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Ms Lynne Cooper
Executive Headteacher
Nell Gwynn Nursery School
Meeting House Lane
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Dear Ms Cooper

Following my visit to the school on 25 June 2019, 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 good in July 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last 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 are an effective executive headteacher who displays clear commitment to early learning. You have developed strong leadership at all levels within the school to ensure that all children have the best start to their education. The federation you have formed with a local nursery school gives you additional capacity to secure ongoing school improvement.

You are outward looking and you have worked well in partnership with The British Council to offer international professional development opportunities. Staff have visited schools in Italy and Sweden to understand current educational research. Staff are reflective on their experiences and have incorporated the best practice seen in other settings, to strengthen the quality of teaching in the school.

Parents reported that the school has a warm and nurturing ethos and all children are made to feel welcome. Children feel safe and well cared for and there are high levels of enjoyment and engagement in all activities. Classrooms are bright and attractive learning spaces and resources are used skilfully to support early language development.

Governors are knowledgeable and know their school well through regular visits. Governors are skilful at identifying future leaders and many staff are home grown and developed through the federation. Governors are ambitious for the school, understand and support financial planning and fulfil all their statutory obligations.

Leaders at all levels, including governance, have worked effectively to improve the quality of teaching and this has enhanced children's learning. From low starting points, the majority of children leave the nursery at age-related expectations.

At the time of the previous inspection, it was reported that the progress made by groups of children, particularly the most able, needed tracking carefully. Leaders have responded well and assessment information now demonstrates clear progress made by all groups of children in line with the early learning goals. This ensures that all children receive sufficient challenge in their learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

Children's well-being is at the heart of all you do. Leaders work hard to support vulnerable children and their families. You have responded well to keeping children safe in the community and you have worked with families to raise awareness of female genital mutilation, knife crime and gang culture. You have also worked with external agencies to support parents' mental health and well-being.

Your safeguarding team ensures that all staff have up-to-date training on potential risks to children's safety. Staff are vigilant and understand clear procedures of how to report any concerns. Leaders work closely with the local authority safeguarding board to ensure that referrals are made when necessary and are followed through effectively. Checks for the recruitment of staff are fully in place and recorded on the school's single central record.

Records of incidents and concerns are detailed and daily risk assessments ensure that the site is safe for children. Attendance is improving and calling the family home on the first day of absence has been introduced to check that children are alright.

Inspection findings

- My first key line of enquiry was to examine the impact of speaking and listening activities in supporting children's language development.
- When visiting the classrooms and outdoor areas, it was seen that all tasks and play activities are planned skilfully to develop oracy. Adults demonstrate strong questioning skills and model vocabulary in play contexts, through the use of clear sentences. Children repeat and rehearse the vocabulary that has been modelled through their play, which in turn supports their confidence and fluency. A clear focus on gender equality ensures that all children have equal access to all activities.
- Activities are exciting, creative and stimulating to develop children's thinking skills and natural curiosity about the world around them. Visits to museums and

galleries enrich the curriculum and visits to the forest school enables children to interact with nature. Children's scientific understanding is further developed through collaboration, exploration and discovery in the natural world.

- Children are confident when talking about books and they understand that writing conveys meaning. Children are developing their knowledge of initial sounds and this is evident in their mark making. However, opportunities are missed to apply their phonic skills in story sessions and group reading activities. Leaders are keen to work with parents on strategies to support children's early reading at home.
- My next line of enquiry examined the level of challenge and support offered to all children.
- Leaders have introduced core books into the classrooms to offer additional challenge for the most able. Children are encouraged to retell stories and are questioned on their understanding of the text. Most-able children are making strong progress and leave the nursery well prepared for the challenges of the Reception Year.
- Children have developed a strong mathematical vocabulary and mathematical concepts of number, shape and space are taught well through tasks and play activities.
- Children who speak English as an additional language have focused support to model spoken English through shared stories and language groups. Spanish is used skilfully to encourage Spanish-speaking children who are new to English to socialise and participate fully in all activities.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported through a wide range of additional interventions. These include communication aids, visual timetables, speech and language therapy and sensory integration. Special educational needs assistants are skilful in their level of support and children with SEND make good progress from their individual starting points.
- My final line of enquiry focused on the quality of provision for two-year-olds.
- Provision for two-year-olds is new to the school since the last inspection. Transition into nursery starts with a home visit and staff get to know children and their families extremely well. Stay and play sessions with parents allow children to settle into the nursery until they are confident to stay with their key worker.
- Language skills are assessed on entry to ensure a full understanding of each child's development needs. Activities reinforce the repetition of receptive language using short sentences to develop children's understanding of spoken English. As children become more skilled and confident in speaking and listening, the focus moves to expressive language. Children are encouraged to express their needs through role play, using more ambitious words and sentences.
- The outdoor provision and use of large apparatus are used well to encourage social interaction and communication and to develop gross motor skills. Well-planned tasks to develop fine motor skills, such as cutting, sticking and play

dough, all support children in their ability to hold a pencil when they are mark making.

- Provision for two-year-olds is offering children a successful start to their nursery education.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- children have opportunities to apply their phonic skills in shared reading activities
- parents are offered support in strategies to develop early reading 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 Southwark. This letter will also be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tom Canning
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection.

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the head of school, senior teachers and the school business manager. I viewed a wide range of documentation including the school development plan, the school's self-evaluation and the school's assessment information. I looked in detail at safeguarding policies and procedures, first-aid records, risk assessments and the school's single central record of employment checks for staff. I met with parents informally at the start of the school day and I met with three governors and the local authority school improvement adviser. I visited all classrooms with you and your head of school, spoke with the children and observed activities in classrooms and outdoor areas. I analysed the 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 15 responses from the staff questionnaire.