

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



24 April 2017

Mrs Ann Collier  
Edith Kerrison Nursery School  
Sophia Road  
London  
E16 3PB

Dear Mrs Collier

### **Short inspection of Edith Kerrison Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 23 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 good in September 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Staff have high expectations of what children can achieve. The school is caring and inclusive. Staff are extremely proud and happy to work at the school. They have created a positive climate for learning. As a result, children at Edith Kerrison are confident, happy learners. They enjoy a range of stimulating and interesting experiences both inside the classrooms and in the outdoor learning environment.

Middle leaders work tirelessly to support parents in helping their children achieve well. Workshops and training provided by the school have had clear impact on parents' confidence and involvement in their children's learning.

The local authority values greatly the work the school does with other local schools to share good practice. This includes making sure that teachers' judgements about how well children are doing are accurate.

Governors are rightly proud that the school has continued to maintain a good standard of education despite some staff changes since the previous inspection. You have tackled the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection effectively. The outdoor learning environment offers interesting and challenging learning activities and the prime areas of learning are given appropriate priority. Early reading and writing skills are planned for and supported well by adults. Children get a good range of opportunities to develop their mark-making and early writing skills. They are also given encouragement to apply their emerging phonics skills to sound out unknown words or to recognise the first letters and sounds in words.

Adults working with small groups of children often scribe their ideas or write lists on children's behalf. For example, children were enthusiastically chasing a 'baddie' in the outdoor area and an adult made notes as she worked with the group. Occasionally, there are missed opportunities for children to engage in mark making as part of the role play. Teachers plan effectively to develop early mathematics skills in number and shape and space. However, the learning environment and children's 'all about me' books show that these skills could be given a sharper focus to help children make even better progress.

All staff have worked hard to ensure that talk underpins learning at the nursery school. They ask questions to check that children understand or to help children explain their thinking. Occasionally adults echo what children say or accept a child's first answer without asking follow-up questions. Sometimes one-word answers are accepted quickly when time could be taken to help children to put the word into a short sentence.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Checks made on the suitability of staff are effective. The chair of the governing body monitors these records regularly. Leaders, staff and governors are kept up to date with current guidance to ensure that the school's safeguarding policy is up to date. As a result, staff are very clear about their responsibilities to ensure that children are kept safe.

The deputy designated lead for safeguarding works with you to ensure that systems for identifying, supporting and monitoring the welfare of vulnerable children or those who are at risk are thorough. You both share an incisive knowledge of the children who are in your care. You use the support of the children's centre and of outside agencies to ensure that children get the support they need.

Parents express gratitude and confidence in your work to keep children safe. Staff who completed the questionnaire were also highly positive about this aspect of the school's work.

### **Inspection findings**

- A focus for this inspection was how the outside learning environment supports children's learning. The outside area has been renovated since the previous inspection. Children benefit from an exciting environment which captures their interest and motivates them in their learning. The areas lend themselves to high-quality role play which adults are skilled at developing. Typical of the strong interactions seen was an adult preparing a 'party' with the children. They created a range of interesting dishes and confidently asked me to come to the party! Children enjoy the mud kitchen and the planting area. Their physical development is supported by the climbing frames and other play equipment. Adults make sure that talk underpins learning and they use talk well to prompt,

praise and support children. Occasionally, adults do not challenge children when they respond to questions by asking a further stretching question to develop reasoning skills, or more sophisticated words or sentences.

- Early literacy work and language acquisition are strong features of the outdoor learning environment. The emphasis on number, shape and space is not as evident in the learning environment or in the 'all about me' books which chart children's progress through the prime areas.
- A second focus for this inspection was how effectively adults develop children's early writing skills. Children are given regular opportunities to write and mark make in role-play situations. Their fine motor skills are developed in a range of activities so that they are able to eventually grip a pencil and begin to form letters. Phonics teaching is a strength of the school. The deputy headteacher models good practice in this area of learning. A group of children in the Nursery already have phonics skills which are in line with the expectations for Reception-age children. The most able children know letter sounds and are able to sound out simple three-letter words to read and spell. Children's letter formation is typically not as developed as their phonics knowledge. Leaders acknowledge that the most able children would benefit from resources, such as magnetic letters to speed up their phonics knowledge further, without the added challenge of simultaneously forming letters.
- A further focus for the inspection was the role of governors, including how they hold the school to account for spending. Governors are highly committed to the school and rightly proud of its work. They knew how the early years pupil premium funding had been used in the previous academic year and its impact on the quality of teaching and learning. A newly recruited governor has recently challenged the governors to ensure that pecuniary interests are listed on the website and this was also actioned during the inspection.
- Governors are clear that they provide ample challenge to leaders to ensure that the school continues to improve. However, their challenge is not always reflected in the school's records of meetings. They accept the headteacher's self-evaluation of the school and are not fully aware of external evaluations, including Ofsted's inspection grade descriptors, to help them to arrive at independent judgements about the school's performance.
- The final focus of the inspection was the impact of middle leaders on informing school priorities. The work of the special educational needs coordinator and the higher-level teaching assistant were considered. The special educational needs coordinator was new to her post at the time of the previous inspection and has continued to improve provision since taking up her post. She ensures that the school's team around the child's approach works well to meet the needs of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, these children make good progress from their individual starting points. The school shares their practice with other local schools to benefit children in the local community. The higher-level teaching assistant, who is also a middle leader, has been instrumental in developing parental engagement in the school. She leads training and coordinates workshops which have helped parents to develop their skills in supporting children with their learning at home.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- staff develop their level of questioning and the prompts they use to develop children's language skills in all areas of learning
- the most able children are further stretched in their phonics sessions so that they can make even more progress
- the learning environment provides further opportunities for children to develop early number skills, as well as their understanding of shape and space
- governors secure guidance on how the school is judged externally during inspections, so that they are better able to challenge leaders' self-evaluation.

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

Yours sincerely

Ruth Dollner  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I had discussions with senior leaders and middle leaders about their school improvement work and safeguarding arrangements. I met with representatives of the governing body. I went on learning walks with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher in classrooms and in the outside learning environment. I talked with children and with parents. I scrutinised a range of documents relating to the school's self-evaluation and safeguarding. I analysed governors' minutes. The small number of responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were reviewed as were the large number of staff responses to the questionnaire. I spoke with a representative of the local authority.