

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



27 February 2018

Mrs Claire Twigg  
Acting Headteacher  
Newtown Nursery School  
Hockley Close  
Newtown  
Birmingham  
West Midlands  
B19 2NS

Dear Mrs Twigg

### **Short inspection of Newtown 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 outstanding in January 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 speedily stepped up to your responsibility as acting headteacher and successfully built on the outstanding foundations set by your predecessor. You have developed an environment of open communication where everyone's contribution is valued. You encourage staff to question themselves and others. You continue to look forward, overcome challenges and strive for ongoing improvement. You have confidently introduced new ways of working, following on from extensive research into new and highly effective practice. Furthermore, you ensure that all staff are trained well and informed fully to confidently embark on new ventures.

Staff at all levels put the children at Newtown Nursery School first. Together with staff and governors, you provide a high level of care for the children that is evident in all that you do. All adults exemplify mutual respect and children readily respond in kind. Through their endeavours, staff consistently overcome any potential barriers to children's achievements.

Children calmly go about their daily routines and trust adults to look after their needs. All planned activities capture children's interest and they are keen to do their best. Adults know when to intervene and when to let the children explore independently, investigate or practise skills. As a result, children purposefully pursue the available activities and experiences. They write and draw with increasing

accuracy, pour liquids from one container to another with precision and excitedly explain the features of a dinosaur to visitors.

The children are learning to be more independent when putting on coats, hats and gloves to explore outside. They confidently ride tricycles and steer with precision and at different speeds. Others climb, explore and play cooperatively with others.

Following the previous inspection in 2013, the substantive headteacher researched and considered appropriate devices to develop children's awareness of technology. She purchased a range of iPads, interactive whiteboards and smart boards. Children quickly and confidently developed a range of appropriate skills to use this technology efficiently. In more recent years, children enter the nursery with a well-developed experience of handling devices appropriate for their age. Nevertheless, staff provide a suitable balance of developing children's technological skill with first-hand experience and investigative play.

In September 2016, the nursery extended its provision to include two-year-old children. You rearranged staffing, provided training and prepared suitable indoor and outdoor areas so that the children were safe, stimulated and able to learn quickly. You continue to work closely with staff and families to ensure that all staff are able to identify, understand and meet the needs of two-year-old children.

In the light of local insecurity regarding the viability of nursery provision, you have diligently considered all future options. You are working closely with a number of other nurseries to consider how best to continue nursery education in the area. The Birmingham Nursery School Collaboration Trust is considering forming a federation of schools.

Governors have remained strong during a time of transition. They are actively involved in the school and frequently visit to observe, make suggestions and ask probing questions. Governors make full use of the local authority's governor support service and as a consequence they are aware of their statutory responsibilities. The school currently has two vice-chairs of the governing body who share the role as one nears retirement. They are in the process of preparing a suitable successor to take on the future role of chair of the governing body.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

All staff, at all levels, take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. As you said, 'Care is at the heart of everything we do.'

Staff receive regular up-to-date training so they keep abreast of local and national issues. They understand the different forms of abuse, harm or neglect and know the relevant indications which would give rise for concern. They know the procedures well and lose no time in reporting or referring concerns.

You are diligent in securing further investigation, seeking necessary expertise and keeping all those concerned informed. You lead weekly reviews with staff so that

they are fully aware of the actions taken by external agencies and how staff might need to adapt their practice in school.

The site is secure and appropriate checks are conducted for visitors. Procedures to recruit and check staff are thorough and the single central record is compliant.

### **Inspection findings**

- You are passionate about 'upping the game' and you have relentlessly identified areas for unambiguous improvement. You say that governors will not and should not accept excuses. As a consequence, you resolutely investigate the needs of the children and work closely with staff to secure ambitious rates of children's progress. You have responded diligently to the many changes brought about by local policy changes and budget reductions. You initially led the school at a time of difficulty when the substantive headteacher was absent due to ill-health. As a result, you have proved an ability to forge ahead and inspire trust in all those who work with you.
- All staff are committed to the families they serve and want only the best for the children. They quickly establish what the children can and cannot do and lose no time in ensuring that each step of development is appropriate, yet challenging. They model language clearly, prompt children's responses and ask questions. As a result, children quickly move from single-word recognition to expressing simple sentences. For example, a small group of two-year-old children sat with a keyworker and named the objects she pulled from a bag. She then went on to ask questions which led the children to move from naming the object to saying, 'we put the hat on our heads' and 'we put the sock on our foot'. Adults lead and facilitate activities with children but know when to step back to enable children to independently investigate, observe and discover.
- The two-year-old children enjoy well-planned activities and good-quality resources. Staff lose no time in identifying children's limited communication and language development. They carefully consider planned activities and experiences so that children's learning is purposeful, enjoyable and pertinent. They understand that children's and families' needs change over time and they remain flexible to quickly adapt to changing circumstances.
- You are unambiguous in your drive for ambitious rates of children's progress, regardless of their starting points. Together with skilled staff, you quickly identify gaps in children's knowledge and understanding and plan sequences of learning to ensure their success. On entry to nursery school, children's knowledge and skills are typically below those expected for their age. You purposefully engage parents by sharing the initial assessments with them. In addition, you provide workshops for parents so that they can effectively support their children at home. You keep detailed records of children's progress and quickly identify where individuals or groups of children are falling behind or where some are capable of more. Your records show that the vast majority of children make impressive rates of progress over three terms. From low starting points, many meet or exceed the standard expected for their age.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governors continue to prepare for the appointment of a chair of the governing body when the need arises later this year.

I am copying this letter to the vice-chairs 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

Deana Holdaway  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the two vice-chairs of the governing body and a representative of The Birmingham Nursery School Collaboration Trust. I observed children in a variety of learning activities and looked at your records of their progress.

I considered your school self-evaluation and improvement plan. In addition, I looked at your school policies for safeguarding, child protection and special educational needs and/or disabilities. I looked at your school website and considered a sample of minutes from governors' meetings.