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Mrs Cottle and Ms McHale
Co-headteachers
The Lawns Nursery School
Imperial Road
Windsor
Berkshire
SL4 3RU

Dear Mrs Cottle and Ms McHale,

Short inspection of The Lawns Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 14 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 October 2014.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection, and for the past 13 years.

You and your team are committed to providing an exceptionally high-quality start to children's education. Your consistently high aspirations for every single child are shared by all members of staff and mirrored across all aspects of school life. You are very ably supported by an accomplished team of staff and governors.

Your inspirational leadership ensures that the school continues to grow and develop. There is not a hint of complacency among staff, leaders or governors about the school's success. You continuously search for ways of developing children's learning and for enhancing their experience of school. Improvements secured since the previous inspection have ensured that the school goes from strength to strength. For example, the successful establishment of the pre-nursery unit for the youngest children has enabled you to build firm foundations for children's education, while developments in the outdoor areas have ensured that children learn equally well inside or out.

All members of staff establish strong, caring and trusting relationships with the children. They develop a thorough understanding of children's personalities and needs. Adults are highly skilled in building children's confidence and in helping them to develop the skills needed to make friends and to learn successfully. As a result, children settle quickly into school life. They behave extremely well because they are happy, busy and secure.

The school's positive and welcoming atmosphere provides children with a cheerful, upbeat start to each session. You and your team greet individual children and their parents with genuine interest and enthusiasm. The few children who are a little reluctant to leave their parents are warmly welcomed and are soon busily engaged in activities. Indeed, the school session clearly goes so quickly for some children that they are surprised when a parent arrives to take them home at the end of the session!

Consistently high-quality teaching ensures that children make exceptionally strong progress and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. This is the case for all groups, including disadvantaged children. Careful checks on children's progress ensure that teachers and leaders have an accurate view of children's learning.

Parents have absolute confidence in the school's work. Every parent completing Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, feels that their children are safe, well cared for and are learning well. Those who spoke with me during the inspection could not have spoken more highly of your school.

The school is an outward-looking community. You and your team are committed to working with the local authority and with other schools to support children's learning. Your influence on the quality of early years education also extends beyond the local area through your role in training teachers new to the profession.

At the time of the previous inspection, you were asked to continue your work in developing the curriculum teams in order to share excellent practice and to support the school's ongoing development. You have addressed this key issue for improvement in full. The curriculum teams, which were newly established at the time of the previous inspection, share expertise and exchange ideas very effectively across the three schools in the federation. They have been influential in securing a number of improvements in teaching and learning since the previous inspection. For example, they have updated classroom resources and have strengthened teaching and learning in a range of subjects, including science and mathematics.

You and your team are determined to maintain the highest-quality teaching and learning in the school while benefiting early years education more widely. You already have ambitious plans in place to pursue further research into early years education, which will contribute to ongoing developments in the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You ensure a consistently strong focus on children's safety throughout the school. You work extremely well with the staff team to ensure that the school provides children with a safe, secure and welcoming environment. You and your team keep a watchful eye on children to ensure that they are happy, safe and comfortable, paying close attention to children's individual needs.

You make sure that safeguarding policies are fit for purpose, understood by all members of staff and followed consistently throughout the school. You do not hesitate to question and challenge anything which causes you concern.

Staffing and recruitment checks are completed regularly and monitored rigorously to ensure that they are current. You make sure that all members of staff are well qualified in safeguarding procedures and know what to do if they are worried about a child's well-being.

Well-established routines contribute well to children's growing understanding of the role they themselves can play in staying safe. For example, during the inspection children visiting the snack table were helping themselves very sensibly to a drink of milk, sitting down to enjoy their fruit snack and returning the dirty cup and plate to the washing-up bowl. The groundwork for these good habits starts in the pre-nursery class, where adults sit with children while they eat snacks, chatting about activities and helping children to socialise.

You and your staff work very closely and productively with families to support children's well-being. As a result, parents feel very confident that their children are completely safe in school, with one commenting, 'It's like leaving your child with your mum.'

Inspection findings

- I focused particularly on the following areas during the inspection: how well leaders use early years pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged children; the quality of children's learning across the early years curriculum; and how effectively leaders and governors monitor and develop the school's work.
- Leaders set aspirational targets for all children's learning and development. They use pupil premium funding very effectively to ensure that disadvantaged children achieve the same high outcomes as other children. Ongoing dialogue with parents ensures that leaders and teachers have the fullest view possible of children's development.
- Teachers and other members of staff are responsive to children's individual needs. They use questioning skilfully to check children's understanding, develop language and social skills and to pose questions and suggestions which effectively challenge and extend children of all abilities.
- The school's broad, stimulating curriculum makes an extremely strong contribution to children's learning and to their enjoyment of school. Teachers provide a wide range of stimulating and intriguing activities which appeal to children's interests and to their curiosity about the world. For example, during the inspection, a group of children chatted enthusiastically about what they were doing as they mixed aromatic herbs with coloured water to make potions, while another group hammered nails into wood to make a marble run under the watchful eye of an adult.
- Children achieve very well in all areas of the early years curriculum. In 2018, for

example, three quarters of children in the nursery had achieved a good level of development by the end of the year, a year ahead of national expectations.

- Leaders and governors have developed robust procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's work. For example, they have developed rigorous assessment procedures so that all staff have a confident and accurate view of children's progress and know how to support the next steps in children's development.
- Governors are exceptionally knowledgeable about the school's work. They provide excellent support and challenge for school leaders. They use a wide range of strategies to check the school's work and are rightly confident that the school continues to provide high-quality education.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school implements plans to use its own research to ensure that teaching continues to be exceptionally high quality and to maintain the school's position at the forefront of early years practice.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Sackett
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with both of you, your assistant headteacher, a representative of the local authority and with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I observed learning with you both at different times of the school day and in all areas of the school, including the outside areas. I looked at samples of children's learning journeys and portfolios of children's work across the curriculum. I reviewed a range of documents, including the single central register, the school's self-evaluation of its work, safeguarding documents and school development plans.

I spoke with staff, parents and children during the inspection. I also took account of 50 views expressed by parents through Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 50 free-text comments and 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.