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Mrs Himisha Patel
Head of Centre
Grove House Nursery School & Children's Centre
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Dear Mrs Patel

Short inspection of Grove House Nursery School & Children's Centre

Following my visit to the school on 12 September 2018, 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 November 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 staff have continued to ensure that the school provision on offer to the children is of high quality. The leadership team is highly knowledgeable and passionate about early years education. All staff have a thorough understanding of children's development. The vibrant learning environment and excellent range of resources enhance the children's experiences. Learning activities are well matched to their needs. The innovative curriculum follows children's interests and extends their knowledge and understanding.

Leaders and other staff liaise very closely with the children's centre, external agencies and parents. Through home visits, important information about the children is gathered in advance. This ensures that all children who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities or who may be vulnerable are supported right from the start. As a result, children settle extremely well into their new learning environment.

Your school is held in high regard by the local authority and local educational community. You have ensured that the expertise in early years education found within the school is shared with other local providers. For example, leaders and staff have forged strong links with private nursery settings and primary schools to deliver professional development for their staff.

Leaders and governors have successfully addressed the key priority for improvement identified at the last inspection. For example, children have

opportunities to use technology to record their learning and develop their language and communication skills.

The relationship between home and the school is strong. Parents greatly value the advice and opportunities you provide, such as parenting courses and workshops. This enables them to support their children's learning and understand their development. The 'FRED' programme (fathers reading everyday) has helped to increase children's interest in reading and develop their language development. Parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were positive. One parent commented, 'The nursery is absolutely intrinsic in my daughter's growth and development.' Parents agree that their children are happy and enjoy school. They also appreciate the impact that the school has on their children's learning. Another parent said, 'I'm also often surprised by just how much she learns when she's there.'

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that statutory welfare requirements are fully met.

Leaders and staff are knowledgeable and well trained, ensuring that safeguarding is a priority. Strong relationships help to keep children safe. Staff are highly vigilant and quick to recognise possible safeguarding risks. They have a thorough understanding of the procedures to follow if there is a concern. A safeguarding display noticeboard contains comprehensive information. It serves as a constant reminder to staff and visitors of the school's safeguarding procedures. Staff skilfully help children learn about how to take risks in a safe and secure environment. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children were safe.

Records are well organised and demonstrate that leaders act promptly to refer any concerns to the relevant authority. Leaders ensure that vulnerable families are well supported, and the right level of support is provided in a timely way. For example, through effective early help procedures and partnerships with external agencies. You and governors work closely to ensure that children are safe. For example, governors receive an update on safeguarding at every governing body meeting and monitor the suitability of staff to work with children.

Inspection findings

- At our initial meeting, we agreed three lines of enquiry for this inspection. First, we decided to evaluate leaders' actions to ensure that all children make strong progress in literacy. During the last academic year, you identified this as a school priority and you are striving to ensure that children achieve even higher.
- An initial focus on phonics, through listening, singing and exploring environmental sounds, ensures a strong foundation. Early on, in small groups, children are introduced to letter sounds through phonics games. This supports children to develop an understanding of early reading and the joy of books.

- Staff provide children with a range of opportunities to develop their fine and gross motor skills. These activities promote children's writing skills well. For example, children used scissors and other cutting tools to manipulate clay and strengthen their hands for writing. I saw many examples of children's excellent progress in writing. Displays around the school and work in their 'learning journals' emphasises how well staff support children to become confident writers. However, for most children, the link between hearing sounds and writing them is not as strong as reading. Therefore, leaders agreed that this should be a next step for the school.
- You told me that a strength of the school is how well staff follow the children's interests and provide a carefully planned curriculum. We agreed to explore how the curriculum supports all children as the second key line of enquiry.
- The school's calm, purposeful and stimulating learning environment contains a wide range of high-quality resources both inside and outdoors. Children are captivated by learning and sustain concentration for long periods of time. Staff provide children with opportunities to develop their decision-making and exploration skills continuously through play. For example, I observed children being encouraged to independently fill watering cans from a water tank. They carefully turned the tap and then observed what happened when the water was poured onto the paved area and sand pit.
- Leaders and staff make daily reviews of the provision on offer. This enables children to develop and deepen their learning through repetition and using familiar activities and resources. Adults intervene skilfully when needed to support children's learning but do not interfere unnecessarily. This enables children to follow their interests and practise skills and knowledge needed to extend their learning.
- Staff ensure that, in all areas of learning, activities are planned that enable children to act out stories and develop their language skills. Adults understand when to extend and support children's language development through skilful use of questioning, modelling of new vocabulary and remodelling of language. As a result, children are confident when speaking with adults, able to articulate their needs and make excellent progress in this aspect of learning.
- The third line of enquiry considered how well children achieve in the school. We decided on this because you told me that children were making high levels of progress in relation to their low starting points.
- Staff check children's progress thoroughly and use regular 'daily debriefs' at the end of each day to inform future planning. Leaders and staff make excellent use of assessments to identify individuals or groups of children who require additional support or extension. For example, last year leaders identified that boys were not achieving as well as girls in certain areas of learning. Opportunities and activities were introduced for all boys to engage and interact more fully in their learning and environment. As a result, boys' progress improved and more achieved age-related expectations.
- Most children enter the school with skills that are below or well below those typical for their age. In all aspects of learning, attainment is high. In some cases,

children are at an early stage of learning English or speak no English at all. Through a range of strategies, including the use of skilful questioning and repetition of key vocabulary, adults enable children to make exceptional progress in communication and language.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff provide further opportunities for children to use their phonics knowledge to develop their writing skills.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Hook
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

At the start of inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher to explore your self-evaluation and agree the key lines of enquiry. I met with you, your deputy headteacher and school business manager to discuss safeguarding. I went on learning walks to classrooms and the outdoor learning environment. On these learning walks, I spoke to some children and staff. We looked at some children's displays, learning journals and story journeys together. I met with you and your deputy headteacher to discuss children's achievement and examined a range of data evidence. I met with your special educational needs coordinator to discuss children who have SEN and/or disabilities. I spoke to your chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority on the telephone. I considered six responses from parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. There were no responses from staff or children. I examined a range of documentation and information published on the school's website.