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Clare Barber
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Dear Ms Barber

Short inspection of Abbey Wood Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 4 July 2017, 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 Abbey Wood Nursery School was judged to be good in January 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since arriving in September 2013, you have led the school with a commitment to providing children with a high standard of education. With the support of the governing body and the staff, you have successfully brought about continued improvements. You have also consolidated the strengths of the school since the last inspection. You are determined to enable every child, regardless of starting points or circumstances, to succeed and achieve well. Senior leaders have high aspirations for all children. Governors know the school well and share your ambition for the children.

You have developed an effective tracking system to monitor how well children, including different groups of children, learn and achieve in your care. This has played an important role in your work to drive further improvements. Leaders make effective use of assessment information to hold teachers to account for children's progress. Children who are not learning as well as they could are spotted quickly and receive well-targeted support so they do not fall behind. Similarly, accurate assessment information has sharpened leaders' work to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all Nursery classes.

Parents and carers appreciate the changes you have introduced since your arrival. Children receive a warm welcome into classes at the start of each session, and staff make time to answer any questions and deal with parents' concerns. Teachers and

key workers pay attention to detail when planning learning opportunities and as a result, children are motivated and enjoy the wide range of activities on offer.

Across the Nursery classes, children typically make good progress from their starting points. The well-planned curriculum, together with teachers' good subject knowledge, support continuous improvement for all children. Leaders and staff work together effectively to tailor the curriculum to meet the needs and interests of children at different stages of their development. You have rightly focused on improving teaching so that all groups of children achieve equally well from their different starting points. However, you are not complacent. You recognise that the quality of teaching needs strengthening so that children routinely experience high-quality activities that stretch their vocabulary and communication skills. I found that this is particularly the case for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Parents say that staff respond well to any concerns they raise and take immediate and appropriate action to resolve matters promptly. You regularly update child protection and safeguarding training for all staff. You expect everyone to take responsibility for keeping children safe from harm. Staff know their duties and understand their role in keeping children safe. Leaders ensure that staff supervise children effectively and that they report concerns in a timely manner. As a result, leaders address issues quickly, drawing on input from external agencies when required.

Governors' oversight of safeguarding arrangements is strong. They visit the school regularly for themselves to check the effectiveness of school procedures. You and the governors have acted swiftly to address any health and safety issues raised and are committed to the continued improvement of indoor and outdoor learning environments.

Parents agree that their children are safe and well looked after. You have ensured that staff have the necessary skills and expertise to meet children's welfare needs. As a result, children feel secure and well cared for. For example, during visits to classes, I observed a number of occasions where staff provided children with careful support and guidance in order to help them feel secure and maintain focus on their learning.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry considered how effectively leaders use assessment information to improve outcomes for individuals and groups of children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This was identified as an area for development at the school's previous inspection.
- I found that you have made considerable improvements to how you assess pupils' learning. Together with your team, you routinely collect assessment information, which you then use to analyse children's progress and measure the

impact of your actions. You ensure that staff make good use of assessment information to inform their planning for different groups of children, including those who are disadvantaged.

- Well-planned activities help children, including disadvantaged children, to confidently use and apply their skills. For example, in the outdoor area, an imaginary pirate ship enthused children about their learning and encouraged children to share ideas and play together well. Children also develop gross and fine motor skills quickly because adults consciously set up activities based on their knowledge of children's needs. As a result, children, including those who are disadvantaged, typically achieve or exceed age-related expectations in their communication and language skills and in their personal, social and emotional development. Moreover, you are rightly focusing on providing disadvantaged children with a greater variety of learning experiences in order to stretch their vocabulary and communication skills.
- The provision for two-year-olds is also strong because staff have a good understanding of children's needs at different points in their development. The two-year-old children explore their individual interests and they also play and learn safely alongside the older children. Well-chosen activities and resources support children's early mark-marking and promote their enjoyment of writing. For example, children were keen to write lists and try out writing on the board. Staff provide children with effective guidance to help them sustain their interest in activities for extended periods. However, staff do not always step in quickly enough to extend children's vocabulary or support them to speak in full sentences. This hinders children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, from making substantial progress.
- My second line of enquiry was about the impact of leaders' work to improve progress for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders with responsibility for this area are working with determination to strengthen the provision for these pupils.
- Careful assessments of children's needs ensure that leaders and staff put in place well-thought-out additional support. Strong partnerships with parents and outside agencies help to inform leaders' decisions on how best to support pupils and meet their needs. You ensure that staff receive suitable training and guidance so they understand how best to support children who have special educational needs/and or disabilities. For example, staff provide children who have autistic spectrum disorder with visual cues and timetables that enable them to take part in activities alongside their peers. You and your team further personalise children's plans so they achieve well and enjoy their learning
- Parents of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities feel that the school supports their children well. One parent that spoke to me said: 'The school supports all aspects of my child's life and as a result my child has made rapid progress since they started at the nursery in January.' Another parent said, 'I am very proud that my child comes to this nursery.' These comments were typical of parents' view and demonstrate how parents appreciate the school's work.
- My third line of enquiry focused on how effectively governors monitor and

evaluate the school's performance. This was identified as an area for development at the previous inspection.

- Since the last inspection, governors have become more closely involved in all aspects of school life. They meet leaders regularly to review actions taken and identify what needs to be even better. For example, governors have successfully forged links with a local teaching school. This partnership has helped leaders and teachers to increase the accuracy of their assessments of children's progress.
- Historically, governors have not checked rigorously whether leaders' actions are leading to better outcomes for children. Governors now set leaders appropriate targets for school improvement. As a result, governors are able to hold leaders to account for the quality of education the school provides. However, this work is at an early stage. Further work is necessary to embed recent improvements so that governors routinely check and evaluate leaders' efforts to tackle aspects of the school that need to be better.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching routinely provides children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, with high-quality experiences to support the development of their vocabulary and communication skills
- governors regularly evaluate the impact of leaders' work to tackle aspects of the school's work that need strengthening.

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

Yours sincerely

Maureen Okoye
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the deputy headteacher to discuss progress since the last inspection and agree the key lines of enquiry. I held meetings with leaders with responsibility for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the chair of governors and the vice-chair of governors. I held a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority. I scrutinised a variety of sources of information, including records of the progress made by groups of children. I also scrutinised the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures, including checks on the suitability of staff to work in the school. I looked at the school's attendance record and procedures. I undertook learning walks with you and with the deputy headteacher and we looked at children's work together.