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Mrs Sanchia Lyon
Interim Headteacher
Mary Paterson Nursery School
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Off Ashmore Road
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Dear Mrs Lyon

Short inspection of Mary Paterson Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 25 April 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. This is the fourth consecutive inspection where the school has been judged to be outstanding. The school has had significant changes in leadership since the last inspection. Since September 2016, when the former headteacher retired, the nursery school has been led by an interim headteacher. However, the interim headteacher knows their school well and, with their leaders and governors, has a very accurate understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be done next. As interim headteacher, you have very successfully managed to lead both Mary Paterson and its federated Dorothy Gardner Nursery School.

The chair of the governing body believes that the 'youngest children should receive the very best', and this culture and ethos filter through the entire nursery. This is also reflected in the overwhelmingly positive feedback from parents, who praise the staff for being exceptionally dedicated to their work. 'Thriving' was in fact a word that parents used repeatedly to describe how well their children are doing at nursery.

It is very evident that children are at the heart of every conversation in this nursery. This begins with the morning briefings in which focus children are identified, their achievements discussed and targets put forward. This develops the culture of every adult knowing every child and being able to move them on in their unique learning journey each and every day.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is very important in this school and you are particularly passionate about ensuring that a culture of safeguarding is at the heart of the school's practice in every respect. You have worked hard, and with success, to establish clear and efficient systems. Staff have received updated training and can show the impact this has on heightened awareness of risks such as extremism and female genital mutilation. You commissioned an external audit in December 2016 to ensure that the school uses greater rigour and this has sharpened practice across the school. Staff are fully aware of the processes that they must follow and safeguarding awareness is discussed confidently. Children feel safe at this school and this is confirmed by parents' feedback, who say how secure their children feel. Children are also taught how to act safely, and they show this when taking part in various activities, such as when using the climbing frame.

Inspection findings

- We agreed three key lines of enquiry as the focus of this inspection. The first line of enquiry was to look at how well leaders had acted on the one area for development from the last inspection report. Leaders were asked to improve professional development for staff by developing a system of coaching and mentoring. Observing peers is now common practice within the nursery and this is effective in ensuring high-quality teaching and learning. You have been instrumental in developing links and sharing practice between the two nursery schools. You have identified that more can be done to develop this further for the benefit of staff and children in both settings.
- The second line of enquiry was to look at the provision for, and progress of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Based on observations, discussion with the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and the analysis of children's learning journals, it is clearly evident that all children make at least good, and many make outstanding, progress from their starting points. This is due to adults' exceptional knowledge of how young children learn and great attention to individual children's needs, coupled with expert teaching and the use of resources to support their learning.
- The final key line of enquiry was about what makes Mary Paterson Nursery such a special and outstanding school. During the course of the inspection, this emerged as being four fold.
- Firstly, the enthusiasm, commitment, expertise and passion of the early years specialists who work at Mary Paterson are evident from talking with staff, meeting with parents and the happiness, enthusiasm and learning of the children.
- Secondly, excellent outdoor learning experiences and opportunities provided on a daily basis within the school grounds but also as part of the forest school experience underpin all that the children do; 'learning from the feet up' is the approach used by the school.
- Thirdly, the richness of the curriculum and how children's interests lead and

shape their learning are powerful motivators and ensure that they are enthused by their learning. It is hard to remember that these are only two-, three- and four-year-olds when you see what they are experiencing and learning. 'Making everything out of anything' is an expression you use to explain the role of the educator within this school. Knowing when to intervene and extend the learning and when to hold back and observe is a powerful and effective strategy that adults use exceptionally well.

- Finally, the attention that leaders, governors and adults give to detail applies most acutely to the children's learning journals, which are incredibly detailed and informative and give an accurate picture of where the children are in their learning and what they need to do next. The great attention to detail can be seen also in the way you hold staff to account and how governors ensure that they have an accurate picture of key aspects of the school's performance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- continue to strengthen links with Dorothy Gardner Nursery so that staff in both settings can share and develop their expertise further.

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

Yours sincerely

Paula Craigie
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, your deputy, the SENCo, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority. I spoke briefly with parents as they dropped off their children in the morning and I took account of the responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire completed by 10 parents. I spoke informally with staff and children. Together, we observed teaching and learning both indoors and outside and watched a small intervention group learning how to make specific sounds. I looked at a sample of children's individual learning journals with your SENCo and then observed these children in the setting. I also reviewed a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, forest school information, and the single central record and other documentation relating to safeguarding.