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Ms Ludmila Morris
Headteacher
McMillan Nursery School
Judge Heath Lane
Hayes
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Dear Ms Morris

Short inspection of McMillan Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 14 September 2016, 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 and your team are uncompromising in your ambition for all children to attend the nursery daily and achieve their full potential. This can be seen throughout the setting, where all adults have very high expectations for children's behaviour, learning and skill development. All children make excellent progress in their learning as a result.

Alongside your teaching team you work very effectively with new children and parents. Those spoken to during the inspection talked of the very effective transition from home to nursery. Parents feel that their understanding of their children's needs and interests is taken into account fully. It was very evident during the inspection that parents were welcomed into the nursery by helping to settle their child into play and learning. One parent explained, 'I cannot tell you how great a start to nursery my child is having. They really listen to us as parents. They want to get it right from the start for my child and for me.'

Regular workshops and support groups further enhance a feeling of community and involvement for parents and children. For example, recent workshops on female genital mutilation (FGM) have helped parents understand the risks this can pose for the well-being of their children.

The curriculum provides rich, stimulating learning across all seven areas of the early years curriculum. For example, pupils were preparing a meal for Eid during the inspection. This encouraged them to work with their peers, talk and use their gross

and fine motor skills such as opening packaging and cutting potatoes. Children are taught the importance of doing things for themselves and persevering when they initially encounter difficulties.

Children develop a love of books and learn basic phonics skills (letters and the sounds they represent) appropriate to their age. These are reinforced through activities such as making sounds when forming letters in sand trays. Children are keen to practise their reading. The most able use their skills in phonics to identify single phonemes (a sound made from a single letter) and to begin blending simple words. Children have free access to books through the nursery and can borrow them for home reading.

You draw proactively on the knowledge of local families to identify those who would most benefit from accessing two-year-old nursery places. You show a clear commitment to reviewing the needs of your children and families throughout their time at the school. By providing free childcare for identified pupils, you successfully ensure that children from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who have special education needs and/or disabilities continue to make rapid progress during school holidays.

The school shares its outstanding practice with other schools. Recently this has included visitors from Japan and Germany. However, as Hillingdon's only maintained nursery school, leaders accept that they could be doing more to share their excellent practice with other schools locally in Hillingdon and London.

Safeguarding is effective.

The nursery has a culture where everyone is responsible for protecting the welfare and safety of children. Senior leaders and governors regularly review safeguarding policies and procedures throughout the academic year. Leaders check termly that staff are up to date with their knowledge and understanding of how to keep children safe. Updates throughout the year keep all staff sharply focused on quickly identifying concerns and passing these on to the designated safeguarding officer.

Staff have a detailed understanding of a full range of safeguarding concerns that could affect children in their setting. They understand the range of welfare concerns that may affect children at the school and know the local risks that mean some risks are more likely. For example, staff have a deep understanding of breast ironing, FGM, child sexual exploitation and gangs. You and your staff are also fully aware of the local issues regarding children looked after by the local authority. Though you currently have no children looked after, you are aware of the issues raised in Hillingdon's most recent inspection of child protection for this group.

Inspection findings

- You, the deputy headteacher and governors rigorously evaluate the work of the school. You have a very clear understanding of the effectiveness of the nursery's work and explore forensically the learning of each individual child. This ensures

that children are known as individuals and their interests and skills are carefully developed over time.

- Teaching and learning activities are highly effective in meeting the needs of individual children, regardless of their background, ability, ethnicity or starting point. Staff have an accurate understanding of children's skill levels and their knowledge and understanding across the curriculum. There is a wide range of meticulously moderated evidence to support the assessment of children's attainment and progress.
- You and your team make excellent use of the assessment information available about children and groups of pupils. They have rightly identified specific groups that are particularly relevant to their setting. For example, staff have been tracking and providing specific provision for shy children. They are given activities which encourage speaking and confidence.
- You accept that further work is needed by leaders to separate English as an additional language (EAL) into two distinct groups; those who are at an early stage of acquiring the English language and those who are advanced bilingual learners. This will help you to focus even more sharply on the needs of different children.
- Governors have maintained their high level of challenge since the previous inspection. They are rightly ambitious for all children and ensure that additional funds, such as the early years pupil premium, are improving the outcomes of children. Governors regularly visit the school and know parents and children well. They use their regular visits to the school to check that they are given accurate information from the headteacher and senior leaders.
- The attendance of children has significantly improved since the time of the previous inspection. Historically, a minority of children did not regularly attend school. You have successfully promoted the importance of regular attendance at nursery. There are now no significant differences between groups of children; they all attend regularly.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- more children benefit from their excellent practice by sharing this more widely with other early education providers in Hillingdon and beyond.

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

Yours sincerely

David Storrie
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, members of staff, the chair of the governing body, several parents, and a local authority representative. I observed children as they learned and played in classrooms and in the outdoor classroom areas. I reviewed the school's plans for improvement, your evaluation of the school's effectiveness, attendance information, records of your checks to safeguard children and records of children's progress and attainment.