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19 January 2016

Mrs Emma Short
Headteacher
Camborne Nursery School
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Dear Mrs Short

Short inspection of Camborne Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 24 November 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 the school was judged to be outstanding in May 2012.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

- You maintain a very welcoming and caring culture within the school which fully supports the school's aim: 'to bring the world to the child and to take the child into the world'. You and your staff have confidently welcomed in the past year the introduction of two-year-old children into your school and embraced the necessary changes required to provide for their particular learning needs.
- Your staff establish excellent communications with parents throughout their association with the school. Parents who spoke with the inspector confirmed they appreciated this as it allays any anxieties children have about starting nursery school. 'Time-to-talk' sessions arranged throughout the year by the school and informal meetings when parents drop off or pick up their children from school allow staff to maintain open and honest communication channels with parents.
- The previous inspection report recommended your school continue to work closely with another local nursery school to develop more reliable ways for checking and recording the progress children make in learning. Teachers of both schools meet regularly to share and agree children's progress and achievements. The findings are used to help parents better understand their child's learning and expectations at both schools. You are also successfully leading a national project to evaluate the

introduction of two-year-old children into school. This work has further strengthened the already outstanding teaching provision the school offers. It has broadened the perceptions of the staff to the learning potential of two-year-olds and what the school can offer them. As a result, two-year-olds have been fully integrated into the life of the school. They settle quickly to learning on arrival at school each day. They play happily alongside their older peers and look up to them as role models.

Safeguarding is effective.

- In line with your vision and commitment to lifelong learning you continue to provide an outstandingly safe, caring and happy learning environment for all children. All staff know the needs of individual pupils exceptionally well. They act as excellent role models for pupils in the ways they should talk, act and behave towards one another. Throughout the inspection I observed children of all ages happily mixing well together in a wide range of play-based learning activities.
- You, the school's business manager and governors ensure that all the necessary recruitment checks and procedures for new staff are carried out in full. All staff have undergone additional safeguarding training in order to ensure that pupils and their families receive the correct kind of support. The school's records show that concerns, when they do occasionally arise, are fully resolved and, when necessary, lessons are learned and acted upon.
- Through the school's annual self-review process and safeguarding audit, senior leaders set improvement targets for the following year. You have recently reviewed ways to record any concerns raised by staff or parents about a child's welfare or safety. In addition, the school has reviewed and strengthened the way it reports to parents about any incidents or concerns. However, these agreed changes have yet to be incorporated into the relevant school policies along with a system to monitor their impact.

Inspection findings

- Senior leaders have ensured that all children, regardless of their starting points, are making very good progress towards achieving their early learning goals. In particular the school's current focus on developing children's early reading skills is paying dividends. For example, the most recent checks carried out by senior leaders show that, in summer 2015, just half of all three-year-olds were on track to achieve a good level of development in learning to read. This has now risen to almost three-quarters of children being on track. Throughout the school day children take part in a wide range of carefully planned and stimulating learning activities, both indoors and outside. All teachers and other adults help children to develop confidence in speaking and listening. In a reading lesson for older children, the inspector observed the teacher's effective

use of children's prior learning of the sounds letters make to broaden their vocabulary and introduce rhyme.

- The school is successfully leading a nationally-funded project to raise standards in early writing and number skills. Working closely with 15 other early years practitioners, teachers are gaining a deeper understanding of how children think mathematically and develop their ability to write. Staff work creatively to devise a stimulating curriculum for children to practise their developing skills. Throughout the day children's independence and self-responsibility is very successfully promoted. For example, children show a high level of confidence in self-selecting activities by either placing a photograph of themselves in a pocket by the activity they wish to carry out or by placing their shoes in a box.
- Teachers and all other adults work closely together as a team to gather information on pupils' learning and progress. They use this information carefully to compile a comprehensive understanding of each child's strengths as well as areas for development. This information is used very effectively to inform teachers' planning and provide children with highly challenging activities that not only interest and motivate them but also give them opportunities to develop and practise essential skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school is constantly reviewing the way it works in order to strengthen its excellent provision and further improve outcomes for children. Currently, teachers are focusing on ways to strengthen children's skills in communication and language. Staff are highly skilled in using questioning which encourages children to think before they respond. The use of sign language has been adopted by all adults and this is very successfully supporting the development of children's communication skills.
- A considerable amount of work has been completed by leaders to review the use and purpose of learning journals, the individual written record kept by the school on each child's learning and progress. Each learning journal captures key moments in a child's learning through photographs, children's drawings and teachers' short, written comments that focus on identifying significant and effective moments in a child's development. The learning journals now also regularly include comments from the children. This approach is very effective in encouraging and supporting parents in understanding and engaging with their children's learning.
- The highly focused staff training is closely linked to the work and priorities of the school. Members of the governing body work closely with the headteacher to check on the work of the school. However, minutes from meetings do not always make clear how governors are holding senior leaders to account. Improvement planning is firmly rooted in rigorous and accurate self-evaluation. The results of an annual questionnaire to parents, national priorities for nursery schools and the learning outcomes of children are all taken into consideration when setting improvement targets. This process allows all stakeholders a sense of ownership in the work of the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- changes in practice brought about through the school's self-review process and the annual safeguarding audit are incorporated swiftly into the relevant school policies and monitored regularly by senior leaders to evaluate impact
- minutes of governing body meetings make explicit its work to hold senior leaders effectively to account.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Cornwall Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and your assistant headteacher, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, teachers and teaching assistants. I also met with parent representatives and held a telephone conversation with the headteacher of another partner nursery school. I accompanied you on visits to lessons, spoke with children and together we looked at the work of children displayed throughout the school and in their 'learning journals'. I evaluated the accuracy of your self-evaluation and reviewed a range of other school documentation. I checked the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements and recruitment information.