

9 August 2019

Miss Sarah Harrison
Executive Headteacher
Pound Park Nursery School
Pound Park Road
Charlton
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Dear Miss Harrison

Short inspection of Pound Park Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 10 July 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 second short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be outstanding in 2015.

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 team have worked with great determination through a challenging period for the school. You have successfully expanded the school by adding an off-site nursery provision for two-year-olds, Cardwell Together for Twos Nursery. You have adapted the nursery provision to meet the needs of the increased numbers of full-time children. Throughout this period of change, the leadership team has worked relentlessly to improve the quality of provision and build a strong staff team across both sites. All staff who responded to the Ofsted survey said they were proud to be a member of the school.

The nursery school is a lively and happy place. Children's behaviour is excellent. They play and learn with exuberance in the highly stimulating environment, both inside and outdoors. The school's curriculum is ambitious. Through the outdoor provision, children from the age of two years old learn how to use tools safely, for example using peelers to whittle sticks. The woodwork bench offers exceptional opportunities for children's development. They keep on trying until they have acquired the skills they need to hammer nails into the wood or use a glue gun as they make models. Children were observed applying the confidence and skills they have learned in these areas to the rest of their learning. For example, one child wanted to write the word 'coat'. With help from an adult, he said out loud the different sounds he could hear in the word. He independently found the poster displaying different letters and picked out 'curly c' before writing it himself. You are

preparing children very well for the next stage in their education.

Leaders and governors have successfully improved the quality of the learning environment at Cardwell Together for Twos Nursery. The outdoor area is small, but skilfully designed with a range of natural areas. Two-year-olds were observed to be engrossed as they dug into the soil with small forks. An adult skilfully helped a child to identify the difference between a slug and a worm, and encouraged the child to say the word 'slug'. The youngest children concentrate exceptionally well as they play harmoniously with others.

The provision for children with speech and language difficulties is highly effective. A small group of children were observed to be engrossed in a story session led by one of the specialist practitioners. The practitioner read a picture book, 'The Big Red Bus', with great enthusiasm. The children joined in using signs, saying some words and singing some of the refrains. The carefully chosen props and engaging storytelling helped the children to concentrate for more than 10 minutes. One parent commented on the impact of this type of provision for her child: 'I am proud of all the new words my son has learned, and he can even sing now. He enjoys life so much more.' The children with speech and language difficulties are fully included in the nursery provision. This means that they learn communication skills from the other children around them. All children in the nursery school benefit from the expertise of the specialist practitioners. For example, the introduction of new words and signs is carefully planned and implemented. This helps every child to learn new vocabulary.

Governors know the school very well and visit frequently. Their close involvement means that they have an accurate view of the quality of the main nursery school, the off-site nursery, and the specialist provision for children with speech and language difficulties.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors ensure that children are safe and well cared for. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and the school fully meets all the statutory welfare requirements.

Leaders and staff are well trained and knowledgeable. They are quick to notice any possible safeguarding risks and know how to report any concerns they have about children. Families are well supported if they are experiencing difficulties, through the school's 'early help' procedures and partnerships with other agencies. Staff say that regular supervision meetings help them to prioritise children's welfare. The school has a strong culture of safeguarding.

The curriculum helps children to learn how to keep themselves safe in a secure environment. For example, children were observed putting on safety goggles before using the woodwork bench with an adult. They understood that only three children could take part safely in the activity and waited patiently for their turn.

The parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, all agreed that their children felt safe in the school.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed three lines of enquiry. First, we looked at the precision with which leaders and governors check that the nursery school is sustaining its excellence. This was the area for improvement identified in your previous inspection.
- Leaders check vigilantly that high standards are being maintained. They have detailed knowledge of the quality of provision on both sites. They give regular feedback to staff. Where a member of staff needs extra support or training, this is quickly identified. The members of staff I spoke to were highly appreciative of the encouragement and training they are offered. All staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire said that the school has continued to improve since its last inspection.
- Governors receive detailed information about children's learning and progress from leaders. They undertake 'learning walks' every term. These are well structured to ensure that there is a clear focus on checking that teaching and care routines are excellent. Leaders work closely with the local authority's specialist early years adviser to check the accuracy of their evaluations. As a result of these actions, the school has continued to improve on the excellent standard of nursery education reported in its last inspection.
- However, leaders and governors do not clearly communicate to others, including parents, how well the school is meeting its improvement priorities.
- For the second line of enquiry, we looked at how well the nursery provision works in partnership with parents. We chose this because it was a strength at the last inspection.
- Each child has a 'Learning Journey' which clearly shows their progress and achievements during their time in the nursery. These excellent documents are shared regularly with parents. They vividly bring children's achievements to life with well-chosen observations and photographs. Leaders monitor the quality of the 'Learning Journeys' rigorously. They ensure that the information shared with parents in the statutory progress checks for two-year-old children is accurate. The check helps parents to see how they can continue to support their child's learning and healthy development.
- The parents I spoke to were unanimous in their praise for the way leaders and staff work in partnership with them. For example, one parent of a child with special educational needs said: 'They've supported me to meet with outside agencies in the school. That meant he got the help and equipment he needed. School showed us how to help him learn to drink from a cup.'
- The third line of enquiry considered how effectively leaders and staff have worked to improve children's attendance. You have identified this as a school priority.
- Attendance has improved this year, compared to previous years. The school has

developed a systematic approach to identifying children with poor attendance. Staff speak to parents about the importance of good attendance, and how frequent absence affects children's progress. Where concerns remain after these informal steps are taken, the school sends a formal letter to the parent about the importance of improving their child's attendance.

- However, the school's systems for managing attendance are not fully effective. Leaders have not monitored the impact of their actions carefully enough. As a result, children on average miss more than a day every fortnight of their nursery education. The attendance of children from disadvantaged backgrounds is worse than this. On average, they are absent for a day every week. When children are absent, they miss out on the excellent quality of the provision. This means that they do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's improvement priorities are communicated more clearly
- stronger procedures are put in place to improve children's attendance.

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

Yours sincerely

Julian Grenier
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I carried out a range of activities:

- I met with the headteacher and the executive headteacher throughout the day to discuss children's progress, safeguarding and attendance. I held a telephone conversation with the chair of the governing body. I also met with the school's specialist early years adviser from the local authority.
- I reviewed the school's safeguarding procedures, including the single central record and the pre-employment checks which are carried out to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children.
- I went on learning walks to all classrooms and the outdoor learning environment on both sites, alongside members of the senior leadership team. I scrutinised a range of children's 'Learning Journeys' with members of the senior leadership team. I met with a group of three staff and spoke to other members of the staff team during the learning walks.

- I listened to the views of 10 parents and considered the 36 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 22 responses to the staff survey.
- I scrutinised the school's website and reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, and information about children's progress.