's information of children's progress and records relating to the monitoring of teaching and learning. I also took account of the responses to Parent View, the online Ofsted questionnaire, completed by eight parents. Account was also taken of the school's most recent questionnaire to parents.