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Mrs Tara Entwistle  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Entwistle

### **Short inspection of Newtown Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 December 2017, 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 2012.

#### **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 dedicated staff team make Newtown Nursery School a happy and harmonious place for children to learn and play. Working with your staff, you intend to lead this school on a journey toward excellence. You are highly ambitious for all children and staff who attend and work at your school. Top of your list is to provide the very best possible education for all children.

You are continually looking for ways to improve the school. Since your appointment as headteacher, you have made a number of significant changes which have enhanced further the quality of education provided. School data is now analysed in much more depth and children's progress is monitored with greater rigour. This ensures that any underperformance is more quickly identified and addressed. You have also developed the role of middle leaders, ensuring that they now take a much more active part in the leadership and management of the school. Children's learning journeys have been revised to ensure that they provide parents with a more meaningful and evaluative account of the progress that their children are making.

You have the support and respect of your staff at all levels. They are very proud to work at your school. As a leader, you encourage your staff to develop their roles in education. It is very clear to me that all staff work well as a team and morale is high.

Trusting relationships have been established with parents, which help to promote security and consistency in children's lives. Parents were very keen to tell me about the 'amazing' progress that their children have made since starting at your school. They appreciate that the transition arrangements into the nursery and onward to primary school are tailored to meet the needs of each individual child. They talked avidly about the excellent relationships that their children have with their key person. Parents believe that this has been pivotal to their children settling in so well to school.

You are aware that most of the children at your school are of White British heritage. However, the number of children from minority ethnic backgrounds is increasing. You ensure that all children are welcome, irrespective of their race, gender or culture. To help children appreciate that they live in a very diverse society, children celebrate a number of cultural festivals, such as Eid and Chinese New Year. Children develop an awareness of others by raising money for charity to support adults and other children in challenging circumstances. Visitors, such as the police officer and farmer, and trips within the locality, broaden further children's experiences and ignite their passion for learning.

Children are delightful and well behaved. Their joy at being at school is evident from their happy, smiley faces, which never waver throughout the day. Learning at your school is active and fun. Children play out in all weathers, suitably clothed to protect them from the elements. They particularly enjoy outdoor activities in the woodland area where they have a wonderful time exploring the natural environment and developing many aspects of their learning. Resources are of good quality and stored at child height, allowing children to make independent choices about their play. The classroom is spacious and well laid out. As a result, children move around their environment freely and safely.

Although all groups of children make good progress, you recognise that outcomes in reading, writing and number could be even better. You also acknowledge that the school development plan lacks precision and that there are some omissions to the school website with regard to the information that must be published. Finally, we both agree that the feedback you give to teachers after formal lesson observations could be more detailed.

You have effectively addressed the areas for improvement highlighted at the school's last inspection. Children now have many more opportunities to develop their awareness of letters and sounds, during free-play activities and those directed by adults. Staff also now question children more deeply to develop and extend their learning. Finally, attendance is now given a much higher profile. For example, attendance figures are published on the school's website and rewards are given to children for good attendance. As a result, the proportion of children who come to school on a regular basis has improved significantly since the last inspection.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

The well-being and safety of the children are high on the school's priority list. All visitors have their identity checked and the single central record contains all the required detail. Staff are up to date with training and current guidance. They talk with confidence about all safeguarding procedures, including the latest national concerns relating to the 'Prevent' agenda. Staff know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. They are aware that anyone can make a referral to the relevant authorities should they be concerned about a child's welfare. Staff who have responsibility for safeguarding and recruitment are trained at an appropriate level. There are comprehensive procedures in place for the recruitment of staff. All documentation relating to safeguarding examined during the inspection was in good order and fit for purpose.

## **Inspection findings**

- From their different starting points, all groups of children make strong gains in their learning. They leave the nursery school as confident children, well prepared for the next stage of their education. However, you acknowledge that outcomes in reading, writing and number could be even higher, particularly for disadvantaged children. From our observations, we both agree that even more opportunities could be made available in the learning environment, both indoors and outside, to promote these aspects of learning.
- You are crystal clear about what the school does well and what further improvements are needed to drive it onwards and upwards. Your self-evaluation is honest, insightful and accurate. However, the school development plan does not focus sharply enough on these priorities for improvement. In addition, targets set are not always measurable. This makes it difficult for you and governors to monitor, with accuracy, the progress the school is making towards achieving these goals.
- You keep a close eye on the quality of teaching delivered by teachers. This is done in a variety of ways, such as formal lesson observations, planning reviews and book scrutiny. However, you recognise that the feedback given to teachers after formal lesson observations does not give enough detail about the progress that different groups of children are making.
- Staff greatly appreciate the wide range of training opportunities you make available to them to keep their teaching skills fresh and up to date. They also have regular opportunities to observe and learn from each other.
- You give careful consideration to ensuring that the early years pupil premium funding is spent wisely to break down any barriers to learning that this group of children may face. The money is allocated well to support disadvantaged children academically and socially. Such effective practice allows them to flourish and take part in all that the school has to offer.
- Your school website is bright, colourful and easy to navigate. It contains a wealth of information to give parents an insight as to what is happening in school. However, it is not compliant with some of the information that must be

published. The complaints procedure does not outline clearly the procedures that the school will follow when dealing with a complaint. In addition, the special educational needs (SEN) report does not evaluate the effectiveness of the provision. Finally, the early years pupil premium statement does not detail the barriers to learning that this group of children face or how the funding will be spent.

- No one can doubt your governors' commitment or passion for the school. They are regular visitors to the school and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for development. You keep them well informed about the progress that different groups of pupils are making. They act as a critical friend, offering good levels of support and challenge in equal measure.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- outcomes in reading, writing and number improve further, with a particular focus on the learning and outcomes of disadvantaged children
- the school development plan focuses more sharply on school priorities and that targets are measurable to allow progress in achieving these goals to be monitored more effectively
- feedback given to teachers after formal lesson observations gives more detail about the progress that different groups of children are making
- the website is compliant and is checked regularly to ensure that it remains so.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lancashire. 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 met with you, staff, a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body. We went on a tour of the school to see the learning that was taking place. I looked at some examples of children's work and observed children's behaviour in class. I reviewed a range of documentation, including the single central record, the school's tracking system and records relating to the monitoring of teaching and learning. I also took account of the responses to Parent View, the online Ofsted questionnaire, completed by one parent.