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Mrs Beth O'Neill
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Dear Mrs O'Neill

Short inspection of Goodway Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 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 good in September 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You provide strong and determined leadership and are highly ambitious for all children, staff and parents and carers of the school. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's work. They believe the school is safe and well led. Parents appreciate the strong support given to their families at times of need and consider this to be a strength of the school. One parent remarked that you had made their son feel 'as important to you' as he is to them. Your drive for excellence, in the quality of provision and care that you and your team deliver, is clear to see.

All staff have an excellent understanding of the principles of early years education and of the importance of learning through play. Staff have high expectations for children and plan learning that meets the needs of individual children to build on what they know and understand. You operate a highly effective key person system, and this ensures that staff have an excellent understanding of children's capabilities and family circumstances. Practitioners provide an exceptional range of stimulating resources and activities, which reflect and value the diversity of the children's experiences. Assessment is accurate and, from the moment children join the school,

leaders and staff collaborate closely to assess and build in challenge. Because the curriculum and teaching are strong, the children are happy, settled and engaged; learning is rapid for all groups.

The recent new build has brought the two-year-old provision into the same building as the three-year olds, and this has helped to create a strong link with the rest of the provision. The quality of the two-year-old provision is excellent. During the inspection, children were all engaged in their learning because staff know how to meet their needs and make learning interesting and fun. The curriculum has been devised to ensure development within the provision and the rest of the school. Indeed, those who have accessed this provision demonstrate better progress than their peers.

Staff are warm, kind and patient in their interactions with children. They have in-depth knowledge of every child's learning journey, and this ensures that they know precisely which strategies to use to encourage children to join in and feel included. The school provides excellent levels of support for the most vulnerable children, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. As a result, these children's needs are very well catered for. All staff have been highly trained to support the needs of all children. For example, staff are trained in autism level 2 or 3 and can use Makaton to sign with children who have communication difficulties. Staff know their key group very well, and children are regularly assessed so that SEN and/or disabilities are identified as early as possible. Parents are involved at the earliest opportunity, so that they are fully involved in decisions and support can be put into place.

At the last inspection, you were asked to provide more opportunities for key workers to be involved in planning activities and tracking the progress of children in their groups. Staff observations and assessments of achievement are accurate. Their planning captures children's interest and secures their progress from their varying starting points. This ensures that all groups do extremely well, and that no child falls behind in their learning.

Adults use learning journeys effectively to record children's level of involvement in activities and progress against their learning goals. This helps adults to direct activities to meet children's needs more closely. They also showed that opportunities for children to engage in problem-solving activities are more limited. You have introduced training for staff on problem solving through a programme you identify as sustained shared thinking. Although some evidence of this in action was seen in the questioning used by staff during the day, we agreed that a more sustained planning of these types of activities would impact positively in this area.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are robust and fit for purpose. Leaders and staff place paramount importance on making sure that the Nursery is a safe environment. At the start and end of each session, they keep a close eye on children as they arrive at and leave the building. You and your staff

ensure that you assess the risks of the activities you provide so that children are safe from harm. This ethos of care ensures that very young children can explore and test their own limits safely, within the physically challenging outdoor area, for example.

Safeguarding of children is seen as the highest priority for all staff and governors. You are supported exceptionally well by three deputy designated safeguarding leads. Key workers provide the cornerstone of care for each child, overseeing their welfare and developmental needs. They know their children extremely well and have excellent partnerships with parents.

Inspection findings

- Regardless of their starting points, children make excellent progress. As at the time of the previous inspection, many children begin their time at the school with skills that are below and well below age-related expectations, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. By the time children leave the school, all have made at least secure progress, and typically four out of five children have made rapid progress, in some case more than 12 months' more progress than expected. This represents a tremendous achievement from their starting points.
- Disadvantaged children make the same excellent progress as their peers and achieve very well, routinely catching up quickly from lower starting points. Almost all disadvantaged pupils make secure progress, and half make more rapid progress from their starting points. This is due to the wide range of targeted support you put in place for these pupils. The early years pupil premium grant, for disadvantaged children, is used effectively to provide activities focused on developing children's experiences and skills across the curriculum. Activities ranging from ceramic workshops and forest school, to language and nurture intervention have resulted in children engaging more confidently and taking safe risks when approaching other tasks.
- The children's learning journals, which are highly detailed and informative, give an accurate picture of where the children are in their learning and what they need to do next. You use them to hold staff to account and to ensure that governors have an accurate picture of key aspects of the school's performance.
- During the inspection, I considered how effectively leaders promote the learning of boys. Our observations confirmed that boys are achieving strongly. Your tracking last year highlighted some differences between groups; girls' attainment was higher than that of boys. You immediately analysed the reasons and made suitable changes. Largely as a result of those actions, boys now make accelerated progress, and their attainment gap is rapidly diminishing. In addition, almost all the boys in the provision make secure progress, and 80% make rapid progress.
- Due to the children's low attainment in communication and language on entry, we also looked at the school's approach to learning in this area. Adult-led sessions ensure that children have opportunities to develop speaking, listening and writing skills and apply them across a range of learning areas. For example,

adults carefully model language and ask children open-ended questions to extend their thinking skills. However, we observed some missed opportunities to expand vocabulary across the wider curriculum. For example, during a session involving musical instruments, words associated with sound were not used with children.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school uses every opportunity to enhance the development of vocabulary across the wider curriculum
- more opportunities are planned for problem solving to be embedded across the curriculum.

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 four members of the governing body, including the chair. I discussed the work of the school with you and the processes and procedures in place for safeguarding, including the single central record. I visited your provision for two-year olds, and the main Nursery provision for three-year olds and four-year olds. In both classrooms, I observed and spoke with four children and looked at their learning journals. I looked at a range of school documents, including the school's information about children's achievement and records relating to the monitoring of teaching and learning. I also reviewed the school's own evaluation of its work, together with the school's development plan. The school's own survey of parents' views was also considered, and additional information collected from parents as they dropped off their children during the school day.