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Dr Julian Grenier  
Sheringham Nursery School & Children's Centre  
Sheringham Avenue  
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London  
E12 5PB

Dear Dr Grenier

### **Short inspection of Sheringham Nursery School & Children's Centre**

Following my visit to the school on 31 October 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 June 2014.

#### **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 ensured that the nursery provision continues to be of exceptionally high quality. Leaders are extremely knowledgeable and passionate about early years education. All staff are well trained and have a thorough understanding of how young children learn and develop. The nursery is a calm, orderly and well-organised environment. Children's behaviour is outstanding. Children learn how to share resources, join in activities and make decisions. The safe learning environment and an excellent range of resources stimulate, as well as extend, children's experiences. Activities are extremely well matched to their needs. The exciting and rich curriculum follows children's interests. It enables them to make excellent progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding across all areas of learning.

Your role as a national teaching school enables you to share the expertise in early years education with other local providers. Leaders and staff have forged strong links with private nursery settings and local primary schools to deliver professional development for their staff. This has the potential to be shared more widely with other schools and nurseries.

Leaders and governors have developed a consistent and robust approach to tackling children's absence. As a result, attendance has steadily improved, successfully addressing the key priority for improvement identified at the last inspection.

The relationship between home and the nursery is strong. Parents greatly value your advice and support. This enables them to be actively involved in their children's learning and to understand their development. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were extremely positive. Parents agree that their children are happy and enjoy nursery. They also appreciate the impact that the nursery has on their children's learning. One parent stated, 'They engage children in a varied range of activities and encourage them to develop new skills.'

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

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

Leaders and staff are highly knowledgeable and well trained, ensuring that safeguarding is a priority. Strong relationships 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. Safeguarding posters displayed in key areas of the school contain comprehensive information. They serve as constant reminders to staff and visitors of the school's safeguarding procedures.

Records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders act promptly to refer any concerns to the relevant authority. Leaders ensure that vulnerable families are well supported, and that the right level of support is provided in a timely manner, for example through effective 'early help' procedures and partnerships with the children's centre and external agencies.

You and governors have a thorough understanding of the risks children may face in the community and work closely to ensure that children are safe. Staff skilfully help children learn about how to take risks in a safe and secure environment. For example, children were observed being well supported by an adult to use large climbing equipment, as well as being taught to manage their own risks effectively. Outside of the setting, during external visits, children are taught road safety and 'stranger danger' through real-life situations.

Parents spoken to, and those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children were safe.

### **Inspection findings**

- At our initial meeting, we agreed three lines of enquiry for this inspection. My first line of enquiry was to find out how effectively you and your staff work in partnership with parents. We chose this as it was a strength at the last inspection.
- The key-person approach used by the school ensures that all staff have an excellent understanding of the families and the community that they serve. Relationships between the children and the key person are strong. Staff are skilled in identifying what children know and can do. They use this information to

follow children's interests and enhance their learning. Parents value this approach. One parent commented: 'The key person helps the children settle in quickly, and they listen to any concerns I may have.'

- Through home visits, close liaison with the children's centre and outside agencies, important information about the children is gathered in advance. This ensures that all children, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, or who may be vulnerable, are supported right from the start.
- Through regular progress meetings and workshops, parents are closely involved in their children's learning. The school's assessment procedures using the 'special books' provide parents with the opportunity to share their views. One parent commented, 'I am impressed with the level of detailed information given on my child's progress.' As a result, parents feel empowered to be part of their children's learning and take an active interest. This has had a positive impact on the school's community. Parents who I spoke to said that relationships between them, leaders and staff are particularly strong. One parent stated, 'There is a shared partnership. We keep up to date with learning and feel involved.'
- The second key line of enquiry was to evaluate the effectiveness of the two-year-olds' provision in ensuring that children are ready for the next stage of their education. We decided on this because you told me that these children made high levels of progress from their very low starting points.
- Children begin in the two-year-olds' provision with skills that are well below those typical for their age. Well-established routines and excellent relationships between children and their key person enable children to settle very quickly. Staff plan activities that build on what children already know, and they respond carefully to the needs and interests of every child. High-quality resources both inside and outdoors are easily accessible.
- Staff support children effectively so that they can choose the equipment and resources to use and decide what they would like to explore further. This enables children to develop decision-making skills continuously through play. Children do not flit from activity to activity, but sustain interest and concentration for extended periods of time. For example, I observed a child over a 25-minute period building with the train track, and exploring different layouts and introducing additional resources.
- Children are encouraged to be independent learners. Adults intervene skilfully when needed to support their learning but do not interfere unnecessarily. The level of interaction between adults and children is exceptionally high. As a result of this work at this early stage of their education, two-year-olds make very strong progress from low starting points. This exceptional start gives them an excellent foundation for the next stage of their education and beyond.
- The third key line of enquiry considered how well the nursery provision helps to develop children's early communication. You have identified this as a school priority even though progress in this area was strong.
- Children's early communication skills are at the heart of the school's approach to learning. Staff ensure that communication is taught effectively, using a developmental approach. They support early communication extremely well

through repetition, modelling phrases and key vocabulary. Adults are confident in using a range of communication systems, including visual picture cues for those children who need additional support. Through exposure to nursery rhymes, songs and imaginative storytelling, meticulous attention is given to fostering children's understanding of language. Staff routinely expect children to share and express their ideas. Children's confident and enthusiastic talk is evident throughout the nursery.

- As the children's early communication skills develop, extended conversations and complex ideas are explored. Consequently, children make substantial progress in their communication and language development. They develop into articulate and expressive speakers, asking questions and sharing their ideas readily with each other and adults.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they further develop opportunities to share the excellent practice found within the nursery with other settings and providers.

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

Andrew Hook  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

At the beginning of the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher and the 'best start in life' strategic lead to explore your self-evaluation and agree the key lines of enquiry. I met with the school business manager to look at the single central record. Throughout the day, I went on learning walks to all classrooms and the outdoor learning environment with you or your deputy headteacher. On these learning walks, I spoke to some children and staff. I met with you and your deputy headteacher to discuss safeguarding, attendance, 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 met with your governors and spoke to a representative from the local authority on the telephone. I spoke with parents collecting their children from school and met with a group of parents formally. I considered 15 responses from parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and one letter that was handed into the school office. I took account of 19 responses from staff. There were no responses from children. I examined a range of documentation and information published on the school's website.