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Dr Lesley Curtis
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Dear Dr Curtis

Short inspection of Everton Nursery School and Family Centre

Following my visit to the school on 16 October 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 May 2014.

This school continues to be outstanding.

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

Since 2004, Everton Nursery School has been judged on four consecutive inspections by Ofsted to be providing an outstanding quality of education. I am delighted to report that this accolade has been sustained for a fifth time.

You and your dedicated staff team make Everton Nursery School a wonderful place for children to learn and play. Your staff are highly reflective. Children are at the heart of everything they do. Staff have a very clear understanding of the underlying principles of early years education and of the importance of learning through play. Your school is a happy and inclusive place. Everyone is welcome, irrespective of their race, gender or culture.

You never stand still and are continually looking for ways to improve the school. This is exemplified by the vigour with which you embraced the challenge of meeting the area of improvement identified at your last inspection. The inspector asked you to raise the awareness of the school's partnership with schools in the locality and nationally to contribute further to school improvement. A wealth of work has been done to meet this recommendation. For example, the school now provides and contributes to a wide range of professional training courses locally, regionally and nationally, targeted at school improvement. Everton Nursery School is a teaching school and supports local headteachers, senior leaders and governors through its work. You work alongside Pen Green Early Years Centre as an external adviser. You

also provide advice to the Department for Education about early years education. Students from European countries have come to observe high-quality early years education in practice. You and your staff write articles for early years education publications. Working with a professional symphony orchestra, children in the locality have been supported to improve their concentration, listening and turn-taking skills. You and your staff have just started two ambitious projects to improve children's communication and language skills. All this excellent work ensures that you and your school have the opportunity to be at the forefront of developments in early years education.

You have the full support of all your staff. They are very proud to work alongside you and they feel valued. Morale is very high. Staff told me, 'We are like a family.' With your support and encouragement, some of your staff have been empowered to further their careers in education. All staff share your aims and ambitions for the school.

Parents and carers are equally resounding in their praise. They are proud of their children's achievements, particularly in their social and language skills. Parents typically commented: 'This school has given my child the best possible start to their education. Staff are amazing.'

As I walked round the school, I observed children who were highly confident, independent and curious. Staff are excellent role models. They lead by example and children follow. Children are totally engrossed in their learning. Consequently, they are busy, and squabbles are rare.

Safeguarding is effective.

A high priority is placed on keeping children safe. You have achieved the right balance of ensuring that all children are safe, while also helping them to become resilient and not afraid to take risks. Staff have a secure understanding of the indicators of abuse and neglect and the procedures to follow. Having completed the 'Prevent' duty training, they talk with some confidence about the latest national concerns relating to radicalisation and female genital mutilation. They are also very aware of the risks to child protection that apply within the local area. Vulnerable families receive timely and good levels of support from the school and other agencies. There are comprehensive procedures in place for the recruitment of staff. No new member of staff can start working at the school until all relevant checks have been completed. This further ensures children's safety. Through many aspects of the curriculum, children are taught about keeping themselves safe.

Inspection findings

- Children enter the school with varying levels of skills and abilities. During their time at the school, all groups of children, including those who disadvantaged, make very good progress and excel in their learning. Consequently, they are very well prepared for their transition into primary school.

- Since the last inspection, you have successfully introduced two-year-old provision into the school. Because of first-class teaching, children's language, social and physical skills are very well promoted. Staff throughout the school model the correct use of language exceptionally well, speaking clearly and with precision. As the two-year-olds play, staff introduce new and exciting words, such as 'splash' and 'squeeze'. This helps to develop and extend children's acquisition of language. From an early age, children are learning the importance of sharing and taking turns. Young children have a broad range of opportunities to develop their physical skills as they kick balls, climb and balance on apparatus outdoors.
- All staff make excellent use of their voices and facial gestures to encourage and sustain children's interests. Three-year-old children are encouraged to take risks and solve problems. Staff are highly skilled at knowing when to stand back and give children time to work things out for themselves and when to intervene to offer support. This was exemplified when staff stood back and observed children working out, through trial and error, the best way to get down from the climbing frame.
- The quality of the learning environment is marvellous, most notably indoors. It makes a significant contribution to the excellent progress that children make. Many of the resources are natural, providing children with real-life experiences. For example, under supervision and wearing safety goggles, children use hand drills to make holes in conkers. Classrooms are well laid out, ensuring that children have enough room to move around safely and in comfort. All play materials are stored at child height and are accessible. This allows children to make independent choices about their play.
- You keep a watchful eye on the quality of teaching to ensure that it is of the highest standard. This is done in a variety of ways, such as through formal lesson observations, learning walks and scrutiny of children's work over time. Staff appreciate the helpful advice that you give them to support them to develop further and refine their teaching practice. There is a strong commitment to ongoing professional development. As a result, staff have the relevant knowledge and skills to help all children achieve to their very best.
- You explained to me how the demographics of the school have changed since the last inspection. An increasing proportion of children who speak English as an additional language are now attending the school. You take care to ensure that children have many opportunities to appreciate the diversity of the world in which they live. This is achieved through planned and spontaneous activities. Children learn about different faiths and cultures and there is a wide range of resources which promote equality of opportunity. Children are becoming aware of the protected characteristics, such as same-sex families and disability, in an age-appropriate and meaningful way.
- Governors that I met during the inspection are highly skilled, knowledgeable and ambitious for the school. They have a secure understanding of the progress that different groups of children make. Governors are very supportive of you and are not afraid to ask difficult and challenging questions should the need arise. They keep a very close eye on the budget to ensure that the school remains sustainable.

- In conjunction with the Department for Education and a university, the school has recently started working with a wide range of schools and other early years settings in the locality and beyond to develop children's communication and language skills. These initiatives are at an early stage and the impact is not yet evident.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the projects that are currently in place with schools and other early years providers to develop children's communication and language skills are embedded and monitored closely to evaluate their impact.

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

Yours sincerely

Sheila Iwaskow
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, staff, a representative from the local authority and four members of the governing body. I also had discussions with parents to seek their views of the school. I went on a tour of the school to see the learning that was taking place. I looked at some examples of children's work and observed their behaviour in class. I reviewed a range of documentation, including the single central record, the school's self-evaluation and information on children's progress. I took account of the responses to the online Ofsted questionnaires completed by six parents and four members of staff. I also took account of the school's most recent questionnaire to parents.