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Mrs J Di Castiglione  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Di Castiglione

### **Short inspection of Greenhall Nursery**

Following my visit to the school on 14 February 2018 with Johanne Clifton, Ofsted Inspector, 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.

Greenhall Nursery school is an inspirational organisation. Children are at the heart of all of the decisions that are made. Staff are committed to the school and love their roles. Since the last inspection, governors have appointed a new headteacher and assistant headteacher. These leaders have substantial skills and experience across different sectors. They have maintained the highest of standards.

Leaders and governors have established a clear programme for staff development. There is a focus on providing all staff with opportunities to share what they do. As a result, staff are able to share effective strategies and continually develop their practice. Some new systems for developing teaching further are at a relatively early stage. Nonetheless, outstanding teaching and learning is in place and is constantly refined and developed.

The school and its site are attractive and well maintained. As children arrive in the morning they take part in communal activities which establish strong levels of interest. Many parents join in with these activities and have time to settle their children and support their learning. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the standard of education and care. Comments from parents include: 'The whole atmosphere is welcoming, parents and children really feel part of the school family'

and 'My child's needs are more than met, but importantly, she is given the space to be herself.'

Developing and promoting communication is the cornerstone of the school's work. Staff use highly effective strategies to encourage children to communicate their thoughts and feelings. As a result of this important work, children make rapid progress with their communication.

Governors hold leaders to account for all that they do. They have an excellent working knowledge of the school and participate in a range of activities to help them understand how provision can be developed further. Governors have considerable experience and specialist knowledge in areas such as education and safeguarding. They are well aware of their statutory duties and leave no stone unturned.

At the last inspection, the school was asked to ensure that leaders and governors review, monitor and evaluate policies, practices and systems more evenly throughout the school. This included making sure that all documentation fully reflects the early years foundation stage welfare, learning and development requirements and making sure that more use is made of assessment information so that the most able children can make even more progress.

Leaders and governors now have a clear timetable and process for reviewing policies. This timetable is carefully monitored throughout the year so that all aspects of the school's practice are up to date. Staff are involved in the review of policies so that everyone is clear about their role and responsibilities. No work is rushed or last-minute. The school's documentation and systems are of a high quality, meet requirements and support leaders to maintain outstanding standards.

The early years foundation stage requirements are fully met by the school. Staff pay close attention to the different stages of development within the early years profile and use these to track children's progress. As a special school, stages of development are effectively broken down into smaller steps to capture all aspects of children's learning. Assessment information is used intelligently to inform teachers' day-to-day planning. All children, including the most able, are well supported and their targets are regularly reviewed.

Though the school remains outstanding and outcomes are very strong, leaders and governors acknowledge that even more work can be done to ensure that new systems for developing the quality of teaching are embedded further and that the level of challenge for all children is consistently high.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is a priority for the school. Leaders and governors have created a strong culture of safeguarding. Some members of the governing body bring specific expertise to the school which helps to ensure that arrangements are fit for purpose.

Induction procedures for staff are a particular strength. Staff know exactly what to do if they have a concern. Due to the size of the school, all staff know and understand how to support the needs of individual children. Leaders have devised robust procedures for discussing the decisions they make about children's welfare. These 'supervision meetings' are well recorded and evidence the important actions that leaders take to keep children safe.

### **Inspection findings**

- The early years welfare requirements are fully met. Leaders have devised comprehensive systems to ensure that children's needs are met. These include: appropriate staff ratios, specific training for medication, paediatric first aid training and thorough risk assessments for all activities.
- Leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching has improved further since the last inspection. Teachers are encouraged to share their practice, the quality of planning is strong and assessment information is reliable. All staff receive regular, meaningful feedback about the impact of their work. Feedback is often generated as a result of staff collaborating and sharing what they do best. However, some aspects of the school's coaching and development model are quite new and need to be embedded further.
- Learning activities are rich and engaging. During the inspection children were undertaking a wide range of tasks. These included making treats, devising magic potions and developing physically in the hydrotherapy pool. Children were having lots of fun and learning all of the time. In most cases, children are thoroughly challenged. However, on occasion, the level of challenge can drop slightly because children are not given sufficient time to think about how they can respond and be even more independent.
- The school devises 'personalised learning plans' to structure the support that children receive. These plans are highly effective. Targets and measures of success within plans are well thought out and regularly reviewed. Plans are on display in every classroom and staff are encouraged to continually assess the extent to which children make progress lesson by lesson. Children's learning journals evidence rapid progress from their different starting points
- Given the complexity of children's needs, staff meticulously plan how different activities are introduced. This careful planning and attention to detail ensures that children are ready for different challenges throughout the day. Everybody understands their roles, children are supported to manage change and it is clear that they feel safe.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- opportunities for staff to share their best practice are embedded further
- all staff consistently maintain high levels of challenge by giving children time to respond and become even more independent.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Keay  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you at the start of the inspection to review your school self-evaluation and development plans. We used our discussion to agree key lines of enquiry to ascertain whether the school remains outstanding and that safeguarding is effective.

Inspectors visited every classroom and also took account of learning experiences in other parts of the school, such as the sensory room and hydrotherapy pool. During observations, inspectors reviewed personalised learning plans, teachers' planning, and children's learning journals.

I held a meeting with you to explore the culture of safeguarding at Greenhall. I took account of a range of key documents, including: the single central record, training records, child protection files, risk assessments, information relating to fire safety, compliance with the early years welfare requirements, and staff personnel files.

Inspectors reviewed further school documentation to check on standards. Documents included: assessment information, training and development plans, minutes of meetings of the governing body and attendance information.

I took account of feedback from 13 respondents to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, 11 free-text responses from parents, and four responses to the staff survey. Inspectors met with drivers, escorts and parents at the start of the day as children arrived at school.

I met with two members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. I spoke to a representative from Staffordshire local authority via the telephone.