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Mrs Daryl Pritchard
Headteacher
Chapel Street Nursery School
Russell Street
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Dear Mrs Pritchard

Short inspection of Chapel Street Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 1 March 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 good in February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Following the retirement of your predecessor, in the two terms you have been acting headteacher the school's safe, secure and inclusive school environment has been maintained. Parents are confident that children are happy and safe in school. Staff provide excellent support to develop pupils' confidence, resilience and readiness for their primary schooling. Vulnerable pupils flourish because of the effective teaching, care and support you provide to meet their individual needs.

Many children enter the Nursery with skills below that typical for their age and a high proportion speak little or no English. Your focus on developing early learning skills, particularly in language development, means that children settle quickly in the Nursery. You have tried to address the issue of poor attendance with some success, and you work closely with the school's family worker to ensure that children, particularly vulnerable children, develop good habits of regular attendance.

Several parents spoke to me about the excellent support and provision you provide for their children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The exceptionally skilled team who work with the children effectively develop children's confidence so they make good progress from their starting points.

Due to the short time you have been in post, you agree that some of the improvements you are initiating are not yet embedded enough for the impact to be fully realised. Two examples of work still at an early stage are the new work to develop the outdoor curriculum and work to further improve outcomes for children, particularly for disadvantaged children.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have established an excellent culture of safeguarding and security across the school. Children are looked after very well and kept safe. Records and procedures for identifying and supporting vulnerable children are documented and detailed thoroughly. Staff's commitment for keeping vulnerable pupils safe is demonstrated through the speediness of identifying children at risk, and the swiftness of adults' action in meeting their needs.

There is a strong culture of good behaviour which is reflected in the very few recorded incidents of poor behaviour. Where there have been concerns, they are thoroughly documented.

The school's family worker ensures that vulnerable children and their families are well supported. She works closely with school staff to ensure that concerns are identified and dealt with quickly.

All safer recruitment arrangements are fit for purpose and records are suitably detailed. Employees' files are generally well maintained but you agree that the paperwork could be more organised in order for leaders to access the information quickly.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was looking at how leaders measure the progress of different groups of children in areas of learning where children are typically below age-related expectation on entry. Developing children's communication and language skills is a strong focus. Children develop their confidence very quickly. Small group teaching ensures that language is at the centre of every task. Story reading and repetition of key words and phrases are integrated throughout the day. Adults make stories interesting and exciting and, as a result, children interact well with adults and are fully engrossed in their learning. During the reading of 'Handa's Surprise', for example, children were able to see and touch fruit as they listened and participated in the story. Children answered questions about the weight of the fruit and what the fruit felt like when touched.
- Scrutiny of the school's information about the progress children make and observations of adult-led activities show that children make good progress in the areas they struggle with on entry. The programmes that have been developed to support the teaching of communication and language have not only helped children develop their speech and language skills, but have also given them the confidence to want to learn. Because of this, children, particularly those whose first language is not English, and those pupils who have special educational

needs and/or disabilities, make good progress in communication and language at Chapel Street Nursery.

- You have used the early years pupil premium grant effectively to further improve the outcomes for disadvantaged children. You have invested in developing an outdoor curriculum. This has resulted in children engaging more in outdoor activities and experiences, giving them the confidence to explore and discover, taking safe risks when approaching other tasks. The children are enthusiastic and confident as they undertake activities and disadvantaged children go on to make rapid progress from their starting points. However, you identify that current children are still slightly behind other children nationally in some areas of learning.
- My second line of enquiry looked at the progress the school had made to develop children's skills in number. You have adapted the way number skills are taught to ensure that numeracy skills are integrated more widely into children's activities. The improvement was verified at the end of 2016 when more children than in previous years achieved standards in mathematics typical for their age. Current children's work demonstrates that this is continuing to improve. Small group mathematics sessions have ensured that children catch up when they fall behind. Good progress can be seen for the most able children in the newly formed 'higher achievers' group. Language skills have developed well. Children's progress and attainment have improved in number, with the majority of children achieving age-related expectation by the time they leave the Nursery. Leaders have identified that in order to get to the next level in the school's journey of improvement, consistency in the quality of teaching across the school is the next focus.
- The third line of enquiry focused on the school's work with parents. Since the previous inspection, you have successfully built on the work you do with parents. Parental support is overwhelmingly positive. Parents who spoke to me, as well as those who responded to Parent View, speak highly of the leadership of the school as well as the commitment and dedication of all staff. They are particularly positive about the support the school provides to families and the information they receive about their child's progress. Your recognition of the value of school and parent partnership is demonstrated in the united community you have developed.
- Parents are able to come to the school to share in their child's learning on many occasions. For example, 'Fun Fridays' and 'Stay and Play' sessions for parents are particularly well attended. The, 'Fathers Reading Every Day', initiative has been successful in engaging parents and family members at weekends with language-based activities which they can enjoy with their children. This enables parents to see how their children are learning and how best they can support them at home, as well as exchanging information regularly with staff. These strong links are very effective in identifying the child's next steps in learning and in many cases lead to children making rapid progress.
- My final line of enquiry looked at how well the school prepared children for their next stage of education. Children leave the Nursery to go on to a number of different primary schools. The work you do with these settings ensures that

transition is smooth, particularly for the children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Transition meetings with the local primary schools ensure that all relevant information is passed on and that children have opportunities to visit their new school. Parents speak of how their children, including those with complex needs, settled extremely well since moving on from the Nursery. One parent said their child's experiences at the Nursery 'prepared her so well for the challenges of primary school'.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to diminish the difference in attainment between children who are disadvantaged and other pupils nationally
- the effective work being carried out in numeracy continues to ensure that outcomes for children are the best that they can be
- children's attendance continues to improve
- employees' files are maintained to a high standard.

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

Yours sincerely

Cindy Impey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, the chair of governors and the family worker. I also had informal discussions with a group of parents to seek their views of the school. I met with the representative from the local authority.

I visited all the classrooms as part of my tour of the school, accompanied by you. Examples of children's work were looked at and I observed children's behaviour during activities and as they moved around the school. A number of documents were reviewed, including the single central record of employment checks, the school's self-evaluation, and records relating to the monitoring of teaching and learning.

I took account of the 46 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaires completed by parents, plus nine responses from members of staff and three text messages from parents.

The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.