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Mrs Rachel Lord and Mrs Judith Dawson
Headteachers
Reddish Vale Nursery School
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Dear Mrs Lord and Mrs Dawson

Short inspection of Reddish Vale Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 22 March 2016, 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 December 2012.

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 ensured that the outstanding provision and highest outcomes have been maintained. From my discussions with you, your staff and governors, there is a common thread of ensuring 'excellence for all'. You place exceptional importance on encouraging children to become inquisitive and curious learners.

Your school is very highly regarded within the local community and it is a wonderful place for children to play and learn. Parents told me why your school is such a special place. The strong family atmosphere provided by the school and its caring ethos are features which parents greatly appreciate. Some parents travel quite a distance to ensure that their child can attend your school. Parents are quite rightly proud of the exceptional progress that their children make. They also commented on the high levels of support afforded to children with special educational needs and described their progress as 'amazing'. Parents hold you and your staff team in the highest regard and commented, 'I don't want my child to leave'. They emphatically state that this is 'an amazing nursery school with brilliant staff'.

Children skip into school in the morning and gaze with awe and wonder at the wide range of exciting activities on offer. The quality of the learning environment, both indoors and outside, is quite simply breathtaking and inspires children to

learn. Children settle very quickly into the routines of the nursery school and are aware of the high expectations of staff. Behaviour is impeccable and children play and learn exceptionally well alongside each other. From our observations, we both commented that children have a truly caring attitude towards each other and share warm and respectful relationships with all staff in your school. Staff spend all of their time interacting and engaging with the children. Many demonstrate the skills of standing back, observing and extending children's learning through thoughtful questioning.

At the time of the last inspection, the inspector recognised the many strengths of your school. These included your aspirational leadership, children's outstanding achievements and your excellent partnership with the local authority and parents. Alongside this, however, the inspector recognised that more efficient use needed to be made of information and communication technology (ICT), particularly with regard to tracking children's progress. You, and your governing body, took immediate action and this issue has now been fully addressed. ICT is now being used to record children's attendance and track their progress. Children also now have access to a variety of resources to develop their technology skills, such as iPads, telephones and computer keyboards.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. Staff are appropriately trained and have a good awareness of the indicators of abuse and procedures to follow. They talk with some confidence about radicalisation, extremism and female genital mutilation. Additional training on 'Prevent' duty is due to be delivered in April 2016 to further enhance staff awareness. The nursery school is a very safe place and visitors to the school are closely monitored. Children are very trusting of adults and, as a result, feel safe. Equipment and resources are of high quality and the school site is secure. The single central record contains all the required information and all relevant risk assessments are in place and of a good standard. Attendance is very closely monitored, ensuring that any potential safeguarding issues are quickly identified and addressed.

Inspection findings

- You and your staff are very ambitious for all groups of children that attend your school. You have highly skilled staff who, through daily planning meetings, tailor activities to children's interests and differing abilities. This ensures that children, from their low starting points, make rapid progress in their learning.
- Staff work exceptionally well as a team and morale is very high. They find you and senior leaders within the school 'very supportive and approachable'. Such effective teamwork contributes significantly to the exceptional progress that children make.

- You keep an eagle eye on the quality of teaching. Staff really appreciate the helpful advice you give them to continually improve their practice and the wide range of training opportunities to support them in extending their teaching skills even further. You nurture and develop talent within your school.
- Teaching staff visit other schools to observe best practice. However, we both agreed that opportunities to observe best practice within the school are not as well developed as they could be.
- Your staff share their excellent practice with a small number of early years providers, such as childminders, to help them develop their knowledge and skills. However, you, I and the local authority adviser are in full agreement that, in order for children to be better prepared for school when they start in Reception, staff should share their expertise with more early years providers in the locality.
- The school improvement plan clearly sets out the school's priorities; however, it is only for one year. In our discussions, you acknowledge that this short-term view does not consider well enough opportunities to further enhance the nursery school in the longer term or to consider the impact of current initiatives over time.
- To support children's learning, you and your staff have created what you term a 'nature school'. From my observations, children relish the opportunities they have to become independent, learn about safety and explore the natural environment when taking part in 'nature school' activities. Safety issues are confidently risk assessed by children before they go outdoors. I observed children telling others that if they see a bee they must stand still, they should not eat berries because they may be poisonous and that they will be stung if they touch nettles. With appropriate supervision, children learn how to climb trees, light fires by rubbing two sticks together and, by working as a team, move heavy logs. Children giggle with delight as they see frogs jumping about, snails moving slowly across leaves and slugs leaving a slimy trail as they crawl through the undergrowth. Staff use these activities very well to develop the vocabulary of the children through their play.
- You give careful and thoughtful consideration to ensure that the early years pupil premium money is spent wisely to help disadvantaged children develop their social, communication and language skills. As a result, these children are making very good progress and take a full and active part in school life.
- Transition arrangements for children starting at the nursery school and moving on to primary school are effective. Parents told me that they greatly appreciate the gradual admission procedures when their children start at the nursery school and the support they get from staff to help them develop their children's learning at home. Parents are also of the opinion that their children

are well supported when they move on to local primary schools. One headteacher from a local primary school told me that 'children who come to my school from Reddish Vale Nursery School have had a well-rounded experience. It is an excellent provision and most children are very independent, confident and ready to learn.'

- Governors know the school well and are aware of its priorities for development. They offer the school challenge and support in equal measure. Like you, they are fully committed to ensuring that all children get the very best start to their education.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school improvement plan considers longer-term objectives
- the sharing of best practice within the school becomes well embedded
- more children start in Reception well prepared to learn by extending the arrangements for the sharing of the nursery school's excellent practice with more early years providers.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Iwaskow
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

This school is run jointly by two headteachers. Rachel Lord was not present when this inspection took place. During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher, middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, a local primary school headteacher and a representative from the local authority. I also had informal discussions with a group of parents and staff to seek their views of the school. I went on a tour of the school accompanied by the headteacher and observed teaching and learning both indoors and outside. I looked at examples of children's work and reviewed a range of documentation, including the single central record, the school's self-evaluation, the school's development plan and records relating to the monitoring of teaching and learning. I also took account of the responses to the online Ofsted questionnaires completed by parents and staff.