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Mrs Lindsay Ingham  
Headteacher  
Basnett Street Nursery School  
Basnett Street  
Burnley  
Lancashire  
BB10 3ES

Dear Mrs Ingham

### **Short inspection of Basnett Street Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 28 November 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 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 aim to create a place which 'strives for excellence' is evident on stepping through the door of the nursery. Such ambition ripples through the daily experiences which children receive. Governors are equally ambitious. Members of the governing body make regular visits to the school and keep a close eye on developments. Incisive evaluation of the work of the school has led to a celebration of success and well-chosen priorities to make provision even better. Plans to remedy any weaker features are sensible and are directly linked to how the action will improve children's experiences.

With determination and fairness, you lead a highly skilled team of adults. You model strong practice for your team so that the quality of teaching is enhanced. Staff appreciate your care and attention to their professional training. Staff video record each other as they teach and then use such recordings to reflect on their practice. Any strengths are shared and any points which can be improved are included in training modules. You personalise the training to suit the particular adult. Consequently, staff feel supported and encouraged to improve; morale is high. You and I agreed that the strong practice evident in the nursery is worthy of sharing with other schools.

Classrooms are wonderful. High-quality resources are organised so that children learn to be independent. They calmly reach for any equipment they need because they know exactly where it is. Broad smiles appear on children's faces as they catch

sight of their reflection in the many mirrors around the room. Children grow in confidence and self-esteem. They appreciate differences in each other and develop their feelings about the world. Outside is a wonderland of activities waiting to entice children to use their curiosity to learn. Well-planned activities invite children to have a go, so that learning is fun and exciting. For example, wearing waterproof clothes and using binoculars, children took giant strides to walk uphill through squelchy mud and across uneven ground as they explored the terrain and spotted birds and wildlife. Similarly, in the wooded learning area, one child gingerly took small steps to manoeuvre stones and pebbles as he splashed down the stream. His deep concentration let his steps grow longer as he became bolder in his attempt to reach the end. Such activities allow children to take risks, learn from trial and error, and delightedly make gains in their social, personal and physical skills.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. Children jointly agree the class rules and set expectations for themselves and their friends. They share, listen and take turns. From low starting points, children learn quickly and use this knowledge and skills in different situations. Now and again, staff could intervene a little more rapidly to enhance children's language skills.

You know your families very well. Parents and carers spoke very highly of you, your staff and the work of the nursery. Parents are confident that you and the staff will help and support them. Your own survey showed that all of the 20 parents who responded would recommend the school.

Following the previous inspection, you and the governors were asked to consolidate the good partnership with parents by ensuring that they contribute to the journals of their children's learning experiences, and by making more of them aware of the school's website. You took swift action to successfully remedy these issues. Parents are very satisfied with their involvement in their children's learning and use the website regularly.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is very high priority in Basnett Street. Staff are in no doubt that everyone must be vigilant. Staff know children and their families extremely well. They are alert to any changes in a child's behaviour which may indicate that the child is at risk. Staff know what action to take if they are worried about a child. All staff have read the most recent guidance about keeping children safe. Annual training makes sure that all adults are knowledgeable about safeguarding. Weekly updates, called '7 minute briefings', keep this knowledge fresh. You check staff knowledge by holding quizzes, and asking relevant questions during class observations. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Recruitment, selection and induction procedures are strict. New staff are effectively introduced to the processes in the school. Visitors sign in and are issued with different coloured badges dependent on the reason for the visit. Children recognise the colours and so feel safe talking to such visitors. Record-keeping is of a high standard. Staff are meticulous in completing these records. Any incidents that need to be escalated to external agencies are referred on swiftly. The school site is

very safe and secure. A rolling programme of maintenance activities makes sure that all the equipment is safe for children to use. A filtering system is in place to protect children when they use the computer. Visits, from the fire, police and medical services, help children to know how to keep themselves safe and healthy.

### **Inspection findings**

- All aspects of the school's work have gone from strength to strength. Despite some turbulence in staffing since the previous inspection, children receive the very best of experiences at Basnett Street.
- Arrangements for children joining the nursery are well planned. Staff make home visits to get to know the whole family and talk to parents individually. Staff use these visits to play alongside the children and start to build positive relationships. As a result, families trust the staff to care for their children and feel confident in leaving them at the nursery. Parents receive a pack of information which is attractively presented and very informative. Children and their parents visit the nursery so they can experience first-hand the daily routines. Preparation for children moving on to primary school are equally well-organised. Several visits to the primary school, such as to watch the Christmas play, enable children to get to know the school. Teachers from the primary school visit the nursery so they can get to know the children in a safe and familiar environment. This means they get to understand what the children know and can do, which smooths the pathway to primary school.
- Parents are much more involved in their children's learning than at the time of the previous inspection. Information collected by staff at the home visits forms the basis of a very informative and well-presented journal of children's learning experiences. This is recorded as 'what my family says about me' so that parents feel involved from the start. Staff record an observation and write an evaluation of the child's learning and progress. This means that parents know the progress their children are making and feel very much part of their children's education. Parents feel that the school takes notice of their views and staff work 'hand in hand' with them to make sure their children do well. For example, one parent felt her child could do better than the observation showed and confidently discussed this with the teacher. She was very happy with the outcome. Termly discussions about the learning journals are held with parents. The numbers of parents taking part in these discussions has significantly increased over the last few years, which reflects parents' keen interest in their children's learning. Parents take advantage of the courses the school provides and many achieve a qualification.
- Parents say they are happy with the new website and use it regularly to keep up to date with developments in the school. The website can translate its pages which means all parents can find the information they want in their preferred language. It is user-friendly and the design reflects the aims of the school. The virtual tour gives a real flavour of what happens daily. Parents particularly like the weekly reminder about attendance. Governors provide an attractive and informative termly newsletter to parents. Parents appreciate this increased communication. The newly established parents' forum is organising fundraising activities which are well supported by the school community. Essentially, the

forum is providing a setting for parents to get to know each other.

- Governors make sure that the extra funding provided for disadvantaged children is used efficiently. They check on the effectiveness of the use of this funding on children's achievement. Leaders know that this group of children need more opportunities to learn how to speak, listen and manage their feelings. Leaders introduced a specific programme of activities to help these children. As a result, last year this group of children made even more progress than the other children.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff use their skills to intervene more precisely in order to enhance children's language skills
- the strong practice in the nursery is shared more widely.

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

Eileen Mulgrew  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you to discuss improvements since the previous inspection. You and I visited all classrooms and the outdoor areas to observe the activities taking place. I met with a group of eight parents. I considered the results from your parent survey and the one response to Ofsted's Parent View survey. I spoke with all staff as a group, and also to several members of staff individually. I met with the chair of the governing body and a parent governor. I discussed the school's work with a representative of the local authority.

I analysed a range of documentation, including documents about safeguarding. I checked the records made to confirm the suitability of adults to work with children. I read the school's self-evaluation document, the improvement plan and a sample of governing body meeting minutes. I scrutinised the information on the school website. We looked at a sample of children's learning books and examples of their work on displays around the school.