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13 February 2018

Mrs Lesley Martin  
Headteacher  
Garretts Green Nursery School  
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West Midlands  
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Dear Mrs Martin

### **Short inspection of Garretts Green Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 1 February 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 November 2012.

#### **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.

You and your assistant headteacher provide exceptional leadership. You have the highest expectations of yourself and of everyone who works in the school. You provide warm, caring and highly effective support to every member of staff. As one governor said, 'The headteacher and assistant headteacher create a family atmosphere, and this is a very special place.'

Your focus on improving outcomes for all children is unrelenting. You never rest on your laurels, and constantly seek ways to improve the school. Your passion, drive and determination to give every child the best possible start to school is to be admired. This passion and drive is shared by every member of staff. Garretts Green Nursery is indeed a special place for children to learn and grow.

You and your staff have the overwhelming support of all parents and carers. The vast majority of responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire not only agreed with the statements, but strongly agreed with them. Parents' comments on the text message service included: 'fantastic', 'fabulous',

'exceptional', 'remarkable', 'phenomenal' and 'outstanding'. Parents' praise for you and your staff is exceptionally high. Parents appreciate strongly the care, support and excellent teaching their children receive, and one said, for example, 'They have great pride and passion in what they do on a daily basis. They are truly amazing.' This was clearly evident during the inspection.

At the time of the last inspection, you were asked to make the school development plan more precise. You understand in minute detail exactly what the strengths of the school are, and where further improvements could be made. Your school development plan is a comprehensive document that clearly identifies what needs to be done to further improve the school. You check very carefully that the plans are improving outcomes for children, and then seek further ways to build on the successes. As a result, the school's improvement since the last inspection has been substantial.

You were also asked to give children more opportunities to develop their reading and writing skills through more focused tasks. You have taken highly effective action to develop these areas. The teaching of phonics is now well embedded, and children have many opportunities to develop their knowledge of rhymes, stories and letter sounds. Staff expertly weave the teaching of letter sounds through all the children's learning experiences. For example, when one child arrived in the classroom, a member of staff modelled the sound of the letter which starts his name to reinforce children's understanding of this initial letter sound.

In addition to this, you have developed a school library. The quality of the environment and the books in the library help children to develop a love of books and reading. Children are able to choose books to take home and share with their parents, which further support their opportunities to read. Staff provide children with many opportunities to practise their writing skills. As well as encouraging children to write, staff provide additional opportunities to develop children's fine motor skills. For example, children use dough to strengthen their fingers, which then, in turn, improves their pencil grips. As a result of this very high quality of teaching, children make excellent progress in reading and writing, as well as all other areas of the early years curriculum.

Governors are very well informed about all aspects of the school's performance. They understand the school's strengths and areas for development in detail. They use the assessment information you give them to check that children are making good progress. They challenge you when they identify an area which needs further development, but also provide you with support to ensure that the school improvement journey continues. This support and challenge is highly effective and helps to take the school from strength to strength.

Governors recognise that the children at Garretts Green Nursery School get a flying start to their education. In addition to checking on the academic progress of children, they focus on careful financial management of the school. Governors recognise that, due to national funding formula changes, they must place even further emphasis on planning for the future financial sustainability of the

school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding children is at the heart of everything staff do in this school. Every step is taken to keep children as safe as possible. You never take your eyes off this area, and all staff recognise and understand their responsibility to protect children. School policies and procedures are followed to the letter, and staff training is regularly updated. When concerns are raised about children, you and your staff do not rest until you have the right support in place to help them.

Staff encourage children to take risks and teach the children very well how to manage those risks. This helps children to learn and play safely in areas such as the forest school. Children are taught how to keep themselves safe throughout the curriculum. For example, staff model carefully why it is not safe to go into the street without an adult, and what to do if the fire alarm rings. Staff work closely with parents, helping them to understand how to keep their children safe when using computers and the internet.

### **Inspection findings**

- Your highly reflective practice is instilled in all staff. Staff have a desire to improve their own expertise and skills and often take it on themselves to look for ways to develop and hone their teaching skills. You provide bespoke training and support to staff, identifying development needs through comprehensive appraisal systems. You check carefully that the training and support are helping staff to develop. Consequently, the quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- You use exceptionally well assessment information about what children can do to track their progress. Assessments cover all early years learning areas. You and all your staff know exactly what each child can do and then use this information to plan carefully to take children's learning further forward. As a result, all children, whatever their needs or ability, make excellent progress.
- You and your staff ensure that not a single moment of learning is wasted and take every opportunity to support children's learning. Through exceptionally high-quality questioning, staff expertly check what children can do, and swiftly provide further support and challenge to help them learn even more. Children demonstrate a level of sustained concentration well beyond their years because staff plan highly engaging activities, precisely matched to learning needs and interests.
- Staff encourage children to think for themselves. They give children time to express themselves and provide support when needed. Staff also encourage children to support one another's learning. For example, when one child was finding an explanation difficult, another child was asked to help out. This helps to develop children's social and speaking and listening skills extremely well.
- Staff make seamless links between all areas of children's learning. The whole early years curriculum is woven expertly into the children's learning environment.

For example, during a forest school session, children learned about keeping themselves safe by following the rules, counted the instructions they had to follow, developed their scientific knowledge about ice and their speaking and listening skills by sharing their thoughts and ideas. The teaching at Garretts Green Nursery School is of the very best quality, which helps children become confident, happy and independent learners.

- As a result of the high expectations of all children and the wide and exciting learning experiences, children are exceptionally well prepared for the move to the Reception Year in their next schools. Staff plan very carefully to help children move to their next schools. They make books for the children, containing pictures of the new schools, placing an emphasis on familiarising the children with their next school. Teachers from the new schools visit the Nursery to get to know the children and their needs. In addition to this, Nursery staff provide children who have additional needs with extra visits to their new schools to help them settle quickly.
- The provision for children who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is a particular strength of the school. A highly skilled leader of the SEN provision ensures that the right support for these children is in place. Staff have an excellent understanding of children's additional needs and plan very carefully to meet them. As a result of this high-quality provision, children who have SEN and/or disabilities make some of the best progress in the school.
- The warmth and care you and your staff show towards children is superb and can clearly be seen in the exceptional relationships which exist between all children and staff. Even the very youngest children show respect towards one another and staff because staff model this so well. Staff have high expectations of behaviour, and the nurturing and encouraging way in which they model good behaviours ensures that children know, understand and respond brilliantly to the routines and structures in the school. It is clear that Garretts Green Nursery is one big, happy family in which children flourish. One parent summed this up by saying, 'There is nowhere in the world I would rather them be.'

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- further strategic financial planning is undertaken to secure the future sustainability of the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Ann Pritchard  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you and your assistant headteacher, two members of the governing body and your school support partner. You and your assistant headteacher joined me on brief visits to lessons. I talked to children and observed their learning. I observed children's behaviour at lunchtime. I spoke to parents before school. I reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's own evaluation of its performance, the school development plan, documents relating to keeping children safe and the most recent information about their achievement. I considered 24 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire from parents, and their comments made through the text message service. There were no responses to the children's questionnaires. I considered nine responses to the staff questionnaire.