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Miss Sarah Harrison
Headteacher
Pound Park Nursery School
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Dear Miss Harrison

Short inspection of Pound Park Nursery

Following my visit to the school on 22 September 2015 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 Pound Park Nursery School was judged to be outstanding in September 2011.

This school continues to be outstanding.

Pound Park Nursery School has been highly regarded within the local community since World War Two, when it was established to support families involved in the war effort. Successive leaders have maintained the special culture in the school, which puts children first and enables them to become confident and curious learners. During my visit, over sixty years since it was established, parents still speak very positively about how safe and how happy their children are and particularly about how much they enjoy their learning every day. Since the last inspection, excellent practice has been sustained. This is because staff are experienced, they understand how young children learn best and they work together harmoniously as a strong team.

Staff actively encourage parents to help their children at home in creative ways, such as home learning projects, 'Dads' Brunches' and contributing to records of achievement. The commitment to children's well-being and achievement is at the heart of these strong and respectful partnerships.

You ensure that all children make at least good and mostly outstanding progress from their own starting points across the curriculum. Children develop very positive attitudes because your staff skilfully nurture their confidence from the moment they begin school. Two-year-old and three-year-old children learn together, amicably, side-by-side. Children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent.

Equally, children's literacy and numeracy skills deepen as they explore with adults, or sometimes alone, the extensive range of exciting activities that are continually available to them. It is not surprising, therefore, that their learning habits are exemplary.

Governors have developed their expertise and skills, which were identified areas of improvement at the time of the last inspection. They take their roles and responsibilities seriously, as demonstrated by their insistence to appoint the right headteacher for the nursery, even though this took longer than they would have liked. This strategy has paid off because, since you were appointed in January 2015, you have built positively on established practice to improve teaching, learning and assessment further still.

Currently, however, the checks carried out by leaders and governors are too general and do not provide sharp enough evidence about how successfully the nursery is meeting its identified priorities for improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

Staff and governors ensure safeguarding arrangements for children have the highest priority. These arrangements are fit for purpose and are kept continually under review.

Robust safeguarding checks on staff suitability to work with children are undertaken during recruitment. Safeguarding checks for serving staff, volunteers and governors are subject to ongoing scrutiny by leaders and senior administrative officers. You insist that staff maintain meticulous records for children at risk. Confidential information is collected and logged in a central and secure location. It is very detailed and well organised, ensuring that external agencies are well placed and well informed to take appropriate action when required.

The nursery works closely with external agencies to provide strong support for families and parents going through difficult times. Parents told me how approachable all staff are if they need to talk about a concern. They are very appreciative of this care and support.

You keep staff and governors fully informed about changes in the statutory guidance, '*Keeping Children Safe in Education*'. In addition, you cascade information from serious case reviews into safeguarding practice. For example, staff must use lockers to store mobile phones during the day and an additional visual panel has been inserted to create two sight-lines into the nappy changing area.

Inspection findings

- You have ensured that the vision, 'to provide children with the best start in life', is embedded into routines and expectations throughout the nursery.

- Inspection evidence acknowledges that the way the nursery worked, although successful, was too informal. You have introduced systems to help them assess the impact of their practice on measurable outcomes. Staff now track children's academic and personal achievement, linked to their ages, so it is easier to identify which children are not doing as well as they should. The leadership team and governors analyse this performance information to provide a more accurate overview than previously of the nursery's strengths and weaknesses.
- My analysis of performance information confirms that your evaluation that all children make significant progress from their individual starting points is accurate. Last year, every child made expected progress and 50% made rapid and significant progress between joining and leaving the nursery.
- Adults track children's achievements and record this in individual assessment profiles. They collect important evidence about children's learning and personal development, using photographs, samples of work and children's comments. I scrutinised a sample with you. We agreed this evidence demonstrates excellent progress, particularly in developing children's communication, number and personal development skills.
- Staff actively promote parents' contributions to assessment records. Parents receive useful guidance about how to encourage learning out of school, such as with singing and storytelling, and ways to praise children's efforts at home. As a result, home and school liaison is purposeful and profiles are highly valued and appreciated by all.
- The assessment profiles contain such rich evidence because adults knowledgeably develop children's curiosity and interest. The indoor and outdoor environments offer a wide range of inviting opportunities for learning. For example, despite the heavy rain during my visit, children chose to learn outside. Adults and children, in appropriate waterproof clothing, thoroughly enjoyed exploring colours by scattering powder paint into swirling puddles of water.
- The nursery is a 'Forest School' centre of excellence. Children are actively encouraged to take risks and, carefully supervised, they use penknives to make bird houses, sit around fire pits for story time and handle minibeasts and natural materials with interest. The way in which the school utilises this initiative results in children's greater confidence and excitement as learners.
- Adults model caring and sensitive relationships with children, who in turn reflect the same. Children's attitudes and behaviour are excellent. They learn together side-by-side exceptionally well, regardless of age, ability or need.
- The nursery is highly regarded for its inclusivity. Under the strong guidance of the special needs coordinator, staff expertly meet the needs of disabled children

or those who have additional needs. Consequently, they make equally good and outstanding progress when compared with other children.

- You initiated fully integrating the two-year-old provision with children who are three. This transition has been seamless because adults know each child exceptionally well. The organisation of the rooms and excellent communication between all team members ensure that no child is overlooked.
- Governors execute their duties conscientiously. They match their personal skills and expertise to check different aspects of nursery provision. They test leaders' self-evaluation information by carrying out learning walks, tracking individual children and scrutinising information about the rigour with which staff safeguard and protect children.
- The school improvement plan correctly identifies the right priorities for the nursery. It has clear short-term and long-term goals that have sustained highly effective practice since the last inspection. Governors and staff carry out regular checks on how well the nursery is doing, but sometimes these checks do not link closely enough to expected outcomes by a specified date. At my final meeting with you and your governors we agreed that this was a most appropriate next step for the nursery.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the school's work is checked with greater precision to ensure excellence is sustained in children's well-being and achievement.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Greenwich. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ann Debono

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and members of the governing body. The inspector spoke informally to parents at the beginning of the school day. Brief visits were made to the indoor and outdoor environments to observe children's learning. The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including children's work and safeguarding information. The school action plan was also evaluated.