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Ms Lisa Taylor
Headteacher
Martenscroft Nursery School & Children's Centre
33 Epping Street
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Dear Ms Taylor

Short inspection of Martenscroft Nursery School & Children's Centre

Following my visit to the school on 3 October 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 your school was judged to be outstanding in July 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 and your new deputy have quickly gained the respect of governors, staff and parents. You were all very keen to tell me how proud you are to be part of this outstanding school.

There is an extremely supportive 'family feel' to the school. Parents are highly satisfied with what you and the staff do for their children and for them. They talk about their children thriving at Martenscroft and about the school 'buzzing' with activities that help their children learn and develop. They are full of praise for how much you and the staff do to help and reassure them and make sure that their children's learning is outstanding.

You listen to parents and children and are all justifiably proud of achieving the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) Rights Respecting School Award. You are clearly very keen to abide by the principle that considering the views of the child is a right not a permission in everything you do. Parents speak very highly of the respect you show them and their children. They value their involvement in activities such as the annual International Day and other aspects of the school's work. Parents feel very involved in everything that the school does. The partnership between home and school is excellent.

Behaviour is exemplary. Children become totally absorbed in what they are doing because activities are exciting and motivating. Thus, children concentrate exceptionally well, often for considerable periods of time. When you and I visited the Nursery class, for example, every single child was learning something new. Children know what is expected of them. They follow instructions and established routines and, even at this early stage in the year, show they have settled well. They are confident when communicating with adults or with each other. Relationships are excellent throughout the school.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were asked to make sure that the school improvement plan had clear, measurable objectives. It now has and you and the governors regularly check progress towards them. They also form the basis for the targets you set for staff as you manage their performance. You were also asked to share the expertise of the staff team and governing body with other schools. Your school has become a teaching school since the previous inspection. This means that staff from other schools benefit from visiting and learning from what you do. Governors have also reached out to other governing bodies, offering training and support.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, staff and governors have an excellent understanding of everything to do with safeguarding. All training, including for first aid and child protection, is up to date. You communicate the school's approach to parents well, and parents are very sure that their children are safe in your care. Children's health, safety and well-being are a high priority for everyone. Staff take great care to ensure children's privacy at all times, and especially when sleeping, toileting or nappy-changing. Procedures are very strict and all staff follow them.

Visitors are readily challenged to show their identity; staff recruitment includes all the relevant checks and the school grounds and all equipment are inspected daily to ensure the children's safety. You involve the older children in checking equipment, thus preparing them to take increasing responsibility for themselves. We observed children using scissors, spatulas, glue and knives safely, and, in the mud kitchen, learning to be aware of hot surfaces and use a microwave safely. You are meticulous in checking up on absences to try to ensure that you always know the whereabouts of the children in your care.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry in this inspection was to determine whether children's progress is still outstanding. To do this, I looked at how staff check the accuracy of their assessments and how well they use the information in planning.
- I found that every member of staff is ambitious for every child. They rise to the high expectations you have of them to ensure that the children do as well as they can. The work you do within school and with other schools and the local authority ensures that the assessments are accurate.

- You make sure that staff tailor learning to each child's needs. Thus, disadvantaged children, most-able children, children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language all make excellent progress.
- Staff act swiftly to close gaps in learning. They constantly reflect on the effectiveness of what they do and how they might do it better. Displays, many of which are interactive, and artefacts in classrooms, corridors and even the reception area promote learning at every turn. Children learn equally well indoors and out, and staff make sure that they thoroughly enjoy learning.
- Children's learning journeys from last year confirm their outstanding progress. However, not all do so consistently. For example, in some, it was easy to see how children progressed from scribbling to more recognisable mark-making and on to forming letters correctly and, in some cases, writing their names or producing recognisable drawings. In others, there were only photographs of children in different areas doing different things.
- In class, children work productively at all times. Even when not working directly with an adult, they remain focused on what they are doing. They are proud to show and talk about their achievements. Occasionally, the extent of their learning is lost because no one is there to record it or grab the moment to move it on, or to develop and extend their vocabulary and ability to communicate.
- My second line of enquiry was about how well new staff had settled and were able to keep the school outstanding. I found that new staff have been very quickly absorbed into the culture of the school and all are determined to continue its excellent work.
- You and the senior management team are clearly passionate about helping the children and their families to thrive. You and the new deputy headteacher have quickly gained the respect and support of the staff, transmitting your commitment and enthusiasm to others.
- Across the school, teamwork is exceptionally strong. Room leaders manage their rooms extremely well, checking on everything and helping staff to reflect on how effective their own work is. Training for staff is carefully selected to help staff meet their targets and provide the best possible support for the children.
- Children are eased into school successfully because you all work closely with families before they start. Similarly, as they move from class to class and on to primary school, every effort is made to make the transition as smooth as it can be so that children can continue to make excellent progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- no opportunity is missed to develop children's language and their understanding of it, even when children are working on tasks by themselves
- there is a consistent approach throughout the school to collecting evidence of the excellent progress children are making.

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

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

This was a pilot 'aligned' inspection in which an Ofsted Early Years inspector inspected what was on offer for children under the age of two. Inspectors communicated with each other throughout the day to avoid unnecessary repetition, particularly in relation to safeguarding, leadership and management and the views of parents.

I carried out a variety of activities during the inspection.

- I met with you throughout the day. We visited classrooms together and talked about improvements since the previous inspection.
- With senior leaders, we looked at assessment information and analysed the work in children's learning journeys.
- I considered your own evaluation of the school's effectiveness and the priorities for improvement which you and the governors have set for the coming year.
- I examined all safeguarding records, including those relating to attendance, explored your recruitment and vetting procedures, and talked with staff and parents about safeguarding procedures.
- I held discussions with all senior leaders, room leaders, five governors and five parents. I also took account of the 12 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and of the comments received from parents by the Early Years Inspector.
- I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority and took account of the 18 responses to the online questionnaire for staff.