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Ms Ruth Mercer
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Mercer

Short inspection of Robert Owen Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 7 November 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 July 2013.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your dynamic and enthusiastic leadership sets the tone for exciting teaching. Since your appointment three and a half years ago, you have put in place, and developed, a united team; one that shares your ambition for high quality education. As a result, the school continues to move rapidly forward under your leadership.

You have a clear vision for the school and are supported by excellent practitioners at every level, and a highly knowledgeable governing body. Consequently, from the day they start at Robert Owen Nursery, all children make excellent progress in their learning from their different starting points. Parents talk positively about all aspects of the school's provision and the strong sense of community and inclusion of all. For example, events like the fathers' brunch, family day and celebrations of cultural events enhance the feeling of community and involvement for parents and children. The curriculum continues to provide rich, stimulating learning across all seven areas of the early years curriculum.

The previous inspection identified the need to develop the use of information and communication technology to involve parents and carers more extensively in supporting their children's learning. Since the last inspection, the use of technology in classes and around the school, the setting up of a Robert Owen Nursery app and the introduction of an online portfolio have successfully addressed this area for improvement. Information and communication technology is now an integral part of

the curriculum. The school also uses it well to involve parents and carers effectively in supporting their children's learning.

Since the last inspection, the school has almost doubled in size, expanding from four classes to seven. School leaders and governors have thought carefully about, and planned for, the government's new 30-hour childcare provision for eligible working families of three- to four-year-olds. Together, leaders and governors acted swiftly. They were successful in their bid, to the Department for Education, to secure funding to extensively remodel the school buildings to accommodate 32 additional places. These building works were completed at the beginning of the autumn term 2017, two additional teachers employed, and a new, mixed-age provision rolled out across the school. This new provision includes two-, three- and four-year-olds being taught alongside each other in the seven classes. Leaders have rightly addressed the need to monitor this new provision, to ensure that it meets the developmental needs of all the children, but particularly the youngest two-year-olds.

Safeguarding is effective.

All staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. The most recent guidance on keeping children safe in education has been considered and shared with staff and governors. Staff are fully trained and know precisely what to do if they have any concerns about a child's well-being. Effective systems are in place for you and your five designated safeguarding leads to communicate regularly, together and with other agencies, including the on-site children's centre, to identify where early help and support should be offered. You draw proactively on the knowledge of local families to identify those who would most benefit from accessing two-year-old nursery places. Through the early identification of children eligible for free childcare provision, and the carefully considered use of the early years pupil premium funding, you successfully ensure that all children are included. This includes children from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who continue to make rapid progress. Families value, and speak very positively, about the coordinated support offered by the school and other agencies. You, your school business manager and governors ensure that safer recruitment procedures for staff are meticulously followed, and the relevant checks are fully carried out. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Inspection findings

- You, your staff and governors have ensured that the school's vision, 'broadening possibilities for children and families,' is embedded into the daily practices and expectations of the school. Governors have an accurate view of the school and a realistic understanding of the diverse community it serves. They have a good understanding of data and how well the school is performing, ask challenging questions, and remain aspirational for the school. Governors are highly skilled, are very supportive, and work closely with you and your leadership team. They visit school regularly and meet with you and other staff to gather information for

themselves as to how things are running. They use their skills effectively. For example, parents were particularly engaged in watching the training video made with the staff and children, by a governor with links to the film industry. This film footage showed clear, practical examples of how parents can support their children and why the time spent on shared activities helps broaden the learning possibilities for all. Other governors use their skills, as experienced early years educationalists, to audit the provision on offer.

- Your commitment to supporting ongoing professional development and in-school research for all staff is paying off. You and your deputy have created a culture of trust and support that allows all to flourish. Staff have many opportunities to present at conferences and share their research in and beyond the school. For example, presenting on the creative learning of young children and the benefits on taking risks with woodwork. A significant proportion of teaching staff undertake further study at master's degree level. Consequently, members of your teaching team make a strong contribution to school improvement. They support the few, new members of staff and share training and ideas, raising the quality of teaching further. Staff retention rates are particularly high. Staff were unanimous in their agreement that leaders ensure a motivated, respected and effective teaching team.
- The well planned and delivered, rich curriculum remains a strength and teaching is still outstanding. This is because you have made strong appointments and provided excellent opportunities for quality training and guidance for all staff. They are fully involved in checking children's learning, observing each other's practice and talking to each other and children about their learning and the children's learning. During our visits to classrooms, we observed high levels of engagement and excellent relationships between staff and children. Excellent use of assessment is ensuring that learning time is maximised, so staff know when to observe and when to step in and intervene. Good attention is paid to setting activities and creating learning opportunities at the right level for children of different abilities. Effective support is provided for those who are at risk of falling behind. Teachers and early years practitioners provide a wide range of experiences and opportunities to extend children's knowledge and skills effectively. Consequently, all groups of children make rapid gains in their learning from their different starting points and they are well prepared for their journey onto primary school.
- Since the last inspection, technology is used effectively throughout the school. An online profiling system captures key moments of children's learning and development during their time at the school. It is actively used by both parents and staff to share significant moments through photographs, video or text. Many parents shared how they are encouraged to record home learning moments, or feed back comments to their child's key worker, creating an online dialogue between home and school. Parents commented on how fully informed and engaged they are in their children's learning. These assessment profiles, along with children's portfolios and learning journeys, contain such rich evidence because adults knowledgeably develop children's curiosity and interest.
- Following last year's successful trial in one classroom, the new, mixed-age provision has been rolled out across the school. You have started to fully

integrate the two-year-old provision with that for children who are three and four. To date, transition has been seamless, because adults know each child exceptionally well. Leaders have carefully thought about the teaching teams in each class to facilitate the sharing of expertise between teachers and early years practitioners. The new building layout, organisation of class spaces, and the excellent communication between all team members, are ensuring that no child is overlooked. However, you and your team are clear that this new provision and the detailed planning that supports it, are in their infancy. All staff are aware of the need to monitor the effectiveness of provision, the planned teaching moments and the wider opportunities for learning provided, in meeting the needs of all the children, particularly the newly integrated two-year-olds.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the new, mixed-age provision being rolled out across the school meets the developmental needs of the youngest two-year-olds.

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

Yours sincerely

Jean Thwaites
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, three governors, a group of staff from across the school and a representative from the local authority. I also met with members of staff responsible for overseeing the checks relating to staff recruitment and for keeping children safe from harm. I spoke to parents at the start of the school day and considered the 86 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online parent questionnaire. I observed children as they learned and played in classrooms and in the outdoor areas. Examples of children's learning, in individual portfolios and learning journeys, were also looked at. A number of documents were reviewed, including records of your checks to safeguard children and records of children's progress and attainment. I scrutinised the school's plans for improvement, your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and documents relating to the work of the governing body. The 16 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire were also considered.