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Mrs Ann Taylor
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Taylor

Short inspection of Edith Cadbury Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 20 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.

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 in September 2018, following a period of instability when the school was without a permanent headteacher. Since then you have wasted no time in identifying what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve. Your focus has been on improving the quality of provision for two-year-old children and the quality of teaching throughout the school. You have made some recent changes to how adults assess what children can do and how this information is used to plan the next steps in their learning. This is beginning to have a positive impact on the progress that children make in some areas of learning, including personal, social and emotional development. However, the school's assessment information shows that children make less progress in other areas of learning, including reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, some children are not as well prepared as they could be for the next stage in their education. Your development plan includes appropriate action to address this, but these changes are not yet fully embedded throughout the school.

You are determined to bring about further improvement and you have high expectations of all the adults who work at the school. The adults who I spoke to during the inspection and those who completed Ofsted's questionnaire agree that they enjoy working at the school. They care deeply about the children they work

with and want them to have the best possible experience at school. Several adults expressed some concerns about the high number of changes that the school has experienced over the last year.

Children are happy, safe and well cared for. There are good relationships between children and their key workers. This is because adults know the children and their interests well. All adults work together to promote children's understanding of routines and expectations. As a result, children behave well. They follow instructions, take turns and share equipment with one another.

At the last inspection leaders were asked to develop adults' questioning skills. Some adults use questions to explore what children understand and to stretch their thinking. These adults use a wide range of vocabulary and have high expectations that children will understand and use this language in their responses. However, other adults are less skilled, and their questions do not promote children's learning or deepen their interest in what they are doing. Leaders were also asked to ensure that the most able children were challenged more effectively to improve the progress they made. You ensure that the teacher and room leaders plan learning activities that build on what children already know. However, challenge for the most able children remains a priority in your improvement plan because your monitoring shows that this has not yet been successfully addressed.

All of the parents that I spoke to during the inspection and most of those who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, are positive about the work of the school. Many parents praise the approachable staff, with one parent summing up the views of others by saying, 'The staff really know and care about our children.' Parents are happy with the progress that their children make and say that they receive useful information about how well their children are doing.

Governors are proud to be part of the school. They are committed to bringing about improvements and they support you and the changes that you are making. Governors ask questions of leaders to find out about the quality of education and outcomes for children. However, often they rely on your reports and do not use a broad range of evidence to be sure they have an accurate view of the school. As a result, they are not in a strong enough position to hold leaders to account. For example, governors have not made close enough checks on the impact of additional funding to support disadvantaged children.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of safeguarding because everyone places high importance on keeping children safe. You, the staff and governors have created an environment which is safe and secure. All staff receive recent and relevant child-protection training, including training related to the 'Prevent' duty.

The school works successfully with a range of professional agencies to provide additional support for children and their families where this is appropriate. Leaders

know the needs of individual children very well. Child-protection records are well organised and stored securely.

Children move around the school sensibly and they learn how to stay safe in a variety of ways. Adults ensure that children explore and investigate safely when they are outside, for example in the forest area when they are using tools and other equipment. In addition, they teach children how to use climbing frames and ride-on toys safely.

Inspection findings

- Since the last inspection there have been some significant changes to leadership at the school. Your appointment has brought stability and, together with other adults, you are making good progress towards making necessary improvements in the quality of education. One area where there has been significant improvement is in the provision for two-year-old children. You and the team have worked hard to create a vibrant and well-resourced learning environment which offers children a range of enjoyable opportunities to learn and develop their skills. You ensure that adults focus on the youngest children's communication, physical, personal, social and emotional development. As a result, children are confident learners who enjoy the activities on offer.
- The governing body is dedicated to the school, its children and their families. The governors offer you support through their visits to school and attendance at special events. Although some governors have had recent training in the statutory requirements around safeguarding and supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, members have had little training in other aspects of governance. As a result, governors are not able to hold leaders to account well enough about the quality of teaching or children's achievement.
- I wanted to find out how well teaching responds to children's needs and interests. You ensure that adults plan activities and tasks that are matched to what children like to do, and themes they are interested in. Most adults understand the typical skills and knowledge that children should have at different ages and stages of development. They are now using this more effectively to plan learning that will enable children to make good progress. During the inspection we saw children engaged in their chosen task, with many showing good levels of concentration. For example, some of the youngest children produced some beautiful beach scenes where they demonstrated good control of their paintbrushes.
- The learning environments both indoors and outside are organised to include all areas of the curriculum. Adults make good use of the lovely grounds to plan activities that develop children's physical and communication skills particularly well. This includes role play in the mud kitchen and exploration of wildlife in the forest area. However, adults do not ensure that children have enough opportunities to practise and build their knowledge, understanding and skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Therefore, children make less progress in these areas of learning and this affects how academically prepared they are for the next stage in their education.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they further improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good
- adults provide more opportunities for children to practise and build on their skills in reading, writing and mathematics to improve their progress in these areas of learning
- they communicate with staff more effectively so that everyone understands the reasons for the actions that are being taken to bring about improvement
- they further develop the skills of the governing body so that governors can provide more effective support and challenge for leaders.

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

Jo Evans
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection I met with you, the nursery teacher and all members of staff. I met with the chair of the governing body and I spoke to a local headteacher who has provided support for the school. I met with several parents at the start of the day. I also met with a small group of staff at lunchtime.

You accompanied me during visits to lessons and together we observed children's behaviour at lunchtime.

I reviewed a range of documentation including the school's evaluation of its performance, the development plan and assessment information. I also reviewed documents relating to keeping children safe, including the school's central register of recruitment checks on staff.

I took account of the 20 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also considered the 11 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.