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Ms Jane Millett
Headteacher
Weston Way Nursery School
Weston Way
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Dear Ms Millett

Short inspection of Weston Way Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 28 March 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 outstanding in April 2013.

This school continues to be outstanding.

You and your staff are fully committed to your work. You have developed a collaborative approach to leadership and your senior team hold the highest ambition for the school's continued success. The children experience memorable and exciting learning experiences because you make excellent use of the beautiful grounds and the extensive woodland on the school site. Teachers and other key workers plan engaging and challenging learning opportunities, using the indoor and outdoor areas. You encourage children to take sensible risks in a secure and stimulating environment. Children love to follow the rules for safe play among the trees and the designated stick-throwing area is incredibly popular with the children.

Children enter the nursery with a wide range of skills and abilities. They make outstanding progress in all areas of learning and particularly in their social and emotional development. When children leave the nursery, they are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education. Weston Way is extremely well regarded in the local community and parents are incredibly proud that their children come here.

Parents, staff and governors are delighted with the attentive, nurturing support which you provide for children and their families. Parents who I spoke to informally at the start of the day were fulsome in their praise of the school. Typical of the comments made were 'I couldn't love this school any more than I already do', 'My child looks forward to coming to nursery every day' and 'My child has flourished here.'

Teachers and other adults demonstrate considerable expertise in promoting children's communication skills. They encourage the children to practise making their own choices, develop independent skills and become socially confident.

Since the last inspection, the school has taken over responsibility for the extended childcare provision 'Silver Circles'. Also, you have successfully piloted the new offer of 30 hours of child care on behalf of the local authority. Families appreciate the new opportunities these initiatives provide for themselves and their children. You are planning to extend this offer of 30 hours per week, and you are already exploring ways to make the best use of the nursery's physical resources. You are also well aware of the need to ensure that children's well-being remains high when they are in the nursery for the whole day.

You have a comprehensive and detailed plan for continuing to improve the nursery, which you review regularly. You carefully evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and I have asked you to involve your leadership team more formally in this work. This will enable senior leaders to develop their own monitoring skills and provide even more support for you, particularly as more children will be spending even more time in the nursery next year.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of good quality.

You and the governing body ensure that staff are kept up to date with safeguarding requirements. Your safeguarding governor is enormously knowledgeable and she ensures that leaders and governors are well informed and well supported and that child protection procedures are rigorous and detailed.

Staff know their duties and understand their role in keeping pupils safe. They are well equipped to spot any signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. All required checks take place to make sure that the adults that children meet in school do not pose any threat. The parents I spoke to told me very clearly that their children feel exceptionally safe and well cared for at school. They consider bullying and bad behaviour to be exceedingly rare events and they are confident that adults who work at the school are quick to respond if they have any concerns.

Inspection findings

- To ascertain that the school remained outstanding, one of my key lines of enquiry was about how the school has extended its partnerships by making the children's portfolios more accessible to parents and children. In 2013, the previous inspection report had asked the school to improve this aspect of its work. Since then, children's individual portfolios have been made freely available to parents, and shared regularly with the children themselves.

- Termly open evenings and consultation days provide further opportunities for

parents to look at their children's work. Also, the popular 'wow moments' display board allows parents to submit comments celebrating their children's achievements and these form part of each assessment record. Comments made recently include 'This morning he got dressed all by himself' and 'She loves to clean her own teeth before bed.' These opportunities allow parents to be directly involved in shaping their children's development portfolios.

- The children themselves love to look at their own learning journeys. They enjoy remembering the activities they undertook earlier in the year and sharing their memories with their friends and families.
- My second key line of enquiry was about how effectively leaders use the early years pupil premium grant to support disadvantaged pupils. At the start of the inspection, the information about this funding was not as detailed as it could have been on the school's website. However, when I examined the school's own records and spoke to senior leaders and governors, it was evident that a comprehensive, detailed and individualised programme of support is in place for each disadvantaged child.
- The nursery currently receives this funding for 14 children and you meet with the families of each eligible child to learn about the child's likes, dislikes, hobbies and interests. Leaders use this information, together with their own knowledge of the child's skills and abilities, to draw up a support plan for each child. Parents are closely involved in the decisions made. The nursery produces an action plan for each eligible child, using a wide range of additional activities. These include individual or small-group teaching, funded access to after-school clubs and additional childcare. A clear and detailed record of support is in place for each child and these are monitored carefully.
- You and key workers are rigorous in tracking the progress of eligible pupils. The school's records, based on regular observations and assessments, show that these children have all made at least the expected progress since September. In fact, 40% of disadvantaged children have made accelerated progress, especially in their communication, language and literacy skills.
- My final key line of enquiry was to explore the effectiveness of leadership and management. Since the previous inspection, a new chair of governors has been appointed and there have been some changes to the structure of the senior leadership team.
- During my visit, I met with you, governors and senior leaders, and I reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation form, the school development plan, minutes of governors' meetings and reports from the local authority. It is clear that you, senior leaders and governors are passionate about your work and you have an accurate and detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. Nevertheless, we agreed that there is scope for senior leaders to be more closely involved in making assessments about the quality of teaching and learning. This will provide even more support to you and give senior staff the opportunity to further develop their own monitoring skills.
- There is a strong ethos of collaborative leadership across the nursery. Senior

colleagues share your vision and determination that every child should achieve to the very best of his or her ability. Leaders have created a rich, vibrant and stimulating learning environment, making wonderful use of all the indoor and outside spaces. As a result, children are free to choose, explore and challenge themselves across a wide range of structured and purposeful learning activities.

- You organise regular training for staff. This ensures that teachers, nursery nurses and key workers use their knowledge to guide, support and extend each child's personal development. This is apparent through the strong focus on adults' use of questioning, which enriches children's speaking and listening skills. This is significant because these skilfully performed interactions between staff and children enable learners to make exceptional progress across all areas of the curriculum.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning is more evenly distributed among senior staff.
- The school is well prepared for the extension of its current provision to 30 hours per week in the near future.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Hertfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Nick Rudman
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you to discuss progress since the previous inspection, the school's self-evaluation and my key lines of enquiry. I held meetings with your senior leaders who have responsibility for extended provision, finance, special educational needs, planning and staffing matters. I met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body and the safeguarding governor, and I spoke on the telephone to a representative from the local authority. I scrutinised a variety of sources of information, including the school development plan, self-evaluation information, governing body minutes of meetings and the school's assessment information. I also scrutinised the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures, the records of checks leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with children and information relating to pupils' progress and achievement. We both undertook

observations of learning across the school, viewed children's learning portfolios and examined records of support for disadvantaged pupils.