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Mrs C Earley
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Earley

Short inspection of Greenacre Community Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 26 February 2019, 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 February 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You bring to the position of headteacher a wealth of knowledge and experience in early years, including a detailed understanding of the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, you have strengthened the focus on meeting individual needs. For example, the introduction of a system to analyse children's progress enables leaders and staff to identify clearly the next steps in the children's learning and to put appropriate learning activities in place which challenge their thinking further.

The children are at the centre of this warm and welcoming school. You lead with passion and commitment, ensuring that the children's learning environment, both indoor and outdoor, is well resourced and highly stimulating. The children I spoke with told me that they love their school. Strong positive relationships between them and the adults who care for them shines out. As a result, the children approach their learning with great curiosity, interest and excitement.

Parents who I spoke with during the inspection, and those who responded to Ofsted's online survey, were overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One parent, reflecting the views of many others, said, 'Greenacre School is amazing. I feel that my child has come on in leaps and bounds since starting there. The staff really care about each and every child.'

You have worked effectively with governors to address challenges in terms of finance, which have led to a reduction in the size of your leadership team. The

governors have supported you effectively with this issue. They are well trained and are skilled in offering both challenge and support to ensure that the children continue to receive the very best of care. In response to the changes to the leadership structure, you have accurately identified a need to further develop the skills of your middle leadership team. This is to ensure that this group of leaders take further responsibility for monitoring children's progress and for supporting other staff in developing further the already good curriculum provision.

At the previous inspection, the inspectors reported on strengths in children's behaviour and noted that good-quality teaching encourages the children and makes them want to learn. My observations, discussions with children and analysis of their work show that leaders have maintained strengths. Teachers provide the children with a wide range of activities which stimulate their imagination and develop their understanding. For example, during the inspection, a teacher encouraged children to explore different coloured paints. She asked probing questions to encourage the children to consider the feel of the paint on their hands and to explore what happens when children mix the colours together. Later in the day, children were able to evaluate their learning. Typical comments included, 'I love painting. I used red, blue and yellow paints. When I mixed red and blue together, I made purple.'

During the last inspection, inspectors asked leaders to increase the progress that all children make in reading, writing and phonics, including those children who are most able. We agreed to look at this as part of the inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

Your school site is secure, and the identity of visitors is carefully checked. Staff closely supervise the children both indoors and when they are learning outside. Staff are well trained and understand their role in keeping children safe and free from harm. At the heart of the school's work is a commitment to ensuring the personal, social and emotional well-being of each child. Relationships between staff and children and between the children themselves are strong and contribute positively to the excellent behaviour demonstrated by children in lessons and during lunchtime.

You and the staff team know the children and their families well. You use a wide range of professionals and services to support children's academic development, emotional well-being and physical health. Children with SEND receive high levels of care, according to their individual needs. You were able to share with me much evidence to show how these children are thriving in terms of their academic progress, well-being and confidence.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection I discussed with you a number of lines of enquiry. The first was to consider how well teaching is stimulating and engaging all children, especially the most able. Your monitoring of teaching and learning highlighted the fact that the most able children were not always receiving a high enough

level of challenge. As a result, you have altered the way in which teachers plan their lessons. Children experience a wider range of activities both indoors and outside. Teachers are effective in structuring learning to challenge the children's thinking and accelerate their knowledge and understanding. While this is a new venture, it is showing positive signs of success. Your evaluations of learning together with an analysis of children's work in books shows that children, including those who are most able, are typically making strong progress from their starting points, which are typically low.

- Leaders and teachers have developed effectively the way in which children learn phonics. This ensures that children's knowledge of the sounds that letters make effectively supports their early reading and writing skills. Teachers carefully record children's progress in their understanding of letters and sounds and provide extra support where necessary. Teachers vary the way in which they teach phonics. For example, they encourage children to sing songs to reinforce the sounds that they are learning. This is an activity which children greatly enjoy. Teachers also develop children's understanding of letters and sounds when they engage them in reading and writing activities. As a result, children are making strong progress in phonics.
- You provide opportunities to help parents contribute effectively to their children's learning. For example, events at school, such as workshops, enable parents to understand how their children learn to read and write. However, the school's website does not currently contain enough information about the curriculum to effectively guide parents in their understanding of children's learning, especially in literacy.
- My final line of enquiry considered how leaders have adapted the children's learning environment to ensure that children receive a broad range of activities to develop their reading and writing skills. Leaders evaluated in detail how children were currently accessing reading and writing opportunities within the classroom and in outdoor spaces. This enabled leaders to identify areas where improvements could be made. As a result, children now benefit from a wide range of opportunities to develop their literacy skills in the classrooms and in the large outdoor areas. Children have, for example, many opportunities for early mark making and to write letters and words. They enjoy using chalks to write words on the ground, copying letters written by their teachers.
- Leaders provide children with a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. These are readily available for children and they access them with interest and excitement. Children enjoy visiting special areas in the classroom and in the outdoor area to share books. Teachers plan lessons which enable children to study books in detail and develop their understanding through other areas of their learning. For example, after studying a fiction book about bears who go hunting, the children enjoyed exploring the school gardens to bring parts of the story alive.
- Due to this increased focus on reading and writing, children are making strong progress from typically low starting points. The vast proportion of children leave the school with skills in reading and writing which are in line with those expected for their age. In 2018, compared with 2017, an increased proportion exceeded

these expectations. As a result, children are well prepared to move on to the next stage of their learning.

- The provision for two-year-olds is good. Staff are skilled in understanding the needs of these very young children. They use resources both indoors and outside to great effect to challenge the children's thinking and excite their curiosity. Staff members are effective in weaving well physical development and communication and language through a broad range of activities. Children make good progress through the three prime areas from starting points which are typically low. The staff ensure that the children's welfare needs are well met.
- You raised concerns with me about a decline in attendance of children since September 2018. You are aware that many have justifiable reasons for absence linked to medical issues. However, a significant proportion are absent unnecessarily. You have shared your concerns with governors and you are working with them to improve attendance. However, this area remains a priority for improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all children able to attend school do so regularly
- leaders review the school's website to ensure that it provides parents with appropriate information about children's learning in phonics, reading and writing
- they further develop the role of middle leaders to ensure that this group of leaders contribute to improving children's outcomes across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Gill Pritchard
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you to discuss your school's evaluation of performance and safeguarding procedures. I met with the vice chair of the governing body and one other governor to consider aspects of school leadership and safeguarding. I also met with members of staff to discuss my key lines of enquiry and spoke with the local authority school standards and effectiveness officer.

I looked at children's progress in books and reviewed documentation, which included your evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and the school development plan. I considered four responses from Ofsted's parent free-text survey and spoke with parents to seek their views on the school's provision.

I visited the two classrooms and the outdoor provision, together with you, to observe children's learning. I reviewed a range of safeguarding documentation including a safeguarding audit and the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.