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Mrs Maureen McGillicuddy
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs McGillicuddy

Short inspection of Kings Norton Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 19 April 2018, 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 September 2014.

This school continues to be outstanding.

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

Through your extensive knowledge and experience, you and your governors provide highly effective and very skilled leadership. You have successfully built on and extended the significant strengths noted at the previous inspection. This includes extending provision to accommodate two-year-olds. A key to the school's success is that you, other leaders and staff do not work in isolation; as the lead of the Birmingham Nursery School Teaching School Alliance you work in close collaboration with other schools and their partners. Good practice is widely shared and you ensure that external views are sought to check and validate the accuracy of staff assessments of children's achievements. You have driven improvements with excellent support from your staff and leadership team. Staff work together in close partnership and invest fully in the child-centred approach promoted by you and your governors. High expectations are the order of the day.

The school's vision of ensuring that all children receive only the very highest level of care and education is borne out strongly in the nursery's practice. Staff are extremely attentive, patient and intuitive. They have an in-depth and insightful knowledge of individual children's characteristics and temperaments. This allows them to maximise opportunities for development as they know precisely when to intervene, to prompt, or to challenge a child further during an activity. The calm and welcoming environment contributes to children feeling happy and safe, and parents and carers are fulsome in their praise of the nursery. Typical of the comments made

by parents include, 'I feel so reassured that my child is safe, well looked after and enjoys learning.' Another added, 'Staff are friendly, supportive and approachable.' Consequently, children thrive in the setting due to the extremely high levels of care and nurture provided by all staff.

You acted swiftly to address the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. These have now become areas of strength within the setting. Improved systems are now in place to analyse assessment information collected. Consequently, leaders and governors have a detailed knowledge of how well different groups of children are achieving and where further support is needed. Children's mathematical skills have also advanced significantly, with many children, not just the most able, working well above the levels expected for their age. However, there is more to do in terms of children using their problem-solving and reasoning skills across all areas of the curriculum, and also gaining consistency in parents contributing to their child's assessment profile.

Safeguarding is effective.

The safeguarding culture within the school is tangible. No stone is left unturned to make sure that children feel safe and are kept safe. Frequent training updates are provided, reflecting the latest guidance, to ensure that all staff know what to do if they have any concerns. Any slight concern is quickly and appropriately reported, investigated and kept under review. Good-quality records are kept and stored securely, and additional advice and guidance are sought when needed. Rigorous checks are made as part of staff recruitment, and volunteers and visitors are checked and supervised to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.

Regular checks, including extensive health and safety audits, are undertaken to ensure that the nursery site is safe. Parents are very aware of, but appreciate, the high level of security in place. The school is a Unicef Rights Respecting School, and due to the promotion of key values, children are taught to respect each other and behave sensibly. Safe practice is integrated well into the curriculum with children taught basic but essential safety skills. For example, they are taught to use outdoor tools properly during 'forest school' activities, use knives safely when cutting fruit in a mathematics task, and wear gardening gloves when planting vegetables. Children remain adventurous and are not frightened to leap off the outdoor climbing frame because they know that there are safety mats below. All adults are highly vigilant in keeping children safe.

Inspection findings

- You and your governors have an accurate understanding of the nursery's strengths and where further improvements can be made. You are committed and determined to bring about continual improvement. This is reflected in your precise evaluation of the school's effectiveness and detailed school action plan. You monitor all aspects of the school's work closely and ensure that staff assessments are validated and agreed, not only with other nursery schools in the teaching school alliance, but also with teachers at schools to which your nursery's children transfer. Your partnership work with other schools enables you and your

staff to not only share the excellent practice at Kings Norton, but also support other schools and keep up to date with early years practice in the area.

- Children make rapid progress from their starting points, which are generally typical for their age but low for some children. This accelerated progress is due to excellent teaching, effective adult support, accurate assessment and strong links with parents. Early assessments are carried out to determine children's needs and abilities. These assessments are based on reliable evidence. Good use is made of the progress checks for two-year-olds to establish a baseline of children's early skills on entry to the nursery. Further and ongoing assessments are used effectively throughout the children's time in the nursery. Good gains have been made, particularly in mathematical skills with the most able children. They are challenged well and introduced to a wide range of mathematical concepts, including measuring, data handling and doubling of numbers. Almost all children reach the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning, and many exceed these. As a result, children are extremely well prepared for their next school.
- You make highly effective use of additional funding received for children who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. For example, speech and language therapy is procured to provide support for children who have communication difficulties and additional support is provided for children who are identified early as possibly having SEN and/or disabilities. Close relationships are formed with parents, who are equally well supported and involved in reviewing provision for their children. All children are fully included in activities and access the wide range of exciting enrichment events that take place, for example, school trips and fun events. You have also created a sensory room to provide additional stimulation for children who have specific needs. Other children also use this room as you acknowledge that children enjoy the colourful and stimulating environment and enjoy working with their peers. Consequently, these groups of children make rapid and accelerated progress during their time in the nursery due to the high-quality support they receive.
- Staff plan exciting and creative activities that engage and interest the children. Excellent use is made of the outdoor environment by all age groups. Children are suitably clothed for working outdoors and areas set up are inviting and well organised. Forest school activities, together with climbing frames, bicycles, and music and art stations, are used so effectively that children's early physical, social and creative developments are extremely well developed. High levels of curiosity and interest are also fostered through careful planning. Some two-year-olds demonstrated remarkable sustained periods of concentration when using binoculars and magnifying glasses to examine insects in the garden area. The use of high-quality resources indoors also ensures that children enjoy learning and develop high standards of literacy, communication and language skills. All adults model speaking correctly and there is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities each day. However, on occasion, activities across the curriculum do not extend children's problem-solving and reasoning skills well enough. This limits their ability to deepen their knowledge and extend their thinking.

- Parents are delighted with how well their children are cared for and taught. Of those who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, 100% said that they would recommend the school to others. You have worked hard at ensuring communication with parents is effective. Methods include newsletters, a nursery app and website, workshops for parents and regular parent consultations. You strongly encourage parents to read with their children and to support this, you have introduced a library for parents to collect books to take home. You have also recently begun to share staff observations of children with their parents in an electronic format and gather their feedback and input. This is still, however, in the early stages of development and requires more work as it is not yet widespread or consistent among parents. Highly effective induction procedures are in place. Introduction meetings and initial visits for parents and children help build positive relationships between home and the nursery. Parents are also welcome to stay with their children at the start of the day and talk to staff to share information. Consequently, children settle very quickly and parents are fully assured that their children are safe and happy.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching continues to develop children's problem-solving and reasoning skills
- there is greater consistency in parental contributions to their child's assessment records.

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 and members of your leadership team and governing body. I discussed the work of the school with you, including the processes and procedures in place for safeguarding. I observed different activities involving different age groups, including those for two-year-olds. I spoke with children about their learning and looked at evidence of their progress and achievement in learning journals and assessment profiles.

I looked at a range of school documents, including the school's information about children's achievement. I also reviewed the school's own evaluation of its work, together with the school development plan. I took account of the 17 responses to

Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the school's own survey of parents' views. Additional information was collected from parents in relation to children who have SEN and/or disabilities, together with more general views from parents as they collected their children.