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Mrs Jennifer Martin
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Dear Mrs Martin

Short inspection of Freshfield Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 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 October 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Children continue to achieve well. They leave Freshfield ready to continue their education at primary school. Leaders and governors make certain that the school is well resourced and the indoor and outdoor areas are attractive places to learn. Displays of children's learning on walls throughout the school celebrate their investigations and achievements.

Children, including two-year-olds, are happy and enjoy their time at the school. Staff give them well-planned opportunities to learn both indoors and outdoors. They teach children new knowledge and skills through a varied and worthwhile curriculum. For example, children learned about Vincent Van Gogh and his artwork. They learned to identify birds through researching for the 'Big Garden Birdwatch'. During the inspection, children investigated the properties of ultra-violet light when using special pens and torches. This wide range of learning was highlighted by a parent who said: 'He comes home thrilled to talk about what he has been doing each day and I am amazed at how much he has developed and grown.'

During the inspection, three- and four-year-olds were very interested to speak with me when I visited classrooms. They displayed confidence, politeness and maturity.

Leaders and governors have taken determined steps to prepare the school to be ready for the years ahead. They have extended the school's provision to include a popular breakfast club and a successful classroom for two-year-old children.

Leaders and staff have a good grasp of the ways that young children develop and learn. For example, staff teach two-, three- and four-year-olds to enjoy and understand stories, rhymes and books. Staff have high expectations, for example of teaching children to read as soon as they are capable. They also help parents to enhance their children's reading at home.

Leaders and staff have implemented the recommendations made at the previous inspection. Staff now use questioning competently in their teaching. They fully support children when they learn in self-chosen activities. Assessments of children are accurate. Middle leaders now play a valued role in assisting the school's improvement.

Staff are very positive regarding their work. They enjoy working at the school. Staff told me that they feel encouraged by leaders and are trusted to make decisions. Leaders have improved training for staff and encouraged them to study for additional qualifications in early years education. Leaders and staff now make links with other nursery and primary schools to share the work of Freshfield Nursery and to learn from the work of other colleagues.

Leaders actively seek the views of parents and carers in relation to the work of the school. Leaders act on the feedback that they receive. Parents are highly satisfied with the school. Parents of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) commented on the positive difference that the school is making to their children's learning. Parents with whom I spoke were extremely positive concerning their children's friendships, behaviour and confidence. One parent's comment, typical of many, was:

Freshfield is a fabulous school. The staff and the environment are of a high standard. The communication from staff is clear... My child has come on in confidence and ability. The encouragement of outdoor play is especially positive.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and staff communicate frequently with parents. Staff's relationships with children are warm and positive. Children's good behaviour indicates that they trust teachers and teaching assistants. Staff provide extra support to any child who lacks confidence or self-belief or feels sad. This work contributes positively to children's safety.

Staff are vigilant. They know what might suggest that a child is at risk of harm. They know what steps to take for keeping children safe. Leaders make certain that staff complete regular training on safeguarding. They check that staff understand what they have learned. Leaders check diligently that all safeguarding arrangements at the school are fit for purpose. They make sure that staff give visitors clear information on safeguarding children. Leaders refer any concerns about children appropriately to other professionals. Leaders ensure that the curriculum for children

helps them to stay safe while working online. This is because staff are aware that children use the internet frequently at home. As part of the nature school curriculum, staff teach children to act safely around fire.

Inspection findings

- To evaluate the work of the school, I selected some areas on which to focus my enquiries. Firstly, I considered how well staff enhance children's learning. I found that staff plan a curriculum that focuses precisely on developing children's language, confidence, physical abilities, their self-control and their emotions. Staff model good vocabulary and questioning to boost children's thinking. Leaders make good use of the skills and abilities of teachers and teaching assistants to ensure that all staff work effectively as a team. Staff teach children well during their self-chosen or adult-directed tasks. During the inspection, it was common to find staff engrossed in activities with children. For instance, in the outdoor area, a teaching assistant was supporting a group of children effectively to be fire fighters, using toy telephones to communicate. Children expressed much concern for my safety when I approached too close to the danger zone. Indoors, a teacher was skilfully encouraging and extending children's role-play in creating a shop. Children were busy pricing up the food packaging available for customers and discussing costs. They were deeply involved in acting out adult roles using new and clear language.
- Staff encourage children to be inquisitive and to talk with adults. Hence, when I spoke with some three- and four-year-olds, they asked me many questions. For example, pointing to my tie and asking, 'How do you undo that bow?' Another child looked at my hands and enquired, 'Who gave you that ring?' The most common enquiry was, 'Why are you here?'
- My second focus was to evaluate the school's use of assessments of children's learning. I found that leaders have a secure grasp of what the assessments tell them about staff's teaching and the next steps for planned activities. Leaders' priorities for improving the school draw reasonably on this information. Staff working with two-year-olds and three- and four-year-olds assess the children's needs thoroughly. They use this information to plan teaching. Staff celebrate children's efforts and achievements through attractive and worthwhile records to share with parents. Nevertheless, the information that staff record in the two-year-old progress checks does not contain enough detail. These records are less comprehensive than the other assessments that staff have in place for these children.
- Leaders make certain that assessments of children are accurate. For example, they have regular, formal discussions with staff to review and moderate judgements of children's progress. Leaders give staff the time that they need during their working hours to complete their assessments of children. This means that leaders manage the workload of teachers and teaching assistants appropriately. For example, one member of staff said: 'Leaders are very mindful of workload, when looking at new initiatives, providing cover and managing the general day-to-day life at the school.'
- Governors and leaders focus well on the school's successes and the main

priorities for improvement. Nevertheless, their understanding of what to improve in the school's provision for two-year-olds requires further clarity.

- My third focus was to consider in what manner middle leaders are contributing to the work of the school. It was clear to me that senior leaders help all staff to contribute to the improvement of the school. They give good support to middle leaders to develop their skills. Recently, the middle leader for phonics used her knowledge of the teaching of reading to sharpen teaching for the most able children. As a result, these children are developing their reading skills well.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they have a precise understanding of how the provision for two-year-olds can be developed even further
- information included in children's two-year-old progress checks is equally as comprehensive as other nursery records for these children.

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

Yours sincerely

Tim Vaughan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, the teachers and some teaching assistants to discuss the work of the school. I held a meeting with the chair of governors and one other governor. I met with your link adviser from the local authority. You and I observed children's learning around the school, including outdoors. I spoke with some children. I also spoke with some parents and a local childminder as they dropped their children at the school. I reviewed the 38 responses and 22 free-text responses from parents to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire. I considered the 20 responses from staff to an Ofsted questionnaire. I checked the content of the school's website. I scrutinised a sample of school documents about improvement and checked examples of staff's records of children's progress. With you and the school business manager, I examined the school's record of checks on the suitability of adults to work with children.