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Miss Deborah Watson
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Dear Miss Watson

Short inspection of Tanglewood Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 7 November 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 Tanglewood Nursery School was judged to be good in September 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You and your team set exceptionally high standards to ensure that children get the support they need. You provide a haven of positive learning experiences with highly-organised activities for children to explore, be creative and develop their skills in all areas of learning. Children are excited by, and successful in, their learning. They listen to each other and work well together. They know the routines to follow and the high expectations for behaviour that you and your staff hold. This was exemplified well when during the inspection I observed children working together in the outdoor 'forest garden'. Consequently, children are safe, well cared for, content and very happy.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about your work and the positive relationships that you successfully build with families. All who answered the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, consider that this school gives their children a passion for learning. One parent with a typically positive comment said: 'Tanglewood is an outstanding setting to nurture and develop children in their early development. The setting is wonderful and a credit to the staff who work so hard to develop each and every child.' Parents' comments unanimously refer to the caring and nurturing environment you have continued to develop. Consequently, all parents who gave a

view recommended the school as a place where 'every child has a fantastic start to their early education'.

Across the school, rigorous assessment is a strength across all areas of learning. Staff follow children's achievements diligently, making sure that any extra help children need to help them to make better progress is effective and provided promptly. Children achieve very well during their time in the nursery. They acquire the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need to succeed in their future learning. This prepares them well for the next stages of their education.

You and your team are expert in getting early help for children with educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). You provide excellent levels of support by working very closely with speech and language therapists and other external support agencies. For example, teaching is precisely targeted to meet the children's varying needs. This ensures that the needs of children with SEND and those who access the 'Rainbow Room', the school's speech and language centre, are catered for extremely well, enabling them to play and learn successfully alongside other children.

Governors are very supportive of the school. You provide in-depth information and analysis of the school's work and so they know the school's strengths and areas for development well. Governors are regular visitors to the school and are proud to be a part of the school's development. A mix of established and new governors has secured a wider range of expertise within the governing body. Even so, some governors are not as able to demonstrate their strategic effectiveness in their governor role as others.

Leaders have successfully attended to the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection, most notably in improving the provision and progress of children in mathematics. This includes provision for the most able children in the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All staff place great importance on ensuring that the nursery is a safe environment.

Governors have received safer recruitment training and undertake appropriate checks on staff. The two-year-olds' provision is supervised appropriately and all staff have the necessary qualifications to teach the youngest children.

Staff are well trained and knowledgeable about their duties to safeguard children in their care. Through strong relationships with children and families, staff are quick to detect changes in a child's circumstances or behaviour that may indicate that their welfare is at risk. Should this be the case, staff report concerns promptly, because they understand the necessity of securing extra help without delay.

All documentation meets statutory requirements and records are well maintained, demonstrating prompt responses from outside agencies to provide timely and bespoke support when children and families need it.

Inspection findings

- To assess whether the school remains good, I followed four lines of enquiry shared with you upon arrival at your school. The first of these was linked to ensuring that leaders comply with statutory requirements for safeguarding and exploring aspects of safeguarding including attendance. These are requirements in all inspections.
- You are steadfast in your expectation about children attending school and being punctual. You offer a high level of support to families to encourage them to make sure that their children attend school regularly. This is valued and appreciated by parents. You also make parents aware of the benefits of children attending school regularly to get into good habits of attendance before they move on to Reception. Attendance for all your children has improved over time.
- Another focus for the inspection was to consider the progress made since the previous inspection in assessing and developing early mathematics effectively. Leaders have increased the opportunities for children to develop and practise their mathematics skills in number, shape, space and measure. During our visits to the classrooms and the outdoor provision we observed a wide range of activities that gave children the chance to use and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of mathematics. For example, children were keen to play with bottles in the water tray and were counting the bubbles created when the bottle was immersed in the water.
- The whole-school focus on mathematics has helped to raise its profile. The mathematics leader has worked well with parents to help them to support their children, for example through mathematics workshops. In addition, regular 'maths weeks' have supported children to develop their mathematics skills, in particular children's reasoning and understanding as they rehearse their learning in different situations.
- A major contributor in improving mathematics has been the implementation of an effective assessment system. The precise and rigorous way staff use this to assess children's mathematics from the beginning of their time with you is successfully securing accurate assessments about what they already know and can do. Following on from this, you carefully follow each child's progress and evaluate how they can achieve better so that measures can be taken quickly to ensure that this happens. Over time, children are achieving well in mathematics from their varying starting points.
- Another aspect I explored was about how well most-able children achieve. I wanted to look at the opportunities that most-able children have to develop and excel. The previous inspection identified that leaders should focus on ensuring that the most able children are challenged, especially in early mathematics. While I looked at the progress made in improving mathematics provision, I also looked at the provision for the most able in all areas of learning.
- Careful thought is given to the planning of tasks and activities for all children. The school's chosen move to 'planning in the moment' has given children the opportunity to contribute towards their own learning. Children access activities confidently and, alongside them, adults intervene at the right time to provide enough challenge according to the children's needs. It is clear that all adults

know the children well and are knowledgeable about each child's next steps. Most-able children are challenged to extend their learning effectively through questioning and adults' high expectations of what they can achieve.

- Your rigorous approach to assessment scrutinises the achievement of all children, including specifically those children who are most able. You make sure that you hold teachers to account for the progress that children make. You check that the teaching and learning is planned precisely to make sure that most-able children achieve well. Consequently, most-able children do well and teachers successfully deepen children's knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning.
- The final line of enquiry was to look at the effectiveness of your focused work on communication and language in ensuring that those children supported by the early years pupil premium funding develop their communication and language skills. Teachers are very well aware of the children who receive early years pupil premium funding. Teachers understand the children's needs very well. They use this knowledge, along with assessment information, to plan high-quality teaching that successfully ensures that children are able to achieve well. You are aware that the renewed focus on developing communication and language is important to sustain to ensure that all children develop their skills effectively. Although you already know it is making an immediate difference, you realise that more time is required to evaluate fully the impact of the actions undertaken.
- You spend early years pupil premium funding wisely. Governors check this and hold leaders to account for the difference that this funding makes. This ensures that early years pupil premium children make substantial progress from their starting points. This is because you check routinely that these children have enriched learning experiences, individual interventions and effective adult support when needed. Equally, you ensure that children's personal, emotional and social needs are catered for so they are able to be successful. For example, your use of the 'sensory' room prepares children to be ready to learn by ensuring that they have a positive, calm start to their day.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all governors have the same high-quality, strategic understanding of the provision in the school and can articulate this clearly
- they continue the focused work on developing communication and language so all children achieve as well as they are capable in this area of learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Tracy Fielding
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I looked at specific aspects of the school's work, including leadership, the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school, and safeguarding arrangements. I visited all areas of provision, including Little Tanglewood, the provision for two-year-olds, the outdoor forest garden and the speech and language resource base area.

You and I worked closely together throughout the inspection, observing teaching and learning, speaking to children and discussing the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. We discussed improvements you have directed since your arrival. I reviewed school documentation, including that relating to safeguarding. I met with the finance officer; the deputy headteacher; the mathematics and English leaders; representatives from the governing body, including the chair; and the local authority school improvement partner. I also held a telephone conversation with your external consultant.

The views of 72 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account, as well as the 68 responses parents made using the free-text service. I also scrutinised the recent parent survey you have completed. I considered the 23 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.