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Ms Stella Smith
Headteacher
Falconbrook Primary School
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Dear Ms Smith

Short inspection of Falconbrook Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 2 March 2016, 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 May 2011.

This school continues to be good.

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

Swiftly, following your appointment as headteacher in April 2015, and with good support from the local authority, you have created a strong leadership team. Two interim leaders, brokered through the local authority, are supporting the school on a part-time basis as you recruit a new deputy headteacher following the retirement of the substantive deputy headteacher last term. You have a clear vision for ongoing school improvement and are well supported by senior leaders and an effective governing body.

Together with members of the governing body, you have made well-defined changes to the governance structure and reviewed the role of teaching assistants to ensure that pupils benefit from high-quality learning experiences. You have improved systems and procedures in a short space of time and are clear that only the best is good enough.

Since the last inspection, the school has continued to focus on the areas identified for improvement. Pupils' progress has accelerated in the early years and more children attained a good level of development (the expected standard) at the end of the Reception Year compared with the national averages in 2013, 2014 and 2015.

The new early years baseline confirms your own judgements that most children join the school with skills and knowledge below what is typical for their age. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 has risen steadily over recent years. In 2015, standards in reading and writing were above the national averages and broadly in line with the national average in mathematics. The school has made good progress in these areas. At the end of Year 6, attainment in reading and mathematics has not improved and results dipped in 2015. You were quick to respond to this and have already reviewed the school's approach to teaching reading and mathematics. You openly reflect that there is further work to be done, particularly in improving teaching in mathematics and reading where it is not yet ensuring higher proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment at the end of each key stage. Current assessments for Year 6 pupils are indicating that more pupils are on track to reach these higher levels, matching the 2015 national figures.

Since 2014, attendance has stalled. In 2015, at 95.3% it was below the national average. The school purchases good support from the local authority and school attendance panels are now firmly established. Although these panels have resulted in improved attendance for the families who engage, it is too soon to see their impact on current whole-school attendance figures. You and your team are aware that improving whole-school attendance further remains a priority.

Safeguarding is effective.

Staff and governors make sure that safeguarding arrangements have the highest priority. These arrangements are fit for purpose and recent safeguarding audits have ensured they are kept continually under review. Records are detailed and include a chronology or overview of key events and actions. Visitors are issued with clear guidance on arrival, outlining safeguarding responsibilities and how to report concerns. Vigilant checks are made of newly recruited staff and they have undertaken appropriate safeguarding training.

Pupils spoken to during the visit unanimously said that they feel safe because they are taught about the network of trusted people they can talk to. The site is well maintained and secure. Pupils move calmly and purposefully around the building and between activities.

Inspection findings

- Teaching has remained good because you have provided good-quality training and guidance for staff, including teaching assistants. This training has included effective support from your local authority school improvement partner, and literacy and mathematics specialists; it has been successful in further developing and improving the quality of teaching. As a result, there has been ongoing improvement in attainment at Key Stage 1 and in the proportion of children attaining the expected standard at the end of the Reception Year.

- Middle leaders contribute to the improvements identified. They look at assessment information and the work in pupils' books, observe teaching and provide feedback to staff, further supporting pupils' achievements. This helps them determine how well pupils are progressing and where the strengths and areas for improvement lie in their different areas of responsibility.
- The leader for the early years has enhanced children's learning journals to include a valuable, visual record of the home visit. This is encouraging further parental input and a stronger sense of ownership by the children of their records of learning. Children's learning journals show the range of activities and skills taught and provide leaders, staff, parents and the children with a valuable record of the progress made. They clearly identify the next steps for each child's development.
- In reading and mathematics, only a small proportion of pupils are reaching the higher levels of attainment at the end of each key stage. You have already identified this as a school priority and are taking effective action to address it.
- Recent whole-school training on the teaching of reading has resulted in clearly planned guided reading sessions. These sessions include tasks which are matched to the different starting points of pupils and introduce pupils to a wide range of texts. In mathematics, teachers plan to support and challenge pupils but, at times, pupils spend too long practising mathematical operations that they have already grasped. Teachers do not always ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop their mathematical reasoning and understanding through the application of these skills in solving increasingly complex problems.
- Teachers use the school's marking policy well to support pupils' progress in their writing. Although progress is good in mathematics, this practice is less evident in pupils' mathematics books, so inconsistencies remain in the application of the school's recently introduced marking policy. Poor presentation skills are also evident in some books; you are aware of the need to tighten up and review school expectations in this area.
- Governors are committed to supporting and continuing to move the school forward. They have reviewed their skills set and reconstituted the governing body to ensure they have the appropriate balance of expertise. As a result, eight highly skilled governors have joined the experienced and recently expanded governing body. They are using their personal skills and expertise to check on the different areas of the school's work and performance, and are ensuring that their visits are directly linked to planned school improvement priorities.
- Pupils have a good understanding of British values and their spiritual, moral and social development remains strong. Pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of racial harmony and showing respect for different faiths and

cultures. This was clearly demonstrated in the good relationships seen in classes and around the school. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the visits and visitors who enrich the curriculum and how they are taught to keep themselves safe. They enjoy finding out about the kings and queens of England, sharing their learning about King Charles and recounting their visit to the Tower of London. Older pupils talked enthusiastically about their planned trip to the Globe Theatre.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they improve the quality of teaching in mathematics so that lessons challenge and support more pupils to reach the higher levels of attainment at the end of each key stage
- school attendance rises for all pupil groups and is consistently in line with or above the national average.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for the London Borough of Wandsworth. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jean Thwaites
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, another senior leader, the school business manager and teachers who lead on the school's literacy, mathematics and early years provision. I met with a representative from the local authority, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors. I considered the views of a small sample of parents as recorded on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the outcomes of a pupil questionnaire. I also considered the 17 questionnaires completed by members of staff. You and I visited classrooms together to observe pupils in their lessons and look at their work. I spoke informally to parents at the beginning of the school day and met with a group of pupils. I evaluated the school development plan, performance information and other records, including those related to safeguarding.