

9 February 2018

Mrs Diane Herbert
Burnwood Nursery School
Chell Heath Road
Chell Heath
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire
ST6 6PB

Dear Mrs Herbert

Short inspection of Burnwood Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 30 January 2018, 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 good in April 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Since becoming executive headteacher in September 2015, you have been determined to create and develop a highly effective nursery school as part of the early years provision in the local community. Senior leaders and governors share your drive and ambition. Together you have substantially improved the provision and developed a very strong team. Every member of staff is committed to ensuring the best possible learning experience for each individual child. The stimulating learning environment and highly engaging curriculum ensures that every child thrives.

The school has undergone a number of major changes in response to local priorities since the last inspection. In September 2013, funding changes resulted in a move from full-time to part-time provision. A new headteacher was appointed. A further change took place in September 2015; you became the executive headteacher and the governors at Burnwood Primary School were asked to oversee the running of the nursery school. The school is currently part of a local authority review of nursery schools in this area. You have been highly effective in managing change while driving further improvements and ensuring ambitious leadership at all levels. There is a clear vision for the future of the school.

The learning environment has improved significantly since the last inspection and is exceptionally well developed. Highly organised and extremely well thought out, it fosters independence from the start. Learning activities of the highest quality engage and interest children. They are intensely keen to investigate and explore. Clear routines and structures enable children to focus on their learning from the moment they enter the nursery each morning. The quality of teaching and learning has further developed and much is outstanding. You constantly seek to provide every member of staff with high-quality training and development opportunities. As a result, all staff have an excellent understanding of how young children learn. They skilfully support, encourage, challenge and question children in every situation. Not a single moment of learning time is lost. During snack time, children counted, added and compared the numbers of cartons of milk, reading and matching numbers accurately.

Delightful relationships are evident across the provision. Children are happy, confident and play well together. A calm, learning focused atmosphere pervades the whole school. Parents are very positive and recognise the progress that their children are making, particularly with their speech and language. As one parent said: 'The teachers go above and beyond... They make the learning fun...and children who were struggling in September are now thriving.'

Governors recognise the journey the school has been on since they became involved two and a half years ago. They have an excellent understanding of the school and make good use of this knowledge to challenge and support. They have enhanced the staffing of the school and ensured that sufficient resources are available. This has been a significant factor in driving the substantial improvements across the nursery. The nursery is regularly used as a centre for good practice and professionals from other schools and settings visit to learn from you and your staff. As a result, leaders are highly reflective and constantly striving for excellence.

Safeguarding is effective.

You ensure that all staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously and as a result there is a strong culture of keeping children safe across the school. Staff benefit from regular training sessions. These include radicalisation and extremism. As a result, staff are vigilant and know what to do if they have a concern about a child. They know their children and families extremely well. The school is very effective in engaging with early help, and promoting this to parents so that children and families get timely support. Strong networks have been established with social workers, health visitors and neighbouring schools. The designated safeguarding lead ensures that information and actions are very well coordinated.

Leaders ensure that policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and are fit for purpose. All appropriate checks are made prior to appointing new staff or allowing volunteers to work in the school. Governors systematically check and monitor safeguarding processes to ensure that they are robust. The environment provides suitable challenge for children to develop independence and learn how to manage risks in a safe and controlled way. For example, children worked together to help each other cross a bridge they had built out of boxes and crates.

Inspection findings

- Data analysis is extremely thorough and drives all that you do. A very strong culture of observe, review and plan ensures that staff know exactly what each individual child can do. As a result of this high level of knowledge, they are able to plan ambitious learning precisely in order to meet the needs of different groups of children. Additional support is given quickly to those identified as having gaps in their knowledge, skills or understanding. High-quality interventions take place daily. Support in speech and language, nurture provision or extensive challenge for the most able children ensure that gaps are closing for particular groups of children. For example, disadvantaged pupils are making accelerated progress in eight areas of learning due to specific support and challenge.
- Full use is made of additional funding to ensure that all disadvantaged pupils access the 30 hours offer. You and all staff are determined that disadvantaged children will acquire the knowledge, skills and understanding to match those of other children by the time they leave the nursery. You understand the potential for these children to make even greater gains. These children are already developing very positive learning behaviours and understand what is expected. They are able to work with increasing concentration and resilience as a result of greater exposure to the high-quality provision.
- All adults are highly skilled in developing the children's ability to think, reason and explain. Staff take every opportunity to talk to children and use challenging words as well as extending sentences to improve children's speaking and listening skills. Throughout the day, children describe what they are doing and why. Adults skilfully help them make connections with what they know already and provide links to the wider world. For example, children excitedly linked x-ray pictures with certain animals and associated the bones in the x-ray with the bones in their own hands and feet. Through discussions, adults challenge stereotypes and support children to develop respect for one another. Behaviour is excellent.
- Teaching is supported by highly structured routines and clear expectations. Children understand the routines exceptionally well and quickly develop confidence. They wait patiently, take turns, share and help one another to clear up. Early reading and writing skills are taught very effectively. Children develop an appropriate pencil grip and begin to use joined-up writing. Phonics is taught very well and children begin to blend letters and sounds orally. As a result, all children are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Transition arrangements are highly effective. They have strengthened and developed since the last inspection. Parents comment favourably on how well you prepare children for school. Children are well prepared for their move from pre-school to nursery and then to Reception. Parents are involved at every stage. Leaders at all levels work to ensure a joined-up approach to all stages of early education. You have created a comprehensive curriculum which runs from pre-school and enables children to build on what they have already learnt. Precise information is shared about each individual child at points of transition. This results in a smooth move from home to nursery and then into school. You have

introduced comprehensive policies to ensure a consistent approach, which helps parents and carers, for example your attendance policy. Children are expected to attend every day on time and you tenaciously follow up any absence. You work extremely hard to establish good habits for later life.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff continue to provide high-quality early interventions in order to further close the gaps for groups of pupils
- staff continue to build on the significant improvements and further develop their work in sharing good practice with other schools and professionals.

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

Yours sincerely

Nicola Harwood

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held discussions with you and other leaders about the significant changes to the school since the last inspection, the school's self-evaluation and areas for further development. You shared the plans for the future of the nursery. I shared my key lines of enquiry with you. We discussed information about children's current progress and attainment. I met with members of the governing body, including the chair. I considered the nine responses to the staff questionnaire. I carried out learning walks with the teacher in charge and observed intervention and phonics sessions. During these I spoke with children and discussed what they were doing. I met with parents before school started and considered the 34 responses to Ofsted's Parent View and text service. I met with a representative from the local authority. I reviewed a range of documents including: the school self-evaluation and development plan; minutes of governing body meetings; information on how the early years pupils premium funding is spent; monitoring and training records; local authority notes of visits; safeguarding policies and procedures; and attendance monitoring data.