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Mr Simon Holmes  
Headteacher  
St Philips Marsh Nursery School and Barton Hill Children's Centre/Cashmore Early Years Centre  
Albert Crescent  
St Philip's Marsh  
Bristol  
BS2 0SU

Dear Mr Holmes

### **Short inspection of St Philips Marsh Nursery School and Barton Hill Children's Centre/Cashmore Early Years Centre**

Following my visit to the school on 19 September 2017 with Claire Mirams, Ofsted Inspector, 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 September 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education at St Philips Marsh since the last inspection. At the same time, it has also led successfully in the reopening of Cashmore Early Years Centre and Nursery which also provides a good quality of education. This is testament to your highly committed leadership team, including governors, and all staff members. They are passionate about providing the best possible quality education for young children within the Barton Hill and wider area.

Both St Philips Marsh and Cashmore nurseries are pivotal to the well-being and early education of the children who attend. Parents talk enthusiastically about the 'wonderful, stimulating, exciting and engaging environment for everyone'. The richness and diversity of the local community is clearly reflected in the work of the school. For example, all the children experience the thrill of Christmas, the challenge of eating with chopsticks and the lively Eid celebrations. Parents cannot praise both nurseries highly enough. They enthusiastically report that not only are staff 'brilliant', but they 'are making a huge positive difference to this world' through the way in which they treat each child and help them to develop as individuals.

The relentless drive towards excellence is evident at all levels of leadership. At the time of the previous inspection, the school was asked to further extend the children's understanding of early reading, writing and mathematical skills. You and your senior leaders responded swiftly to this. The responsibilities of the early years practitioners

have been restructured and their ways of working reorganised. All children are allocated a key person responsible for teaching them in small groups. You ensured that your early years practitioners received high-quality training that enabled them to effectively and confidently develop children's learning. You know that there is still work to do to ensure that interactions between adults and children are consistently of a high standard.

Organising practical workshops and providing useful booklets for parents have also improved the support they give their children at home with learning. As a result, children's progress in early reading, writing and mathematical skills has accelerated over the past three years. Children leave both nurseries well-prepared for the next stage of their education. Given that your children transfer to school in the middle of their foundation stage curriculum, you and your leaders are eager to use their Reception outcomes to make further improvements to provision.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Both nursery schools have an impressive culture of safeguarding, which shines as a beacon within the local community. Very close working partnerships with specialist agencies, organisations and charities, such as the Barton Hill Settlement, ensure that the families who attend the nurseries are supported through a strong team approach.

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 detailed checks to any visitors to the school site, ensure that the children are never put at risk. Staff and governors are very well trained and are quick to act on any potential signs of abuse, radicalisation, extremism or child sexual exploitation. Careful monitoring of extended holiday plans, and partnership agreement between home and school, protects the children from illegal practices.

Children new to the nurseries settle in quickly and rapidly gain confidence. This is because they feel secure and well cared for. The breakfast and after-school clubs also enable them to be kept safe if their parents are at work, involved in training or need extra help looking after their children.

The five parents who responded to the online inspection questionnaire and the parents that inspectors spoke to all agree that the nursery schools keep their children safe. Their views can be summed up by one parent who explained that the children are loved and cared for by all the staff.

### **Inspection findings**

- My first line of enquiry was to explore the ways in which you and your staff had further developed children's reading skills. Your early years practitioners promote well children's understanding of the sounds that different letters make using lots of different stories and fun songs. Reorganising the way that books are stored and creating stimulating library areas have ensured that all reading resources are fully accessible for children and their parents to share and enjoy both at school and at

home. Consequently, children confidently turn pages of books and recognise simple words.

- Specialist training from speech therapists has helped early years practitioners develop well the speaking skills of those children who use English as an additional language and those who find difficulty communicating. Individual and small group work successfully enables these children to gain confidence using a basic understanding of key words.
- My second line of enquiry was to find out how you had successfully improved the children's early mark-making and writing skills. Providing opportunities for children to make marks both indoors and in the outdoor learning areas has enabled children to understand how to communicate using marks. Children develop how to use their hands to hold pencils, pens, paint, chalk and sticks to create marks. Adults constantly model the importance of communicating through writing little sticky notes and always ensuring that there are lots of posters and signs up and around the nurseries.
- Until recently, the information you collect on the progress that children make indicated that boys did not do as well as girls. You and your senior leadership team are particularly proud of the way in which you have improved boys' skills. They are now progressing at a faster rate than girls because they are provided with a wide range of role play activities, particularly outdoors. For example, boys enjoy pretending to be 'superheroes' such as Batman and Robin and extend their vocabulary through play. They quickly gain confidence with their speaking skills, eagerly engage in mark-making activities and enjoy reading books about their chosen theme.
- My final line of enquiry was to explore how you had achieved a significant improvement in the mathematical development of the children. Your skilled early years practitioners made effective use of every available opportunity to promote mathematical vocabulary. For example, at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions, the children help the adults to count the numbers of boys and girls in attendance. Snack times are used well as an opportunity to demonstrate mathematical language such as halves, quarters, in front and behind. Tidy-up time has been creatively turned into a sorting activity where children take responsibility for returning all the resources to the correct storage place.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- build on the close links between the nurseries and the schools that the children transfer to so that outcomes at the end of Reception can be used to inform future planning
- ensure that all interactions between early years practitioners adults and children are consistently of 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 Bristol City. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

We met with you and your deputy headteacher and discussed improvements made since the last inspection and the school's self-evaluation. We looked at the safeguarding records and explored your recruitment and vetting procedures. We also held discussions with two governors, including the chair of the governing body and met with two middle leaders. Together we visited both nursery sites 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 and spoke to some parents. I also visited the Barton Hill Settlement. I took account of five responses from Parent View, the online inspection questionnaire, and considered the comments that had been submitted by text. I also took into consideration the questionnaire response from 10 members of staff.