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20 March 2019

Mrs Deborah Jones  
Headteacher  
Rubery Nursery School  
Leybrook Road  
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West Midlands  
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Dear Mrs Jones

### **Short inspection of Rubery Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 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 December 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You have managed changes in staffing effectively and have ensured that children continue to receive high-quality care and make good progress. Together with your governing body, you have integrated provision for two-year-olds. This has been highly successful. Consequently, the numbers on roll are higher. Children now have increased time in the setting to develop their early skills to a good standard. This stands them in good stead for when they transfer to Reception Year. The large majority reach the age-related expectations in all areas of learning by the time they leave Nursery.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about Rubery Nursery. 'I have nothing but praise for this setting and the staff; they do a fantastic job,' was typical of comments made on Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. Other parents commented that their children would go to nursery at the weekend if it were open. Staff's views are equally positive. Staff feel they are well supported and they are proud to work at the nursery.

The school is highly inclusive. Disadvantaged children and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in all the nursery's activities. Interventions and additional adult support enable children to achieve well. Staff plan exciting and imaginative activities which build on children's interests. This

leads to high levels of concentration and engagement. However, the most able children are not sufficiently challenged in some activities and this limits their progress. Additionally, some quiet and reserved children are not encouraged to participate in group discussions. This restricts their communication and language development and their self-confidence.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement raised at the previous inspection. There is a strong focus on writing and mathematics throughout the day, with children applying the skills taught to different activities and areas of learning. Children regularly reflect on what they have been learning and share their work with adults and other children. However, work is needed to improve the punctuality of some parents who bring their children to school later than the official starting time.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Together with your leadership team, you have established a strong safeguarding culture within the school. Recruitment checks on the suitability of staff working in the school are robust. Frequent training updates, reflecting the latest guidance, are shared regularly with staff and governors. This ensures that they know precisely what to do if they are concerned about a child. Systematic record keeping is in place. Swift and appropriate action is taken when incidents are logged or reported, including referral to social care when necessary.

All parents and staff who responded to Ofsted's online surveys said that the children are safe and well cared for. Children are regularly taught about safety and how to use equipment properly, for example, scissors. Road safety is also built into the curriculum through role-play activities.

### **Inspection findings**

- As headteacher, you provide a clear direction for the school. You have created a united and supportive staff team. Leaders' self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is honest and accurate. This has been translated into a well-targeted development plan which focuses appropriately on the key priorities. Staff appraisal and performance management targets are also closely linked to these documents. This ensures that all staff contribute to school improvement.
- You and the leadership team keep a close eye on the quality of teaching. This is done through regular learning walks. You provide helpful feedback to enable staff to improve their practice. All staff receive training to ensure that they are equipped with the skills and knowledge to give children the very best start to their education. External reviews are also carried out by partner settings. They endorse your views of the quality of teaching. Teachers' assessments are regularly checked to ensure that they are accurate.
- Leadership of special educational needs is effective. The deputy headteacher has a detailed knowledge and understanding of children's individual needs. Well-trained staff provide good support for children with complex difficulties in the 'rainbow room'. Regular interventions are used to successfully promote social,

emotional and language skills. These are carefully tracked, and school records and learning journals show that children make good progress from their starting points. Close partnership working has been established with parents. This enables them to be fully involved in reviewing their child's learning plan and next steps. Good links exist with external agencies to provide specialist support to individual children and their families.

- **Governors are skilled and knowledgeable.** They share your dedication and high expectations. Governors are aware of the school's strengths and its key priorities. They monitor safeguarding and finance carefully. They know how the early years pupil premium is spent and that it is having a positive impact on the achievement of disadvantaged children. They meet regularly with leaders to hold them to account and receive detailed reports about the work of the school, including provision for children with SEND. This enables them to ask pertinent and searching questions to provide good levels of challenge and support to leaders.
- **Children love coming to the nursery.** They display high levels of confidence and security in their daily activities. Staff are adept at promoting children's independence, doing so encouragingly and patiently. For example, children change quickly into anoraks to work outdoors and contribute readily to 'tidy-up time'. Relationships between all adults and children are strong. Children form strong bonds with their key workers, who are on hand to support, encourage and nurture them throughout the day.
- **Developing children's love of books and early reading, including phonics, is a strength.** Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials, both indoors and outdoors. The youngest children sit attentively, turn pages, and share books with adults. Adults maximise these opportunities to develop children's listening and language skills. Rhyme and song are used to good effect. Children join in with familiar songs and can recite key phrases from favourite stories, for example, 'The Gingerbread Man'. Library books are provided for parents to share stories at home and involve them fully in their child's education.
- **The introduction of the provision for two-year-olds has helped to provide a good start for children.** Activities are suitably matched to children's abilities and needs. Leaders and staff place a strong emphasis on developing children's social, communication and physical skills. Adults encourage good speaking and listening skills in role-play and other activities. For example, at the hairdressers, conversation flowed freely between the staff member and children pretending to be hairdressers. As a result, children thrive in the calm and secure environment created.
- **Children move into the classrooms for three-year-olds as happy, confident youngsters.** Activities become suitably more demanding as children increase in their ability, confidence and independence. They are secure with routines, share equipment well and sensibly take turns. They access a wide range of exciting activities which develop all aspects of their learning. However, on occasion, some of the most able children are not challenged well enough. Additionally, adults do not encourage or question the quiet and reserved children sufficiently to enable them to participate more in group work. This limits the progress of these individual children.

- Very good use is made of the outdoor area. Children relish their time in 'forest school' and were highly excited about writing letters to the 'fairies' they found there. Opportunities to practise writing and mark-making are plentiful and skilfully woven into different activities. Most children are confident in using different media to make marks on different surfaces.
- You monitor children's behaviour and attendance carefully and liaise closely with families when there is a problem. Appropriate action is taken to follow up any concerns. As a result, behaviour and attendance are both good. However, punctuality remains an issue. A small number of families consistently arrive later than the school's published start time. This results in some children missing part of the initial teaching session of the day. You and the governors are keen to work with these parents to help reinforce the importance of arriving promptly and establishing good habits of being in school on time.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching provides greater levels of challenge for the most able children
- adults encourage quiet and reserved children to contribute during taught sessions through targeted questioning
- parents understand the importance of being punctual and bringing their children to school at the agreed starting time.

I am copying this letter to the chair 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

Heather Simpson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and two members of the governing body. I discussed the work of the school, including the processes and procedures in place for safeguarding. You and I visited all classes and observed children's learning. Together with the deputy headteacher, I discussed the school's provision for disadvantaged children and those with SEND. I looked at a sample of children's learning journals and information about children's attainment and progress.

I examined a range of documents, including the school's evaluation of its work and the school improvement plan. Minutes of governing body meetings and reports from peer reviews with other schools were checked. I took account of the 28 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and spoke to parents as they brought their children to school. The views of nine staff were considered through their responses to the Ofsted staff survey.