

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



11 May 2017

Ms Annette Long
Headteacher
Moss Hall Nursery School
189 Nether Street
Finchley
London
N3 1NR

Dear Ms Long

Short inspection of Moss Hall Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 15 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Indeed, this is the third occasion that the school has been judged to be outstanding. Your predecessor, staff and you should be proud that the children attending Moss Hall Nursery continue to receive the very best start to their education.

You became headteacher in January 2017 and have quickly established yourself in this leadership role. Aply assisted by your deputy headteacher, you have maintained a sharp focus on ensuring that every child achieves their full potential. Since the previous inspection, the wider staff team have remained largely unchanged. Consequently the school has continued to drive forwards effectively, making continuous improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment that the children receive.

Central to the success of the school is the excellent knowledge all staff have of the children they teach. Learning activities are skilfully matched to individual children's needs, aptitudes and interests. Therefore, children are continually stretched and developed. They are taught to take and manage risks, not just in their learning, but also physically. Children make extensive use of the trees in the outside area and climbing apparatus to develop their physical ability, confidence and willingness to take measured risks.

A most impressive feature of the school's work is the development of children's use

technology. Children learn to make things from wood using tools including saws and screwdrivers. They make not only toys, such as snakes or aeroplanes, but also equipment with practical uses, for example coat hooks. Observations of children's learning showed them safely and confidently using equipment adapted for their age. Consequently, over time, children have made exceptional progress in their fine and gross motor skills. This benefits their development elsewhere in the early years curriculum. For example, their strong pencil grip supports early writing skills.

Leaders have rightly identified that technology in the school garden could be enhanced further. Portfolios show there is less opportunity for children to develop their skills in this area when learning outdoors.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fully in line with the most recent guidance in 'Keeping children safe in education', September 2016. Staff regularly discuss any emerging child protection issues and leaders ensure that their record-keeping helps them to follow up referrals effectively. They maintain close contact with external agencies to check that children get the right support when they need it. Training for all staff is regular and thorough, ensuring that they have a clear understanding of how to identify and report concerns. Staff know about different forms of abuse and the school has rightly emphasised how to identify concerns in younger children, alongside more general aspects of safeguarding.

Inspection findings

- Staff assess children's skills systematically when they join the school. Assessments are accurate and based on observations and interactions with individual children. There is ample evidence of engagement with outside agencies, including health visitors and social care, and with parents and carers to gain a full picture of children's skills and development needs on entry.
- Regardless of their starting points, children make excellent progress. As at the time of the previous inspection, many children begin their time at the school with skills that are broadly typical for their age, particularly within their personal, social and emotional development. However, around one in three children have skills that are above this. By the time children leave the school, typically eight in 10 children attain above average standards for their age. This represents tremendous progress from their starting points.
- The vast majority of parents appreciate the information they receive about their child's progress. Parents told the inspector of their passion and pride in the work of the school. Leaders and staff support parents when they need access to public services such as health and housing. Impressively, the school has successfully helped parents access additional support when seeking employment. This has in some cases truly transformed the lives of individual children and their families.
- All groups make excellent progress. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and the most able disadvantaged, successfully catch up with all other children

nationally. They typically leave the school with the skills expected for their age and in many cases they have overtaken their peers.

- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also make excellent progress, diminishing the differences between their progress and that of their peers. Parental evidence shows that children make almost immediate progress on entry to the school. Staff carefully develop children's confidence while making adaptations to learning activities and teaching. Therefore, children can successfully access all areas of the curriculum.
- Parents and staff are highly positive about the leadership of the school. Staff feel highly valued and well developed professionally. The vast majority of parents are passionate in their praise for the leadership of the school. They assert that the school has continued to flourish since the previous inspection.
- I agree with you that the school has built upon and developed its previous strengths. The outdoor provision has continued to be a strength of the school. Staff take children regularly on exploratory walks through the wooded area, for example, pretending to be the three bears looking for 'Goldilocks', or creating their own 'Three billy goats gruff' bridge.
- Staff and children use drama to help them explore stories. Staff expertly develop children's language through questioning and modelling. They use events around them to enhance children's awareness of nature and their descriptive powers. For example, describing the sound of a bird flapping out of a tree.
- Governors have worked hard to ensure that they understand both the school and views of parents. They have maintained the aspects of the school's work that are valued most by parents. For example, governors have ensured that leaders have continued to develop children's risk-taking, outdoor learning and drama.
- Children enjoy reading throughout the school. Regardless of their starting point or attainment, children regularly and freely choose to pick up a book and explore it. Initially this may be a form of role-play reading, but as they progress, children become confident in accessing appropriate books to read individual words.
- Staff are skilful at interacting with children to discuss their opinions and thoughts about books. Weekly school library sessions allow children to borrow and explore books at home. On returning a book, children discuss and review their book at a basic level. Sibling toddlers also take part, helping them benefit from early access to the school's work with children.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they evaluate the impact on children's learning of the ongoing improvements to technology in the outdoor classroom.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Barnet. 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 formally with you, the deputy headteacher, the leader for learning outdoors and a further four staff members
- met with the chair of the governing body
- listened to children reading
- reviewed a range of documents, including records showing the work of the governing body, the school's evaluation of its own work and leaders' plans for improvement and information about children's progress and attainment. The school's single central record of pre-employment checks and safeguarding procedures were also reviewed
- scrutinised the school's website and confirmed that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information
- considered 32 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, nine handwritten letters to the inspector and three responses to a survey of staff views
- visited a range of learning activities across each nursery session, jointly with you.