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Ms Elizabeth Hillyard
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Hillyard

Short inspection of Tachbrook Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 14 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 March 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 provide strong and determined leadership. Together with governors, you have steered the school successfully through challenging circumstances, including a staffing restructure. Throughout, your decisions have been centred on maintaining an inclusive and warm learning environment for all children. The provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a clear strength. You and your team are rightly proud of the school's work in this respect.

Staff provide excellent support for children's personal development. Classrooms, indoors and out, are calm and happy environments. Children enjoy exploring the interesting activities and resources on offer. They do so with confidence and consideration for their peers. You and your team know precisely how best to nurture children's emotional well-being. For example, staff guide children to work together and find solutions to any challenges that arise as they play and learn.

Through the curriculum, you ensure that children benefit from plentiful experiences which take account of their interests and stimulate their imaginative play, including opportunities to work with professional artists. As a result, children make strong progress during their time at the school, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. Parents and carers are highly complimentary about how the school promotes their children's positive attitudes to learning. Parents who responded to Parent View would unanimously recommend the school. As one parent put it: 'My child couldn't be happier to come to school.'

Leaders' plans for improvement are well-focused and reflect your vision to provide children with the best possible start to their school lives. Governors know the school

well and are supportive of your aims. Through the introduction of a new approach to assessment, leaders have responded effectively to the recommendations from the previous inspection. You and your team keep a close eye on how well children learn and ensure that they develop the knowledge, skills and understanding that are typical for their age. Currently, however, assessment information does not provide leaders and governors with enough information on the progress of the most able children. Sometimes, teaching does not challenge these children as much as it should in the development of their early reading and writing skills. Leaders have made this a priority, but it is too soon to evaluate the impact of their work.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and staff place utmost importance on children's welfare. Staff are quick to spot and reassure children who are feeling insecure or upset. The start of the day is calm and welcoming, with plenty of staff available to encourage children to join in with the planned activities. Staff tailor strategies effectively, based on their knowledge of each child's needs and interests, for instance by reading favourite stories to help children feel settled and secure. Parents are confident that their children are safe, happy and well looked after.

Leaders and staff carry out thorough checks on the learning environment. Any hazards are identified and rectified promptly. For example, governors have recently invested in improvements to the outdoor area to ensure that it remains both a safe and stimulating space for children to learn. Through the curriculum, children benefit from well-planned experiences to help them increasingly understand risk and how to behave safely in different situations. For instance, children were able to use mallets and pegs sensibly as they constructed their own den in the garden area.

Leaders and staff are knowledgeable about factors which can endanger children's welfare. Records show that leaders and staff are vigilant and respond effectively if any concerns arise. A key area of focus has been raising awareness of issues related to mental health. Children who may be vulnerable are identified and supported swiftly. Strong partnerships with parents enable leaders to obtain a complete picture of children's needs. Leaders work sensitively with families and support them well when they or their children experience difficult circumstances. The governors are well informed about this work and make this a priority when deciding how to allocate resources.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed three lines of enquiry to evaluate whether the school continued to provide a good quality of education. The first of these focused on whether leaders have accurate information on children's outcomes. I also considered how well leaders use this information to identify aspects of the school that could be even better. The previous inspection found that this was an area that needed improvement.
- Leaders' work to address this recommendation has been successful. When children join the school, staff work closely with parents to understand children's starting points. Leaders and staff meet regularly to discuss and evaluate

children's progress across all areas of learning. Through this, you and your team consider carefully how to plan and adapt activities, so that they enable children to develop the skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. Staff are acutely aware of children who are falling behind in a particular area of the curriculum. They waste no time in putting in place effective extra help so that these children make good gains in their learning and development. This contributes to children's strong progress during their time at the school.

- Leaders analyse information on children's outcomes systematically. They use this analysis to ensure that teaching caters equally well for all areas of learning. Leaders reflect carefully on the range of information available to them, ensuring that it is both meaningful and reliable. Nevertheless, leaders lack sufficient information on the progress of the most able children. This reduces leaders' capacity to evaluate and strengthen the quality of these children's learning, particularly in reading and writing. To address this, leaders have made a positive start on refining the school's approach to assessment. It is too early, however, to judge what the impact of these changes will be.
- My second area of focus considered how effectively teaching and the curriculum promoted children's language development, including their early reading and writing skills.
- The development of children's language and communication skills is a clear priority for you and your staff. Children benefit from adventurous activities, that both fire their imagination and broaden their vocabulary. For instance, a group of children building a den in the outdoor area were encouraged to use words such as 'mallet' and 'tarpaulin' to describe what they were doing. Staff question children effectively to develop their confidence in sharing ideas and using more complex vocabulary.
- Opportunities for children to join in with familiar rhymes and songs feature regularly throughout the school day. This is effective in helping children to use and remember vocabulary and important knowledge, such as counting to 10. Frequent story times, centred on high-quality texts, foster children's interest in and enjoyment of books. Staff incorporate well-chosen resources into storytelling sessions to sustain children's interest and develop their understanding of the story. For example, children enjoyed touching straw and toy animals, when listening to the story of 'The Three Little Pigs'. Classrooms provide plenty of resources to encourage children to explore books independently, both at home and at school. This includes dual-language texts, which cater specifically for children and families who speak English as an additional language.
- These strengths ensure that, overall, children make good progress in the development of their communication and language skills. Sometimes, however, teaching does not do enough to develop the most able children's reading and writing skills, especially their understanding of letters and the sounds they make. This prevents the most able children from attaining as well as they could in these aspects of their learning.
- My final line of enquiry focused on the provision for children with SEND. Leaders evaluated this as a particularly successful aspect of the school's work.

- Close partnerships with families and external professionals ensure that staff are highly attuned to children's needs and their barriers to learning. This work begins before children join the school, through home visits and meetings with parents. Consequently, children get off to a successful and happy start to their learning.
- Adults' high expectations underpin the effective extra support for children with SEND. Staff are well trained and use their expertise, including in pictorial communication strategies, to plan and tailor additional help to meet children's needs. As a result, children with SEND make excellent progress, particularly in their social and emotional development.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- assessment systems enable them to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the progress of the most able children, and identify aspects that need to be strengthened
- the most able children benefit from suitable experiences to develop their early reading and writing skills, including their phonological awareness.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Murphy-Dutton
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with senior leaders to discuss their evaluation of the school's effectiveness and plans for improvement. I also met with leaders to discuss safeguarding, the provision for children with SEND and children's outcomes. This included looking at samples of children's work and assessment information. Together with leaders, I observed children's learning, both indoors and outside. I spoke to parents informally before school and took account of the 30 responses to Parent View, including written comments. I spoke to staff informally during the inspection and observed a meeting, in which staff discussed how to plan learning to meet children's needs. The seven responses to Ofsted's staff survey were also considered. I met with members of the governing body and an adviser from the local authority. I looked at a range of documentation related to safeguarding, including the single central record of pre-employment checks.