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28 February 2019

Ms Mary Prest  
Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Prest

### **Short inspection of The Nottingham Nursery School and Training Centre**

Following my visit to the school on 12 February 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 May 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. The school's vision is stated as 'giving children the keys to their future'. You and your leaders aim to do this through inspiring awe and wonder, fostering curiosity, celebrating inclusivity and nurturing children, families and communities. This vision is shared by staff and governors alike and forms the backbone of everything you do.

There is a real sense of teamwork at the school. You have ensured that all staff can attend staff meetings so that everyone is fully informed about improvements that are taking place and can benefit from training. The daily morning staff briefings include those staff who supervise the breakfast club, so nobody misses out on important information for the coming day. Parents and carers are guaranteed a warm welcome as staff, including the receptionist, business manager and site manager, greet them as they bring their children to school.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were asked to ensure that staff and governors have a clear understanding of the progress being made towards the school's planned areas for improvement. Since that time, you and your leaders have reviewed the format of the school's development plan. The plan contains clear actions, success criteria and milestones by which leaders and governors can check the progress of the improvements being made. You and your leaders have a systematic approach to checking the work of the school. You follow a clear timetable to monitor the progress towards the improvements which have been identified as

necessary. Governors receive regular updates and visit the school to see it in action for themselves. Governors and staff at all levels understand the school's current priorities for development and are involved in evaluating the success of the new strategies and approaches.

You are very quick to take action when you notice that provision can be improved. For example, you spotted that the provision for the most able children could be improved to enable them to make even better progress than they already do. This group of children have regular access to opportunities which will extend their learning. This includes trips to a local supermarket to purchase fruit to make a smoothie, or designing and making a troll's face linked to the story of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'. Throughout these activities, staff skilfully develop children's vocabulary and number skills alongside their independence, creativity and understanding of the world. During the inspection, children were just finishing making their paper-plate troll's faces. The results were very impressive, and several children confidently explained which materials they had chosen to use and showed how their finished product looked just like the design they had originally drawn.

You and your leaders have improved the way in which adults assess children's knowledge and skills and how they use this information to plan next steps in learning. Leaders have a very clear understanding of the progress children make during their time at the school. Regular meetings to discuss the progress children are making focus sharply on evaluating both the progress that groups of children and individuals make. The school's assessment information shows that while most children join the school with skills, knowledge and understanding often below those typical for their age, the majority make strong progress and are well prepared for primary school.

This is a very inclusive school. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well supported to learn alongside their peers. Those who speak English as an additional language have effective support to improve their skills in speaking English. Staff work alongside parents who do not speak English, so they can communicate with school staff.

Children develop an understanding of the wider world, through events such as European day, harvest festival, World Book Day, or celebrating Diwali or Sikh New Year. During the inspection, children were learning about Chinese New Year. They very proudly 'wore' the large and creative Chinese dragon they had made as they danced together to traditional Chinese music. There was a real sense of fun and achievement as children demonstrated their ability to cooperate with their friends and followed the instructions carefully to perform their dance.

Parents are welcomed into the school to talk with their children's key worker and to access the range of information and leaflets the school provides. This includes information about safeguarding, what children are learning in school and ways in which learning can be developed at home. A range of books is available, in both English and other languages, for parents to read with their children. When children join the school, staff talk with parents to help to begin to get to know each child as

an individual. Soon after children join the school, parents receive a 'settling-in report', which informs them about how well their child is doing in their first few weeks. While adults welcome parents into school to talk with them informally about what their children have been doing at home, leaders have not introduced a systematic process by which parents can contribute to their children's ongoing assessments through the year. This means children's achievements outside school are not reliably considered when adults plan their next steps in learning.

Adults throughout the school show genuine care for the children. Relationships are warm and nurturing. Adults gently encourage children to have a go, for example, at zipping up their own coats or cutting up their fish fingers at lunchtime, while being close at hand to step in at just the right moment when help is needed.

A key feature of the school is the extensive facilities available for outdoor learning. During the inspection, children were supported by adults to solve problems and develop their curiosity by making mud pies or filling buckets of sand. Others, including two-year-olds, had fun improving their motor skills and coordination using balls and hoops. The forest garden provides opportunities for children to explore willow structures and find out about mini-creatures. Children learn to treat small creatures kindly, such as worms as they watch how they wiggle. Adults facilitate children's learning and develop their curiosity well as they play the drums on the outdoor stage or use large wooden blocks to make a bridge for the three billy goats. There is a real sense of adventure and purpose as children learn and play together.

Parents with whom I spoke and those who expressed a view through the online survey, Parent View, were fully supportive of the school. Every parent would recommend the school to others. All said their children are safe and cared for well. Several took time to tell me about the strong progress their children make, and how much their children enjoy coming to school. Other typical comments from parents relate to how well staff bring out their children's confidence and how happy the children are to come to school. One summed up the views of many by saying, 'My child is in very safe hands.'

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The arrangements for safeguarding are fit for purpose. Leaders ensure that staff at all levels receive up-to-date training in child protection issues. Staff are fully aware of how to report a concern about a child's welfare, should one arise. Safeguarding records are detailed and securely kept. Leaders undertake all the appropriate vetting checks before adults start to work or volunteer at the school. Leaders keep safeguarding at the front of everyone's thinking by including information and updates into their regular meetings. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding meet frequently to discuss any concerns or vulnerable children.

Leaders provide a wide range of early support for families. These include parenting classes, which are well attended, or directing parents to external services where these may be helpful.

The strong culture of safeguarding permeates the day-to-day provision. Children are encouraged to take 'safe risks'. During the inspection, children were encouraged to use cutlery, including knives, independently and correctly at lunchtime. Staff provide opportunities for children to use tools, such as scissors or a hammer and nails, safely. Adults supervise activities closely, teaching children how to be safe by holding tools correctly and wearing protective goggles when hammering a nail.

### **Inspection findings**

- Since your arrival, you have worked closely with the leadership team to clearly define the roles of leaders and improve their skills. Leaders have received training, including national qualifications, to improve their leadership skills. They play a valuable role in evaluating, and improving, the school's practice and provision.
- Governors, like leaders, are fully conversant with the school's strengths and current priorities for improvement. They understand well their strategic responsibilities. They have changed the format and content of several of the reports they receive, so they receive the information they need to be able to ask challenging questions and hold leaders to account.
- You and your leaders have ensured that staff at all levels can attend staff meetings. This means all staff benefit from the training and developments available. For example, the leader with responsibility for mathematics has provided training in mathematics mastery. Displays and resources around the classrooms are carefully designed to develop children's understanding of early number skills. As all staff have received the same training, they are all able to follow up equally well on learning opportunities as they present themselves during the school day. During the inspection, adults followed children's interests in the objects they chose, while capitalising on the opportunity to reinforce the concept of the number three.
- Leaders have provided training for staff to improve the interactions they have with children, focusing on ensuring that their interactions advance children's learning, rather than interrupt it. Staff ask very well-considered questions to develop children's thinking and problem-solving. Typically, these open-ended questions begin with phrases such as, 'I wonder why...' or 'I wonder what...'. Adults make highly effective use of songs and rhymes as they support children in their learning. This ensures the repetition of important vocabulary to develop children's speaking skills.
- Adults develop children's early reading skills well. Attractive book corners tempt children to share books with friends and adults. During more formal sessions, adults use puppets, songs and objects to capture children's interests and help them to identify words that rhyme. During the inspection, this activity took place towards the end of the school day. While some children participated keenly and were able to identify the rhyming words, others were clearly tired after their busy day. On recognising this, leaders, in typically reflective fashion, immediately put plans in place to ensure that children who attend the school after lunch can take part in these sessions earlier in the afternoon, before they become too tired, so they get the best from the activity.

- Adults have very high expectations of children's behaviour and engagement in activities. Children understand the clear routines and patterns of the day, which ensure that they feel safe in their familiar environment. They remain fully engaged in the activities provided because adults plan learning that links together and makes sense to them. Some activities are led by adults and others chosen by children independently.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- parents can contribute to their children's ongoing assessments by providing information about what their children have achieved at home, so that:
  - children's successes at home can be celebrated in school
  - adults can consider this information when they plan learning, enabling them to build even more closely on what children know and can do.

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

Yours sincerely

Di Mullan  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I held meetings with you and five other staff, including the deputy headteacher, mathematics leader, two practitioners who work with children with SEND and the teacher with responsibility for children who speak English as an additional language. I also met with the interim chair of the governing body and held a telephone call with the school improvement partner from the Nottingham School Trust.

Along with you, I paid three visits to classrooms and the outdoor areas to see the learning taking place at different times of the day. I considered the views of 14 staff and 23 parents through their respective online surveys. I spoke with parents in the morning and at lunchtime as they brought their children to school. I spoke informally with children while they were learning and as they ate their lunch.

I examined a range of school documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, minutes of the governing body meetings, children's learning journeys and the school's self-evaluation document and development plan.

