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30 May 2017

Mr Luke Page  
Head of School  
Triangle Nursery School  
25 William Bonney Estate  
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London  
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Dear Mr Page

### **Short inspection of Triangle Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 1 May 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 December 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of outstanding as a result of this inspection.**

The leadership team has worked with determination during a challenging period for the school since the last inspection. You started as head of school in September 2017, and many other staff are also new this year. You quickly identified weaknesses in provision and set about working with staff and governors to make improvements. You also acted effectively to tackle falling numbers. The number of children on roll had dropped to just 47 last year, but the school is now thriving again and has significantly higher numbers on roll. You have addressed the area for improvement identified at the last inspection by promoting the further development of support staff. For example, you are mentoring a member of staff who is working for a higher qualification.

Parents, carers, staff and governors show their confidence in you and in the school. One parent, reflecting the positive views of many, commented, 'My child loves Triangle Nursery and we as parents are happy to be part of Triangle.'

The culture of the school is demonstrated by the way that you value every child and every family. Your work with parents is particularly strong, with many attending a wide range of workshops about children's early learning, emotional development and behaviour. You rightly emphasise how the school can give the most vulnerable children a flying start to their education. But, while leaders have evaluated the

different interventions which are funded by the early years pupil premium, these evaluations have not been rigorous enough. As a result, leaders do not know if the money has been well spent and focused on the right activities to help disadvantaged children.

Since the previous inspection, the federation of Triangle and Holmewood Nursery Schools has been extended with the addition of Maytree Nursery School. The three schools have an executive headteacher. You have carefully considered how to make the best use of this new partnership. Leaders and staff across all three schools work together to share expertise, with the aim of supporting all children to reach their potential.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You make all relevant checks on staff and volunteers who visit or work at the school. Governors monitor these records termly. Leaders and staff ensure that the school is a safe environment.

The school helps children to develop their own awareness of keeping themselves safe in different situations. For example, a two-year-old spent several minutes watching how children climbed a ladder. Once the other children had finished, he carefully climbed up to the top.

The school's staff are quick to notice when there have been changes in a child's circumstances or behaviour that may indicate that they are at risk. Staff know how to report any concerns they have about children. However, some staff are not able to speak confidently about key policies and procedures.

When leaders have needed to act on serious concerns about individual children, their actions have been swift. You rightly challenge external agencies if you consider their responses to be too slow, because the care and safety of every child are your priority. Parents say that their children feel safe.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed on two areas of focus. The first of these was to look at how well you are achieving the school's vision of supporting all children to become confident, self-motivated and independent learners.
- Children show their pleasure in learning and exploring as soon as they arrive in the school. They quickly become involved in a range of stimulating activities with their friends and adults. They often remain involved in their play for long periods of time. One parent commented, 'Staff put a lot of effort in to make children happy and enjoy their learning.'
- Staff have organised the environment very carefully, both inside and outdoors. This enables children to explore a wide range of different activities in different ways. For example, children enjoyed rolling and squeezing play dough. Then they began to pretend they were making cakes. One child carefully put her 'cakes' into

a muffin tray. As she did this, an adult helped her to count accurately to 12. Outdoors, a child wanted to move a large bag of sand but it was too heavy. The adult suggested taking some sand out of the bag with a scoop. After a few minutes, the child was still unable to move the bag and said, 'I need help'. The adult suggested, 'Shall we try together?' She encouraged the child to 'keep lifting' until they managed to move the bag together.

- Helping children to become better at learning underpins the school's curriculum. Adults successfully help children to develop the confidence they need to try new things and to persevere when they come across something difficult. However, occasionally, some staff do not maximise children's ability to find their own solutions to problems. Children who were planting beans outside were given so much guidance that they did not make any choices themselves. At lunchtime, adults serve the food and pour out water for the children. This means that children do not have a chance to develop these skills for themselves and become more independent.
- The next area we looked at was how you use the early years pupil premium. This is the additional funding which the school receives for disadvantaged children. We agreed to focus on how you use this to promote children's communication skills and their early learning about reading and writing.
- You have used the early years pupil premium to offer regular music therapy sessions to help children to improve their communication. One parent who particularly appreciated this told me: 'My child had music therapy. Now she's different. If staff hadn't suggested that, I wouldn't have thought of it. She is speaking now.'
- Staff listen carefully to children and make time for conversations. For example, you showed me a note about one child's response to 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. The child said, 'The bears live happy ever after. Goldilocks needs to say sorry and then she be happy ever after too.' This approach is helping children to develop their confidence in sharing ideas, and it fosters their love of books.
- However, when we observed children as they played and learned in the morning session, we only saw one child briefly looking at a book. Children have a regular story time at the end of every session, but the school is not maximising the opportunities for disadvantaged children to make progress in their literacy.
- We reviewed a small number of records of children's learning, which are carefully maintained and well illustrated with photographs. The records showed how children take part in many different types of activities to help them with the early stages of writing. For example, one child started by making very big lines with a paintbrush and with his fingers in a tray of shaving foam. As he developed his confidence, he began to use pens and pencils to draw on smaller pieces of paper using a clipboard. However, assessments of children's writing which are completed by different adults are occasionally inconsistent and inaccurate. This means that adults do not always adapt early writing activities for individual children to ensure that they are highly challenging.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they evaluate the early years pupil premium rigorously to check that initiatives are boosting the progress of disadvantaged children, particularly in literacy
- assessments of children's early writing are made consistently and accurately so that staff are able to adapt activities to ensure that they are sufficiently challenging.

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

Yours sincerely

Julian Grenier  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I held meetings with you and your executive headteacher to evaluate the quality of children's education, including their development and achievement over time. I reviewed a range of documentation related to safeguarding, improvement planning and assessments of children's skills and understanding. I held a meeting and a telephone discussion with members of the governing body. I also spoke to the school's local authority adviser. Together with leaders, I visited the nursery rooms and the garden to observe children as they played and learned. I spoke with children while they were playing and looked at records of their learning over time. I spoke to some staff members about their understanding of safeguarding procedures in the school. I considered parents' views of the school during discussions with a parent governor and through 17 written comments from parents.