

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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9 October 2017

Ms Jeanette Hill  
Acting Headteacher  
Redcliffe Children's Centre and Maintained Nursery School  
Spencer House  
Ship Lane  
Redcliffe  
Bristol  
BS1 6RR

Dear Ms Hill

### **Short inspection of Redcliffe Children's Centre and Maintained Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 26 September 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 July 2014.

#### **This school continues to be outstanding.**

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the nursery school since the previous inspection. Its continuing success is achieved through the passion and dedication of all the adults who work in the nursery school. The exceptional way in which all teaching staff 'tune in' to the needs of each child ensures that all learning opportunities are tailored to meet the needs of all individuals.

The extremely wide range of opportunities provided, both within the nursery site and in the wider community, ensures that there are no limits put on children's learning. This enables them to deepen their knowledge and understanding across all areas of the early years curriculum and helps the children to make wider connections with everyday life. For example, not only do the children grow their own fruit and vegetables from seed, they plant them at the local city farm, then harvest them. Once collected, they enjoy preparing and cooking their food to make delicious meals to share with each other.

All the parents who responded to the online inspection questionnaire praised the impressive curriculum and the way in which it fully engages their children. One parent summed up the views of many by explaining, 'Teaching staff really capture the imagination of the children.' Parents unanimously agree that the curriculum

gives their children an 'amazing experience and start to their education'. They are also very clear that the experiences their children have at nursery school continue to motivate them as learners at home. For example, as one parent explained, when at home they, 'love to chop fruit and vegetables and talk about different foods which have been explored through cooking classes'.

At the time of the previous inspection, the nursery school was asked to ensure that computers were always available and accessible for children. You and your teaching staff have tackled this with aplomb by incorporating digital technology into every aspect of the nursery curriculum. Children not only use small electronic devices to take photographs of their work and play, they also use them to research things which interest them. Evidence from work produced by children during the last academic year showed that when a group of boys became interested in volcanoes, an adult helped them to investigate further using their electronic pads. Children confidently use digital scales when cooking and actively engage in dismantling old computers, televisions and mopeds. Their information technology skills are used well to extend their learning and enhance the strong links between home and school. For example, the children take photographs of what they have been doing at school and send them to their parents. The responses sent back from their parents further develop the strong links between home and school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures, coupled with careful checks of any visitors to the school sites, ensure that the children are not put at risk. Your extremely well-trained staff are very alert to any vulnerable families and demonstrate a secure knowledge of the signs of abuse, radicalism, extremism and child sexual exploitation. They are very quick to explore any unexplained absences or plans for extended holidays which could potentially put the children at risk.

As part of a children's centre, the nursery school works in close partnership with family support advisers and specialist agencies and organisations. This highly experienced team approach ensures that wider family issues are supported sensitively and effectively.

All parents who responded to the online inspection questionnaire agreed that their children feel safe at school. This is because they are looked after extremely well by all adults who work in the school. For instance, teaching staff make effective use of their homely 'nest areas' to ensure that their individual groups have a base to which they can go if they need some comfort. Teaching staff make sure that the transition between home and school is seamless. Prior to starting nursery school, well-planned visits to the nursery and their homes enable the children to establish a relationship with the key person who will be responsible for their well-being and education. Parents agree that that this helps them 'settle in much quicker than anticipated'. They appreciate the play and stay sessions over the

summer and the successful home visit made by the key person who will be responsible for the care of their child.

## **Inspection findings**

- My first line of enquiry was to explore how well you use the information collated on individual and groups of children which is used to inform future activities and opportunities. For example, you have successfully improved the progress of those children who live in the nearby high-rise accommodation and have effectively raised the achievement of boys, particularly those who are from minority ethnic groups. This is as a consequence of the way that teaching staff have focused on their specific needs, brought learning alive and ignited the children's interest. Working closely with your most vulnerable families and providing them with specific support, you have also improved the progress made by these children.
- Your extensive analysis of children's outcomes indicates that they are less well developed in the expressive arts, especially singing, song recognition and dancing skills. This has been exacerbated by financial restraints and the inevitable cuts made to specialist teachers. Nevertheless, you are developing a new initiative for the teaching of music. However, this is still in its infancy.
- Your school improvement plans are guided effectively by the information you receive from the local authority about the overall foundation stage outcomes from their primary schools. For example, having noted that at the end of the academic year 2015 to 2016 the proportion of children reaching a good level of development in writing was lower than that of other key skills, you extended opportunities for the children to write. Activities such as writing when playing in the outdoors 'ice-cream shop' and chalking on the playground have helped them to practise their skills. As a result, at the end of the academic year 2016/17, writing standards improved and this has enabled the children to be better prepared for starting their Reception Year in primary school.
- My second line of enquiry was to evaluate the impact of your extensive use of the local and wider community on the children's learning. Lots of experiences in a nearby wood help the children to develop their language skills. When they are experiencing learning in the forest, they describe the 'long and short' twigs and eagerly decipher the signs on the trees. They gain a strong understanding of letter sounds and use this knowledge to recognise familiar shops when they explore the local environment. Opportunities to sail down the harbour in a boat also provide them with time to consider their local environment from a different perspective. They also develop a knowledge about life in a harbour and enjoy observing the wildlife.
- My third line of enquiry was to evaluate how well your extensive involvement in research and training supports the work of the school. As yours is a teaching school and provider of initial teacher education, all staff demonstrate the highest level of professionalism and depth of knowledge. This has a demonstrable impact on the children's development.
- Those teaching staff who are involved in researching children's mathematical

and scientific development are instrumental in developing their colleagues' knowledge and understanding. The professional development they provide enables them to gain confidence and create more opportunities to extend the children's mathematical and scientific thinking. Consequently, children show a strong interest in adding and subtracting numbers and use accurate vocabulary when telling the time. They are mesmerised when investigating water flow and by the changes in texture when liquids are frozen and become solid. This inspires them to ask questions and explore further.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the new initiatives introduced to develop the children's skills in expressive arts, particularly in singing, recognising songs and dancing, are used effectively to promote these skills.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bristol. 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 in your capacity as the acting headteacher in the long-term absence of the substantive headteacher. I discussed the school's self-evaluation and the improvements made since the previous inspection. I met with the associate headteacher responsible for safeguarding. I looked at the safeguarding records and explored your recruitment and vetting procedures. I also held discussions with three governors, including the newly appointed chair of the governing body, and two middle leaders. Together we visited all the learning areas to look at the children working on their early reading, writing and number skills. I had a discussion with the local authority school improvement officer. I took account of 40 responses from Parent View, the online inspection questionnaire, and considered the comments that had been submitted by text.