

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



27 March 2019

Mrs Valerie Daniel  
Headteacher  
Washwood Heath Nursery School  
201 Sladefield Road  
Ward End  
Birmingham  
West Midlands  
B8 2SY

Dear Mrs Daniel

### **Short inspection of Washwood Heath 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 outstanding in November 2014.

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

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

You have recently undergone a significant upheaval at Washwood Heath, with the loss of the children's centre. You have ensured that this has not impacted on the excellent standard of education you offer your children.

Washwood Heath is a warm, supportive and caring school, where children are nurtured and encouraged to explore and have fun. Children enjoy their time at school and make very strong progress. You and your staff are passionate about providing every child with the very best education possible. You are very ably supported by your deputy headteacher. She shares your vision of ensuring that Washwood Heath Nursery consistently improves on its previous best performance. Together, you all strive to make school both enjoyable and challenging for all groups of children. As a result, children make outstanding progress and leave Washwood Heath extremely well prepared for primary school.

You and your staff are consistently focusing on children's interests, which become a focal point for developing learning. The children have access to a rich and stimulating curriculum. Fun and exploration are at the core of the staff's practice. Relationships are strong and supportive. Practitioners provide an exceptional range of stimulating resources and activities which reflect and value the diversity of the children's experiences. Staff use assessment information well to incorporate activities that

challenge and extend children's learning and ensure that they are happy, settled and engaged. Therefore, learning is rapid.

Children with a range of needs are well-supported. Staff have high expectations for children, and they plan learning to build on what children already know and understand. Staff are very familiar with the needs of their key group of children, and children are regularly assessed so that any special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified as early as possible.

Leaders use multiple sources of information. They help identify areas of children's learning that could be improved further, based on the assessment of children's progress. This information is not always organised clearly and is not routinely updated. You are aware of this and are already working on developing more precise methods to inform the evaluation of the school's effectiveness.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has worked hard to ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. It has made certain that the culture of safeguarding permeates all aspects of school life. Leaders work very well with all staff to ensure that the needs of all children are considered thoroughly. They also work effectively with outside agencies in health, social care and the local authority to safeguard children's well-being. Any concerns that are identified are followed up swiftly.

Leaders and staff make sure that the nursery is a safe environment. Risk assessments are in place for activities where children might hurt themselves. However, there is still suitable challenge for the children. In the outdoor areas, where children can be more adventurous, they learn how to manage risks. Off-site visits are planned thoroughly so that potential risks to children's safety are assessed and minimised.

You and your staff work very closely and productively with families to support children's well-being. Parents feel that you are approachable and that you help them solve any issues they have, with one parent commenting, 'They always make the time to listen when you need them.'

### **Inspection findings**

- Many of the two-year-old and three-year-old children joining the nursery have low starting points. Over time, they make outstanding progress in all areas of learning because of consistently effective teaching. As a result, they pick up new language very quickly.
- Those children who are two years old enjoy a strong provision. Staff are skilled in understanding their needs. You provide activities that fascinate children. One example of this is the use of interactive play with different sized toy goats so that you could re-enact the story of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'.
- You give a high priority to helping children to develop a love of reading. You have introduced floor books around the provision, and this has encouraged children to

learn to have a genuine love of books and to make reference to them in their play. Many know the sounds that letters make and are beginning to blend them together to make words.

- You have wisely invested time in helping staff to develop the ways in which they ask children questions. Adults' questions are mainly focused on helping children to think about their learning more deeply and to investigate further. Occasionally, a small number of staff do not do this as effectively as they might. Consequently, this leads to missed opportunities to challenge those children to progress even further.
- You have improved the use of additional funding to help disadvantaged children and have selected the most effective methods of improving this group's progress. As a result, disadvantaged children make very strong progress and reach standards that are close to those achieved by other children in the nursery.
- You, your leadership team and governors have effectively addressed the priority for improvement identified at the previous inspection. You have been pivotal in the development of a nursery-focused collaborative in Birmingham, and this has enabled your staff to share best practice widely, and to bring new ideas and approaches to the school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff use questioning consistently well to deepen children's learning.
- the information that the school uses to evaluate the impact of its work is organised more efficiently and is regularly updated so that it is more useful to leaders, including governors.

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

Max Vlahakis  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and your leadership team. I also met with a representative of the local authority and with two governors, including the chair of the governing body. You, your deputy and I observed children's learning throughout the school and at the two-year-old provision at the Cloverlea site. I reviewed a sample of records of children's progress. I considered a range of school documents, including leaders' self-evaluation and records of the monitoring of teaching and

learning. I checked the content of the school's website. With the school bursar, I checked the school's record of checks on the suitability of staff and governors to work with children. I spoke with some parents as they brought children to school and with a member of the Birmingham Nursery Schools' Collaboration Trust who carries out school improvement, in place of the local authority.