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Miss Louisa Halls
Headteacher
Somerset Nursery School and Children's Centre
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Dear Miss Halls

Short inspection of Somerset Nursery School and Children's Centre

Following my visit to the school on 20 February 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 October 2014.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have worked closely with governors and leaders to share your high expectations and promote learning through play. As a result, children's experiences at Somerset Nursery are of a very good quality. School improvement is central to everything you do, and governors fully support this and share your desire to achieve the best for every child. Your well-developed, clear and thorough systems for planning and assessment ensure that learning is seamless throughout the day. There is a real sense of fun and enjoyment across the nursery. Teachers skilfully engage children in meaningful conversations and are excellent role models. They engage children in a wide range of exciting and stimulating activities throughout the session. Together with your team, you continually reflect on what works best for each child. You have developed highly effective educational practice, where every child is treated as an individual.

Leaders share their thorough understanding of how children learn at different ages and stages of their development. Regular progress meetings take place to ensure that children achieve their learning targets and adults know each child's next steps in learning. As a result, children from the youngest two-year-olds through to those who are about to start school are motivated to explore, investigate and participate fully in the curriculum. Children benefit greatly from the nurturing and supportive relationships with the adults around them. This, together with a rich and varied curriculum, ensures that children make strong gains in their learning and are very well prepared to start school.

Together with governors, you have ensured that there is a close relationship between the nursery and the onsite children's centre. You know families well and are able to develop effective links with parents and carers early on. Parents typically told me their children were 'very happy' and 'well settled'. Children come into the nursery each morning happy and relaxed, they separate well from parents and are keen to get on with their day. Parents appreciate staff's kindness and support and many told me they travelled some distance to attend because of the positive experiences that older siblings had.

At the time of the last inspection many strengths were identified and you were asked to work in partnership with others to develop high-quality early years practice. You have worked closely with three other nursery schools and some local primary schools to share many of your systems. You have provided a range of professional development and support to others to help them raise standards and improve outcomes in their settings.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is central to the work of the school. You know the children and their families well. There are robust systems in place to keep children safe. All staff are well trained in their safeguarding duties. Staff know what to do if they have any concerns and use the systems that are in place appropriately. The recruitment process is robust and effective and ensures that all appropriate checks are made when new staff are appointed.

Governors meet their statutory duties very effectively. They work in partnership with you to ensure that children are safe and that staff are well trained. Governors audit the systems and processes that are in place. Leaders work very effectively with a wide range of other professionals to ensure children's safety and well-being. Concerns are quickly addressed and your very good engagement with other professionals ensures that children are kept safe and families are supported appropriately.

Inspection findings

- The main focus of this inspection was to explore and evaluate the capacity of leaders and governors to sustain the outstanding quality of education that had been reported on at the time of the previous inspection. I found that you have been highly proactive in working with leaders and governors to build upon and further improve the strengths identified.
- There is strong leadership at all levels. Together with governors, you have a sharp awareness of the strengths and areas for development of the provision. Your self-evaluation document is accurate and you have correctly identified the areas for improvement. You and your team are always looking for ways to make things even better. When you make changes you monitor them for impact to ensure that they improve children's outcomes.
- Leaders have created a rich and varied curriculum. It skilfully meets the needs of all groups. Children are routinely excited and engaged in their learning. They

have first-hand experiences, for example by visiting a Chinese restaurant to help inspire their own role-play in their authentic 'Somerset Chinese Restaurant'.

- Governors are effective in the role because they hold leaders to account. They ask challenging questions about children's learning and routinely monitor progress data. They regularly visit the nursery and talk to children, parents and staff to ensure that outcomes are strong. They have a clear vision for the nursery and work hard to ensure that the nursery continues to meet the needs of the local community.
- I then considered how effective leaders' actions are in ensuring that all children make good progress. I found meticulous analysis of children's progress quickly highlights any individuals or groups who need additional help with their learning. Skilled staff provide support or intervention promptly. As a result, children make good progress in all areas of learning. Analysis shows that all groups of children are doing equally well. Leaders quite rightly identified that the starting point for boys was lower than girls, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Effective support ensures that their progress is at least equal to that of girls. As a result, most leave the nursery at levels that are at least typical for their age and they are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.
- Excellent use is made of the early years pupil premium funding for eligible children so that they are also thriving. The impact of the two-year-olds provision is clear in the outcomes of these children. By the age of three, they had made up ground and developed the skills that were typical for their age.
- There is exceptional practice in the way some adults facilitate play, which could be shared among all to ensure consistency. They allow children to be experts. As a result, children are very skilled at developing their ideas and including others. These adults promote learning through play and ask questions at an appropriate level to challenge children.
- Children demonstrate excellent attitudes and learning behaviour. They are able to concentrate well and sustain interest in their learning. The nursery plans everything with a focus on the 'whole child'. As a result of carefully planned learning opportunities, children have time to rehearse and practise their skills with adults and with each other. This has a very positive impact on children's skills in cooperation, turn-taking, sharing and listening.
- The nursery is full of opportunities to investigate and explore. Children benefit enormously from the way in which the indoor environment, in particular, is set up. Children can choose and access resources easily. For example, during my visit, children worked out how to make a train track go round a bend to create a complete circuit for the train to travel along. Once completed, children quickly sketched what they had achieved. They were able to do this because mark-making tools like pens, paint and chinks were available. On another occasion children working in large block play drew their towers before turning them into a running track and engaging their friends in a game.
- However, the outdoor area did not offer children the same excellent opportunities to capture and record their ideas. As a result, opportunities to develop children's writing skills are missed, particularly during independent play. On a few

occasions, adults did not have the necessary resources to hand in the outdoor area to model writing skills effectively.

- Leaders have quite rightly identified the areas of language and mathematical development as key areas to enhance further. Around the nursery key vocabulary is displayed which ensures that all adults use these words as part of their everyday interactions in each area. Modelling language in this way is having a significant impact on children's use of language. During the inspection we saw children using the key words accurately. However, opportunities to reinforce language and vocabulary are not of the same high quality in the outdoor area as those seen inside.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- opportunities to develop children's literacy, language and communication skills are consistently of the highest quality, particularly in the outdoor area
- leaders share the best practice that exists within the nursery so that all practitioners facilitate and extend children's learning consistently

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

Yours sincerely

Lou Anderson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, special educational needs coordinator, class teachers, a representative of the local authority, parents and members of the governing body. The inspector reviewed 19 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and considered the responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. The inspector observed learning across the provision, visiting all learning areas. The inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation, including evidence of children's work, performance information and tracking data, records and minutes of governors' meetings, safeguarding information, the school action plan and self-evaluation documents.