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Mrs Deborah Harrison  
Headteacher  
Greenfield Nursery School  
Hurst Drive  
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Hertfordshire  
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Dear Mrs Harrison

### **Short inspection of Greenfield Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 20 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 October 2013.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

You were appointed as headteacher of the school in September 2017, having been acting headteacher during the previous year. You had rightly identified a decline in some aspects of the school's work, particularly in leadership and the quality of teaching and children's outcomes in Nursery, since the last inspection. By the end of their time in Nursery, no children were attaining above the expectations for their ages in any area of learning because of weaknesses in teaching. Staff development and appraisal were not in place.

The areas for improvement identified at the last inspection, especially in improving teaching of the most able children, had not been sufficiently addressed. Insufficient progress had been made in improving children's attendance, especially that of disadvantaged children.

Since your appointment, you have quickly put in place a strong system of appraisal where staff performance targets are linked to the priorities for improvement in the school development plan. These priorities for improvement are based on your accurate self-evaluation of the impact of teaching on children's learning and progress in the pre-school and in Nursery.

You have set high expectations for teaching and, as a result, staff know what these

are and how to improve their practice. You have worked hard with staff to improve the environment for children's learning, which is particularly noticeable in the pre-school where children are doing better than those in Nursery. You are addressing the weaknesses by working closely with governors and the local authority to recruit a deputy headteacher. In the meantime, you have also established strong links with the Acorn Teaching School in Hertfordshire to improve teaching and learning. You are currently improving attendance so that where disadvantaged children are absent, their families receive a first-day call home, followed by an email. You also display your targets for attendance on the outside school wall for all parents and carers to see.

The quality of teaching and learning in the pre-school is a strength and is reflected in the increasing enjoyment and good achievement of nearly all children. You have developed strong teamwork, restored staff morale and gained the confidence of parents. Typical of other parents' comments, one parent wrote, 'The new headteacher is doing a brilliant job and the teachers are great. My child is really happy and doing so well in school.'

Children, staff and parents agree that children's behaviour is usually good, and children enjoy coming to school. Children listen carefully to their teachers, concentrate on their activities and have good attitudes to learning. The curriculum is promoting children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. They have good opportunities to learn about British values through their everyday routines of respecting others, taking turns and sharing.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school is developing a strong culture for safeguarding through close work with parents. You, your staff and governors are providing a safe and secure environment to protect the welfare and interests of the children. You have implemented the school policies for safeguarding effectively and you thoroughly check the suitability of staff and visitors to work with children. You assess any potential risk to children carefully to ensure that they stay safe.

The school is very welcoming. Children play safely, move around school sensibly and handle equipment carefully. Staff, children and parents agreed that children feel safe and bullying is rare.

### **Inspection findings**

- I wanted to find out whether teaching was challenging enough to extend the learning of the most able children, because in 2017, some did not achieve as well as they should. During our joint visits to lessons, there was a positive atmosphere for learning and adults were asking probing questions to deepen children's thinking.
- In the pre-school, children were provided with challenging activities. In Nursery, there were some missed opportunities to extend the learning of the most able children, as seen in mathematics, where these children were not always

encouraged to explain their answers. Children's learning journals and your data show weaknesses in teaching and assessment in Nursery, which have led to weaker progress, especially of the most able children, in 2017.

- I also wanted to determine how well different groups of children, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, those who are learning English as an additional language and disadvantaged children, were doing compared with other children. Your data shows that children in the pre-school make good progress from their low starting points, with many catching up quickly. By the time they left pre-school in 2017, many children, including disadvantaged children, were working at levels typical for their age and were well prepared for Nursery. Most children identified with SEN across the school made good progress in most areas of learning.
- Nevertheless, your accurate self-evaluation shows that children learning English as an additional language across the school are not making enough progress from their starting points. In Nursery, disadvantaged children are not doing as well as those in the pre-school across the areas for learning. This is because assessment is not used well enough to match tasks to their different needs.
- The governing body is much stronger than at the time of the last inspection. Governors monitor the work of the school closely and are realistic about the effectiveness of the school. For example, they have looked at children's development of language and surveyed a group of parents to seek their views. They ask the headteacher probing questions about the quality of teaching and learning at their meetings. They visit the school regularly to form their own view and have noted the rapid improvements to teaching and learning that the new headteacher has made. Governors are ambitious for the school and provide good support and challenge to promote further improvement. They ensure that all policies are up to date and legal requirements are met.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers accurately assess attainment and progress of all groups of children and use the information effectively in planning to ensure that all children, including disadvantaged children, reach the levels typical for their age in Nursery
- the proportion of children in Nursery who make good progress increases
- children across the school who are learning English as an additional language make good progress from their starting points
- the plans to strengthen leadership by appointing a new deputy headteacher are implemented as soon as possible.

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

Yours sincerely

Declan McCarthy  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I held meetings with you and four governors during this inspection. I also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I visited lessons with you in the pre-school and Nursery and looked at samples of children's work, including learning journals. I talked to children about their learning and considered their responses during the inspection. I considered the views of parents by examining the 18 responses to Ofsted's electronic survey, Parent View, together with the 17 text responses. I met with eight parents who collected their children from school. I also looked at the 30 questionnaire responses from staff. I examined a range of documentation, including your self-evaluation and school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, vetting procedures, records of training in safeguarding, risk assessments, records of behaviour and attendance figures.