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Ms Alexandra Law
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Law

Short inspection of Harry Roberts Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 20 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 the school was judged to be outstanding in February 2015.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Children make a very good start to their school life. Senior leaders give you first-rate support and your deep knowledge of the children and their learning is at the heart of the school's successful work. Parents and carers are very pleased with the school and many spoke about this family-friendly school very positively. Several parents told me that their children love coming to school so much that the hardest part of the day was getting their children to leave at the end of the session!

You have developed a highly successful partnership approach with parents that supports children's excellent progress. Teachers and support staff work very closely with parents. They help parents to support their children's learning at home. You have created home-learning resource packs that encourage children to continue exploring at home what they have been learning in school.

Teachers make creative use of the school's indoor and outdoor spaces. Children enjoy the varied and engaging activities that teachers set in the inside and outside spaces. Learning resources are of very good quality. Teaching assistants promote children's learning through friendly interactions and discussions with the children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

A strength of the school is the teaching of reading. You do this through teaching children phonics and by creating an environment for the children to work in that is full of books and examples of literature. Children can choose from a wide collection

of books, word displays and puzzles that are available to them. They also benefit from many opportunities to carry out exciting investigation tasks set up around the school. These foster the children's natural eagerness to read, because children's interest is captured by all that the school has to offer. As a result, children make very good gains in building their formal reading skills and develop a love of reading.

Senior leaders regularly measure the progress that each child and groups of similar children make. Leaders use the information to check that all children make strong progress and provide additional support promptly whenever it is required. You and your leaders work very effectively with the governing body. Governors check the school's development from a strategic point of view. They make careful use of assessment information to check how well children learn. They visit the school regularly to gather first-hand evidence of the school's work. Governors are highly skilled and provide you with useful support and challenge.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture throughout the school. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed. Leaders have also ensured that staff training is up to date, including that related to the 'Prevent' duty. Leaders understand the school's context extremely well and staff are highly vigilant. Should any child protection concerns arise, staff make swift referrals when necessary. The school works successfully with a wide number of external agencies, including parents, social services, the police and local welfare organisations to safeguard children's well-being.

Inspection findings

- We agreed three lines of enquiry for this inspection. The first of these explored how well leaders ensure that boys make equally strong progress as girls so that they leave the school as confident learners. The school's records show that over recent years, girls have made stronger and more substantial progress than boys.
- The leadership team makes very careful use of the school's assessment information. This has enabled you to look closely at the factors that might have caused boys to make less substantial progress than girls in the past. You have found that boys benefit most from working closely with parents through home-learning tasks, and this has led you to focus on improving this aspect.
- A clear outcome of this is that current boys are achieving as well, and in some cases better, than the girls. Teachers have developed a more boy-friendly approach to setting activities and tasks that draws on the common interests of boys more than in the past, and makes greater use of the outside spaces. Teachers give clear choices to boys about the equipment they can decide to use, enabling them to be adventurous in the activities that they select. This has helped boys to make strong progress across all areas of learning.
- You and your team are keen to develop boys' achievement further by ensuring that staff interact with boys in ways that capture their interest. You are already making improvements and the results are starting to be measurable.

- As a second line of enquiry, we looked at leaders' actions to improve children's outcomes in mathematics. The school's assessment information shows that last year children's progress in mathematics, although strong, was not as substantial as in other subjects.
- You have provided staff with inspirational training to improve mathematics teaching. This has helped to raise teachers' expectations of children in mathematics and gain a better understanding of the mathematics curriculum. As a result, assessment information in mathematics for children currently at the school shows improvement.
- Resources are used well to cater for the many different abilities in classes and this helps children to become very interested in their learning. Teachers are adept at using opportunities to extend children's mathematics learning still further, including as part of the school's daily routines. For example, children enthusiastically tidy resources away and set the correct number of placemats on the dining tables at lunchtime.
- Occasionally, opportunities are missed to check children's understanding of key mathematical concepts and stretch children's thinking further.
- For the third key line of enquiry, we explored how well the school works with children with SEND to ensure that they make the best progress they can. This is because you have been working on this area as part of school development planning.
- You have supported teachers and helped them to work highly effectively alongside children with SEND. You are ambitious to make sure that all children at the school receive a first-class education.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to children's learning. They form part of a well-established team which has a deep knowledge of individual children's learning needs. Within this supportive environment, children with SEND flourish to become high achieving and happy children who are well prepared for their move to the Reception Year.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all children make the best progress possible in mathematics from their starting points by ensuring that staff support children's conceptual development of mathematics and the number system.

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

Yours sincerely

Tim McLoughlin
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection I held several meetings with you and the deputy headteacher. I met with four governors and a representative from the local authority. You accompanied me on visits to classrooms where I observed children as they played inside and outside. I met with parents informally at the start of the day and considered the responses of 53 parents to the survey questionnaires given to me. I also evaluated a range of school documentation, including school development plans, safeguarding records and information about current children's achievement.