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Mrs Lucy Driver
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Driver

Short inspection of St Paul's Nursery School & Children's Centre

Following my visit to the school on 12 February 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 first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be outstanding in July 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 leadership team have maintained the outstanding outcomes for children since that time. You have shared your best practice widely and have been relentless in your ambition to develop the provision further. You make sure that staff routinely reflect on and improve their practice, and that they investigate new teaching practices which help children to make outstanding progress. As a result, the school has led innovative research projects which have helped to improve the strong teaching in the Nursery school. For example, your work to embed new approaches to develop boys' speaking has helped to close gaps between girls' and boys' achievements in communication and language. You have addressed the area for development at the previous inspection by providing children with regular access to technology to enhance their learning.

You are ably supported by your leadership team and governors, and together you accept nothing but the best for the children at St Paul's Nursery School. You are accurate in your evaluation of what is working well at the school and also how it can continue to improve. You use the information about children's outcomes well to identify priorities for improvement. For example, last year you identified that there were further improvements that could be made to the teaching of mathematics, and you have put into place a number of changes to support this area of learning. This is having an impact on children's skills in counting and their knowledge of numbers. You rightly wish to embed this good practice and to make sure that teaching continues to develop children's mathematical vocabulary even further.

You make sure that adults develop a deep understanding of how children learn best, and that they know the individual needs of the children extremely well. As a result, practitioners provide an excellent range of activities which reflect the children's unique experiences and their starting points. Those who are at the early stage of speaking and understanding English receive very effective support from bilingual staff to help them to catch up with their peers. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make substantial progress as a result of leaders' precise assessment of their needs and carefully planned additional help, including from external professionals.

Parents and carers have overwhelmingly positive views of the provision. Parents regularly work in partnership with the school to review their children's progress and to plan the next steps for learning, both in school and at home. As a result, parents share the school's high expectations. Additionally, the guidance that the school provides helps parents and carers to contribute well to their children's learning and development at home.

Leaders make sure that children learn in a highly supportive and caring environment. The nurturing relationships between adults and children and organisation of daily routines help children to develop positive habits and attitudes to learning. During of the inspection, children settled exceptionally well to activities at the start of the day. Children became engrossed very quickly in activities with their key workers, which included reading, writing and counting. They in turn responded enthusiastically to adults' well-formed questions. Across all areas of learning, children enjoy experiences which motivate them and stimulate their imagination. Children show deep thinking and take pride in their learning. Later in the day, the inspector was invited to listen to a child's story, which she retold with great enthusiasm and fluency.

Children thrive in the setting as a result of the stimulating curriculum and the support and challenge which adults provide. They are exceptionally well prepared to move to the next stage of their education.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have made sure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff are trained to recognise risks to children, and they act swiftly to follow up concerns. Leaders go to great lengths to provide support for children and their families by initiating support from a range of external professionals, including healthcare professionals. Records of concerns and their follow up are carefully maintained so that leaders can check that families are receiving the help that they need. The governor responsible for safeguarding has reviewed arrangements by completing the local authority safeguarding audit. Vetting checks on staff, governors and volunteers meet statutory requirements.

Children's health, safety and welfare are all supported by the school's policies and procedures, including procedures to keep the site safe. In addition, the school's work to help children to respect each other and to resolve conflicts is highly

effective. As a result, children's behaviour at all times shows their understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.

Inspection findings

- To determine whether the school remains outstanding, I considered how leaders make sure that disadvantaged children make outstanding progress and that their barriers to learning are identified accurately and swiftly addressed.
- Adults keep detailed and precise assessments of each child's learning and development. All disadvantaged children have detailed plans which identify how adults will adapt the teaching to meet their needs. This has resulted in a range of actions to make sure that disadvantaged pupils make rapid progress. For example, the school has used the early years pupil premium funding to support families with additional help to prepare children for learning. In addition, extra help to support those with low levels of language acquisition has been very effective and ensures that children catch up to the levels expected for their age in listening, understanding and speaking.
- The school's information on the progress of disadvantaged children and the evidence in records of their learning and development confirm the outstanding and sustained progress that disadvantaged children make across all areas of learning. The small number of most-able disadvantaged children are making strong progress and are on track to exceed the standards expected for their age.
- Next, I considered how well leaders make sure that all pupils, especially those who speak English as an additional language, make outstanding progress in early literacy skills. These skills include speaking, listening, understanding, reading and writing.
- From typically low starting points, children make substantial and sustained progress in language and literacy. Those who speak English as an additional language make an excellent start because support staff are very well deployed to manage the transition to speaking in their home language to English. Observations of children and evidence in their school records show that they make rapid progress from speaking in simple phrases to full and extended sentences.
- Adults provide excellent models of language for children to imitate, and they question children very effectively to help them to understand new vocabulary. Throughout the school day children enjoy opportunities to hear stories, sing songs and to listen and speak in small groups. In addition, children plan stories and tell them to others. This has a striking impact on the development of their vocabulary. For example, the inspector observed an animated session where children listened attentively to each other's stories and joined in with the characters' actions and emotions. Practitioners also develop children's understanding of the sounds that different letters make, using objects and written texts.
- Adults provide for mark-making across areas of learning and support children to develop early writing skills, including correct pencil grip and formation of letters.

The most able are supported to form meaningful sentences. This prepares children, including the most able, well for the next stage of their education.

- Finally, I considered how well leaders evaluate the quality of provision and use this to plan for improvements.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. Governors provide strong challenge and support for leaders to make sure that all groups of pupils make the progress they are capable of.
- Planning for improvement has been very effective and, as a result, the gaps in learning between groups have closed or are closing rapidly. Leaders have plans for improvement in place for each area of learning and for groups of learners. Leaders and governors review these plans so that they can intervene quickly if children are not making enough progress.
- Leaders' plans to develop children's mathematical understanding are developing well. While this has led to improvements to children's confidence in counting, leaders recognise rightly that children need to strengthen their understanding of mathematical language further.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the work to develop children's mathematical understanding and vocabulary is continued and firmly embedded.

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 City of Bristol. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Claire Mirams
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and members of your leadership team. We reviewed your plans for improvement, information on current children's progress and your own evaluation of the school's performance. We observed teaching together. I also met with members of the governing body and with the chair of governors. I met with a representative of the local authority.

I met with parents at the start of the school day to gather their views on the quality of provision, safeguarding and communication between parents and the school. I scrutinised various safeguarding records, including risk assessments and the checks

on adults working in the school. I reviewed a number of records of children's learning.

I also considered 34 responses to the staff survey, 21 free-text parent responses and 28 parent responses to the online survey, Parent View.