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Mrs Elizabeth Hulse  
Headteacher  
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Cheshire  
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Dear Mrs Hulse

### **Short inspection of Westminster Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 11 July 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 November 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your staff have a secure understanding of underlying principles of early years education. You never stand still and are continually seeking ways to develop the quality of education and care that you provide. This ensures that children get a good start to their education in this inclusive and nurturing school. All children are welcome at your school, irrespective of their race, gender or culture. You and your staff ensure that each child is treated as an individual and that uniqueness is respected.

Since your appointment almost two years ago, you have made numerous changes which have impacted positively on outcomes for pupils. For example, you have significantly increased the number of children attending the two-year-old provision. Staffing arrangements have been reorganised to ensure that this group of children is taught by a qualified teacher. You have opened up the library to parents and carers to encourage them to take an even more active part in their children's learning. To support children who have difficulties in communicating with others, you have introduced Makaton across the school.

You and your staff have developed good partnerships with others in the locality and beyond. Links have been established with schools in Germany and Sweden, so that you can share good practice and learn from each other. You work well with other schools and early years providers in the local area to support each other with training and moderation. This partnership working extends to other professionals such as health visitors.

Staff are proud to work at the school and you have their full support. They feel valued and appreciate the fact that you are beginning to involve them more in decision-making within the school.

Parents are equally resounding in their praise of you and your staff. They believe that staff know their children well and are very attentive to their needs. They appreciate the fact staff 'always welcome children with a smile at the start of every day'. I believe that the following comment sums up, most eloquently, how parents feel about your school: 'There is no better nursery in the area than Westminster Nursery School'.

As we toured the school, I observed confident young children with beaming smiles who were happy and keen to learn. Children from different cultures mix well together. There is no hint of any discord. Children are well behaved and are a credit to the school and their families. Westminster Nursery is happy and harmonious place for children to learn and play.

The school's website is bright, informative and easy to navigate. It provides parents with a wide range of useful information. This enables them to have a clear understanding of how children spend their time and what they are learning while at the nursery.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. A new assessment system has been introduced which monitors and tracks the progress of different groups of children. This gives governors a more detailed picture of what progress looks like for different groups of children, such as boys, girls, disadvantaged children and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, governors now ask more searching questions, holding you more fully to account. Staff now plan activities and ask more probing questions which encourage children to think more deeply and harder, particularly those who learn more quickly.

As stated earlier, you are always looking for ways to improve your school and complacency is not an option. You correctly acknowledge that the learning environment outdoors is not of the same high standard as that available indoors. I have also identified that the school development plan and the feedback given to teachers after monitoring of their teaching lack precision.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is given high priority at your school. Staff are in no doubt that everyone must be vigilant. They are fully aware that safeguarding and protecting children's welfare is everyone's responsibility. Staff know children and their families well. They are alert to any changes which may indicate that a child may be at risk from harm. Staff have a secure understanding of procedures to follow should they be concerned about a child's welfare. Regular training makes sure that all staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding. There are comprehensive procedures in place

for the recruitment and selection of staff. Visitors sign in and are issued with badges which must be worn at all times while they are on school premises. Classrooms are only accessible with the use of a key fob. A filtering system is in place to protect children when they use the computer. All documentation relating to safeguarding that was examined during the inspection was fit for purpose.

## **Inspection findings**

- Children come into the nursery with skills and knowledge that are below those that are typical for their age. Their language, communication and social skills are particularly low, and significantly below those typical for their age. Over time, from their different starting points, children make good progress in their learning. Particularly noteworthy is the progress that the two-year-old children have made this year, which is much stronger than in previous years. You recognise the importance of building on this success and ensuring that it is sustained over time.
- Learning at your school is active and fun. Firm friendships are being formed and conversation flows freely as children play. Staff are well deployed. They spend all their time interacting with the children, developing and extending their learning.
- There are clearly defined independent play areas indoors, which cover all aspects of children's learning. All these areas are well resourced. However, the learning environment outdoors does not offer children the same wide range of exciting opportunities.
- You keep a close eye on the quality of teaching to ensure that children are receiving the best possible start to their education. Your staff have access to training, linked to school priorities, which keeps their teaching skills fresh and up to date. However, feedback given to staff after monitoring of their teaching does not focus sharply enough on the progress that different groups of children are making.
- The school development plan sets out the school's priorities to improve further outcomes for children. However, targets set are not sharply focused on what needs to improve, nor are they measurable. This makes it more difficult for you and governors to monitor, with accuracy, the progress you are making towards achieving your goals.
- Arrangements for children starting at the nursery are effective and tailored to suit the needs of individuals. Children who start the nursery at the age of three receive a home visit. Staff use these visits to play alongside the children and to start to build positive relationships. All parents receive a pack of information which is attractively presented and informative. Parents are encouraged to take an active part in children's initial assessments when they start at the nursery. Although attendance is non-statutory, staff make parents aware of the importance of children attending regularly and being punctual.
- Transition arrangements into primary school are equally well organised. Most teachers from the local primary schools visit the nursery so they can get to know the children in a safe and secure environment. During these visits, Reception teachers get to know what children know, understand and can do. Such effective practice smooths the pathway into school.

- The proportion of disadvantaged children in the school is low. You ensure that the extra funding that you receive for these children is wisely spent. Governors monitor the effectiveness of the use of the funding on children's achievement. You are aware of the barriers to learning that this small group of children face. The money is used well to support these children academically, socially and emotionally. As a result of the effective use of this funding, disadvantaged children achieve well.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the outdoor play area is developed to provide children with a wider and more varied range of opportunities to develop their learning
- feedback to staff, after monitoring of their teaching, consistently places more emphasis on the progress and learning for different groups of children
- targets in the school development plan are sharper and measurable.

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

Yours sincerely

Sheila Iwaskow

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. Accompanied by you, I visited classrooms to see the learning that was taking place. I looked at examples of children's work in their books. A range of documentation was considered, including the single central record, the school development plan and the school's own assessment information relating to current pupils' progress. I took account of 19 free-text responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire Parent View. Consideration was also given to the Ofsted online questionnaires completed by six staff.