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2 March 2017

Mrs Helen Adams  
Headteacher  
Truro Nursery School  
Higher Trehaverne  
Truro  
Cornwall  
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Dear Mrs Adams

### **Short inspection of Truro Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 23 February 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 the school was judged to be outstanding in January 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 early years team have successfully maintained the nurturing and supportive ethos which permeates the nursery. This enables all children, regardless of their age or ability, to grow in confidence and develop into eager and keen young learners. Pivotal to the success of the nursery is the excellent way that you and your exceptionally skilful team work seamlessly together to ensure that the children are 'school ready'. However, this is never to the detriment of their all-round development. One parent summed up the views of many others by explaining that the nursery is 'led by fantastic teachers and staff who genuinely care about my child's progress and offer support and help when necessary'.

You and your governors have an accurate understanding of the exceptional nursery education you provide and are justifiably proud of the excellent reputation you have gained within the locality. Your innovative work with other local schools not only enhances their provision, but also ensures that you are kept up to date with initiatives in the primary and secondary sectors.

At the time of the previous inspection, you were asked to involve the children in setting their own individual targets for learning. You and your team have successfully developed a way of doing this which meets the needs of the children. They regularly meet with their teachers or early years practitioners to talk about what they have been learning about. They are encouraged to make suggestions

about how they might develop their learning further. These discussions are recorded using speech bubbles which the children enjoy looking back on and celebrating what they have learned since they started attending nursery.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff and governors have completed all relevant training, including on the prevention of extremism, radicalisation, female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation. You keep them up to date on new information and check their knowledge by testing it from time to time. However, although recruitment and vetting procedures are thorough, they are not systematically maintained. This means that it is not easy for them to be checked.

You and your staff keep the children safe and secure in nursery. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their own safety. For example, they know that 'a circle of safety' is required around their woodwork activities or when they build bonfires during forest activities. You work closely with all the families and this ensures that they feel comfortable approaching you with any worries or concerns. You have effective links with outside agencies and this ensures that families receive the specialist help they need. Those parents who completed the Parent View, the online inspection questionnaire, reported that their children were happy at Nursery and felt very well looked after. The views of many were summed up by one parent who explained that 'It is a wonderful school with a warm, caring and nurturing environment.'

### **Inspection findings**

- My first line of enquiry was to find out how you were maintaining the nursery's exceptional provision. You and your staff are never complacent about your outstanding status and continually seek ways to improve the opportunities for your young learners. Professional development opportunities are used extremely well to share expertise with other colleagues and refresh your own early years practice. The exciting curriculum opportunities that are planned for the children, both indoors and out-of-doors, motivates and engages them very well. Practitioners interact sensitively with the children and model new skills and concepts. Children are encouraged to talk about what they are learning and they respond enthusiastically when asked challenging questions. The most able children are given additional opportunities to solve problems and negotiate challenges with each other. As one parent explained, the nursery staff are 'always trying new and interesting activities for the children ... They seem to learn so much and gain an amazing amount of experience.'
- My second line of enquiry was to explore the way that you ensure that your children are making effective progress. You and your staff are extremely thorough in your approach to tracking, checking and analysing the progress that all your children make. This is further endorsed through joint moderation sessions with other nursery classes from your partner schools. Of particular note is the impressive way that you and your local schools share assessment

information openly and honestly. This enables you to track the progress that your children continue to make at primary school. You are justifiably proud that, over the past four years, those children who attended your nursery reached a higher level of development at the end of their Reception Year than those who did not.

- You explained that you use the information you get from the local primary schools to refine your own practice. My third line of enquiry was to explore how you were improving the children's writing skills, given that the information from primary schools indicated that this was a weaker area of the children's development. You and your team have tackled this in two ways. Firstly, you have introduced more physical activities, such as crawling and balancing, which develop the children's skills. They use hammers, saws and drills with developing confidence and accuracy. By learning to lift up objects using tweezers, they steadily develop more control over the muscles they use to write with. Secondly, you have increased the number of opportunities available for the children to make marks using a wide range of resources such as sand, water, paper, paint and shaving foam. For example, they 'sign in' when starting an activity and are always expected to label their work when it is completed. Evidence from the children's learning journals indicates that this additional focus on preparing the children thoroughly in developing their writing skills is having a positive impact on the progress that the children are making.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- administrative systems for recruiting new staff are systematically maintained and regularly checked.

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

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and your assistant headteacher. We talked about how you had maintained the outstanding quality of education since the last inspection and reviewed the information you use to check the individual progress of each child. We also looked at the progress made at the end of the Reception Year by those children who attended the nursery. I looked at all safeguarding records and explored your recruitment and vetting procedures. I also held discussions with three governors, including the chair of governors. You and I spent time together watching the

children develop their skills both indoors and outdoors. I considered the 28 responses made on Parent View, the online inspection questionnaire, and the completed staff questionnaires.