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Ms Panna Nagar
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Nagar

Short inspection of Northfleet Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 25 January 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 September 2013.

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 deputy headteacher have very high expectations and there has been no complacency since the last inspection. You and all the staff work together as an exceptionally strong team to make sure that the Nursery continues to provide the best possible experiences for children and their families. Children play and learn in a rich, stimulating learning environment and are provided with opportunities that allow them to flourish in all aspects of their development. Children thrive and make excellent progress during their time in the Nursery. Cultural diversity is celebrated in a vibrant environment where many different languages and heritages are represented. You have continued to ensure that the Nursery is a centre of excellence, which is acknowledged through your approach to delivering the curriculum, your work to support other schools as a national leader of education and the lead role the school has as a teaching school.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the Nursery. They were queuing up at the start of the day to express their positive views to me. They spoke, among many other aspects, of how quickly their children settled, how happy children are to attend the Nursery and how well the staff know all the children and their particular needs. One parent summed up the views of many with the comment: 'What a fabulous place this Nursery is. My son is very happy and engaged in all aspects of

life due to the things he learns at school. I cannot recommend this school enough to other parents and carers.'

At the time of the last inspection, many outstanding qualities were recognised. These included your highly skilled and inspirational leadership, outstanding teaching and learning, children's exemplary behaviour and the excellent progress made by all groups of children from their starting points. These features continue to be exceptionally strong and very evident in practice. You have successfully addressed the issue that required further improvement by enhancing children's learning through the use of a wider range of information and communication technology (ICT). The regular and rigorous checks you make on all aspects of the provision ensure that there are well thought out plans to forge further improvement. You identify that, within the rich curriculum, there is further scope to enhance children's awareness of a range of people and communities in their understanding of the world.

Safeguarding is effective.

Parents are unanimous in their view that their children feel safe in school and are well looked after. You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Keeping children safe has the highest priority and you have made sure that this is embedded within the culture of the Nursery.

The school's policies and procedures are comprehensive, up to date and clear. High-quality records note concerns and the action taken by the school. This includes the involvement of parents and, where applicable, outside agencies. All of the appropriate checks are made on adults who work with children. All adults understand that the well-being and welfare of the children is everybody's responsibility. Staff are very well trained and vigilant in noticing any signs that children may need help. They know exactly what procedures to follow to make sure that children are given timely and appropriate support where necessary.

You and other staff are always visible and available to offer parents and children a warm welcome when they start in the morning or afternoon session. This gives parents an opportunity to communicate any problems or concerns that their children may have that day. Site security is continually updated. All areas, including the three outdoor spaces, are checked regularly for safety features. Children are encouraged to take considered risks to develop their awareness, physical development and resilience but know the boundaries. For example, a child explained to me that the cones placed around the climbing area meant that: 'We don't go there, it's slippery and dangerous, we might hurt ourselves.' Robust risk assessments are carried out, including for when children go on trips out of school.

Inspection findings

- I focused, in particular, on the following aspects during the inspection: the effectiveness of your work to keep children safe; the use of technology to support children's learning; the quality of the provision, including outcomes for

children, and how well you engage parents to benefit children's learning.

- Children make rapid gains in their learning and personal development during their time in the Nursery. Their starting points when they join are often below the typical expectations for their age, particularly in their communication and language skills. Children make excellent progress and reach levels of development in all areas of learning that are at least in line with, and often above, those typical for their age by the time that they leave. They are extremely well prepared for their transition into the Reception Year. Your uncompromising belief that all children deserve the very best start means that all groups reap the rewards of attending this outstanding Nursery. Children who are new to learning English as an additional language, those who are disadvantaged and eligible for the early years pupil premium funding and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, all make rapid and sustained progress.
- All staff know the children extremely well and have very strong and positive relationships with children and parents. This means that staff adapt and plan activities that are really appropriate to each individual. Children's interests and choices are at the heart of the provision. They benefit enormously from the hands on, practical and active participation that drives the teaching and learning. The slogan on the playground wall underpins your approach, 'Learn to play then play to learn.' Children here love to learn. Their enjoyment in all that they do, and skilful teaching, means that children concentrate for relatively long periods and stick at activities. They listen well to their teachers and each other. They are kind and friendly and take care of each other. One child, without any prompting from an adult, informed another that he had dropped his hat and he had better pick it up in case someone stood on it. Children develop as confident, responsible and independent individuals. They behave exceptionally well and show respect for others with their good manners.
- Staff are highly skilled in nurturing and expanding children's thinking, learning and problem-solving skills. They know when to hold back and let children explore and discover for themselves and when and how to intervene to move learning forward. This was seen in the absolute delight of a child when she worked out for herself how to secure a large piece of material to make a canopy for a den. A project that involves story telling and story acting is having a marked impact on children's communication and language skills as well as their creativity and imagination. One child's storytelling skills, for example, progressed in a short time from, 'London, a princess and the helicopter and a deer' to 'Once upon a time there was a little fairy and she had a magic wand. She went to the seaside and Jack and a princess came and they tried to get the dragon.'
- Adults take every opportunity to promote mathematical understanding and vocabulary, for example by getting children to count out the segments in a satsuma during snack time or counting and recording how many children are there at the beginning of a session. The creative approach to developing children's understanding of mathematics was celebrated in a recent exhibition in the local community. ICT is now used more widely to support children's learning. Teachers ensure that planning includes specific activities to use ICT and you made sure that there were training opportunities for staff to develop this aspect.

- You and all the staff continue to maintain excellent relationships with parents, as you know that a strong partnership between home and school greatly benefits the children. Parents value highly all that you and the staff do for them and their children and are very pleased with the progress that their children make. They appreciate the excellent communication and the many opportunities they have to get involved in the life of the school. One parent expressed the views of many with the comment: 'Parents are often welcome to special workshops and events along with their children which is really nice and gives a sense of community.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the planned review of children's awareness of a range of people and communities further enriches their understanding in this area of their learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, the deputy headteacher, teachers with leadership responsibilities and governors. I had a telephone conversation with the local authority senior early years adviser. I visited all of the groups to observe children making their own choices and learning in small and large group time. I observed children during snack and lunchtime and in the outside areas. You or your deputy accompanied me for most of these visits. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day and looked at 28 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, which included 14 written comments. I looked at a range of information about children's achievement, your checks on the quality of teaching and learning, the school development plan and documents relating to safeguarding. I looked at evidence through published books and photographs of children's previous learning experiences. We discussed your own evaluation of the school's effectiveness.