

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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21 June 2018

Ms McHale and Mrs Cottle  
Co-headteachers  
Maidenhead Nursery School  
School Lane  
Maidenhead  
Berkshire  
SL6 7PG

Dear Ms McHale and Mrs Cottle

### **Short inspection of Maidenhead Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 June 2018, 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 both provide inspirational leadership. It ensures that children have the best possible start to their education.

Children flourish at this school. They come in each morning with bright and happy smiles. They are excited by the learning experiences that you provide. Parents and carers cannot praise the school highly enough. All who answered the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, consider that this school gives their children a passion for learning. One parent said: 'The school provides an excellent start to my son's education. The teachers are brilliant and there are always interesting things going on.'

Your team shares your drive for continued excellence. Teachers are committed to providing the very best for the children. They make sure that each child achieves to their full potential. This is because no opportunity for learning is lost. One example of this was seen when children asked about the blue lines on the inside of their wrists. Your staff explained that the lines were blood circulating through veins in the body. Staff then set up a system of long plastic tubes and gave children the opportunity to pump liquid around the tubes like a heart.

Your school is well regarded as a national teaching school. As national leaders in education you play an important role in improving the quality of education for children in many settings.

The last inspection asked you to give children a good awareness of physical science. You now provide many opportunities for scientific enquiry. Children enjoy conducting experiments, such as how water flows downhill. They learn that this is to do with gravity.

An area for improvement from the last inspection was to develop the role of middle leadership. You have addressed this issue well. Middle leaders play an important role in making the school even better. As leaders, you utilise the wealth of knowledge within both this school and the two other nursery schools within the federation.

There is a free flow of ideas between staff. They develop their skills effectively through a range of courses. You have identified that you want to develop more research opportunities in school. This is so that the outstanding teaching provision improves even further.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. Training is thorough. Staff know the procedures to follow if they have any concerns. They have effective links with a range of external agencies.

Children are very confident and secure because of the strong relationships they have with staff. Children learn about how to stay safe when taking risks. Staff help children to understand that they may hurt themselves or others if they do not handle resources carefully. Parents are confident that their children are safe when attending the school.

### **Inspection findings**

- We agreed to check on the impact of leadership in maintaining the school's outstanding status. It is clear that your inspirational guidance has ensured that the school continues to go from strength to strength. Your self-evaluation is rigorous and challenging. Staff targets for improvement are aspirational.
- Governors are highly effective in holding the school to account. Governors expect the very best for the children at this school. They know that an outstanding judgement does not mean the school is perfect. They use their wide spectrum of skills to ensure that the school keeps on improving. Governors know how different groups of children are progressing. This is because of the clarity of the data presented to them by yourselves. Each governor has an area of responsibility. They visit the school frequently and focus on specific aspects of the school's provision. Governors have a deep understanding of current school issues.
- We agreed to check how well the early years pupil premium funding is spent. Yours is a very inclusive school and funds are spent effectively. Disadvantaged children with weaker skills are provided with additional help, including individual

support. This enables them to thrive and make rapid progress. Any gaps in attainment are swiftly closing.

- We decided to check whether children continue to make outstanding progress. Most children start nursery with skills and abilities that are below those typical for their age. You use assessment effectively to ensure that children make as much progress as possible. Most children make exceptional progress. By the time they leave most have reached or exceeded the expectations for their age in all areas of learning.
- Teachers plan activities that build on what the child already knows. Staff capture 'learning in the moment'. They respond carefully to the needs and interests of every child. A key feature observed was that children sustain their concentration because they find activities fascinating. For example, during the inspection children were enthralled by watching chicks hatch.
- We found that the curriculum has a very positive impact on children's academic progress and personal development. The environment is rich in literacy and mathematical resources. Trips and visitors provide a variety of fascinating experiences. Children enjoy using natural resources, for example, when doing activities in the forest school and the texture kitchen.
- We checked how well parents are involved in their children's learning. We found that the school has ensured strong support from home. Parents write about their children's learning experiences when out of school, such as visiting a zoo. Parents play a full role in completing their children's learning journeys. Staff help parents by giving suggestions about their children's next learning steps. This has ensured a seamless level of support between home and school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- school plans to develop research opportunities are implemented so that the outstanding teaching provision improves still 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 Windsor and Maidenhead. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Liz Bowes  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I held meetings with both of you, a representative from the local authority, and the chair and other members of the governing body. I went on a tour of the school,

accompanied by you both, to see the learning that was taking place. Behaviour was observed at different times of the day. I reviewed a range of documentation, including the single central record, the school's self-evaluation, and development plans. Account was taken of the responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire completed by parents, and the school's own questionnaire to staff.