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Monica Kitchlew-Wilson  
Headteacher  
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London  
SW17 9TJ

Dear Mrs Kitchlew-Wilson

### **Short inspection of Furzedown Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 14 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 June 2013.

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

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

Together with senior leaders and governors, you have developed a positive and inclusive vision for the school that is supported by all. You have created a caring and nurturing ethos where good behaviour and trying hard are valued. You and your leaders are reflective and your self-evaluation is accurate. You are quick to respond and make changes to improve learning across the school.

The previous inspection identified the need to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, ensuring that pupils had more opportunities to think for themselves and develop independent working skills. You have addressed this by ensuring that teachers work with and observe each other regularly, so that they can share best practice. You have developed effective, whole-school tracking systems to help teachers understand pupils' needs and plan appropriate activities that ensure that they make good or better progress. You have ensured that pupils are given appropriate opportunities to work on their own and in groups, resulting in time for deep, individual thinking and time to share ideas with others.

Governors know the school well. They provide effective support and a good level of challenge to you and other school leaders. They are ambitious for the school and have developed their skills and expertise further. They regularly visit classes and talk to parents, pupils and staff to gather their views. This helps inform their decisions.

Pupils are very happy at school. They feel well supported with their learning and told me that they felt safe and well cared for by staff. Pupils perform significant roles in the school, including being 'bully buddies' and school councillors. They take pride in their roles and know the important contribution they make to the school.

The vast majority of parents are very positive about the school. They appreciate what the school does to support them and their children. One parent told me, 'this school is like a family'. Parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire reported that the school is a welcoming place and they value the way it is led and managed.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are in place and are fit for purpose. The school maintains comprehensive and thorough records that are of a high quality, including referrals made to external agencies. The safeguarding culture at the school is strong. Staff are well trained and they understand their responsibilities around issues such as the 'Prevent' duty, female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation. They are vigilant and quick to spot any changes in the behaviour of pupils who may be at risk. You have established effective support groups to ensure that parents, particularly those from vulnerable communities, are aware of, and are informed about, safeguarding issues.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of contexts. Older pupils are aware of different types of bullying and abuse and recognise what to do to keep themselves safe online. They understand how to raise concerns relating to their safety and well-being. Robust school logs and records confirm this. Pupils say that they feel safe at school because, as one pupil explained, 'the adults are always here to help and look after us'.

### **Inspection findings**

- I began by investigating how effective leaders' actions are in making sure that disadvantaged pupils make enough progress to ensure that they reach expected standards in phonics by the end of key stage 1, and in science, mathematics, English grammar, punctuation and spelling by the end of key stage 2. You and your leaders know pupils well and quickly identify issues that might prevent them from learning well. You have put effective strategies in place to help close the gaps between some disadvantaged pupils and others. You have added an additional teacher to each year group and specialist teaching assistants have been trained to deliver specific support. The impact of this is regularly checked to ensure that pupils meet their ambitious targets. The majority of current pupils are now making good progress.
- Phonics has a high profile in the school. As a result of frequent, focused teaching, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are making progress in line with others.
- The science curriculum has been revised and is now more challenging. As a result, pupils engage well in a range of activities that allow them to think hard

and test their ideas. Pupils are applying these skills to other subjects across the curriculum, particularly mathematics.

- You have introduced a new approach to the teaching of mathematics. Teachers have received well-considered training and, as a result, they are now more confident in and proficient at teaching mathematical skills and providing opportunities for all pupils to solve problems and develop reasoning skills.
- You recently made the decision to group pupils by ability for mathematics sessions. This has proved an effective strategy for the most able and the least able mathematicians. The most able flourish because they are challenged and develop the knowledge needed to work on their own. The least able are well supported and have time to apply and practise new learning. However, it has been less effective for pupils in the middle-ability groups, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This group has made less progress than its peers. This is because the level of challenge is not always appropriate. Sometimes, pupils lose interest in their learning when activities are either too difficult or too easy. The school has rightly identified this as an area to address so that these pupils do not fall further behind their peers.
- There has been a strong focus on learning multiplication tables and number bonds across the school. This, together with an emphasis on talking about mathematics, has ensured that pupils' mental mathematics and reasoning skills have improved. Those working at higher levels are confident problem solvers and self-checkers who can identify number patterns quickly and manipulate algebra and fractions well. Pupils reported that they enjoyed mathematics most when it was challenging.
- The writing curriculum has a strong focus on developing the skills of spelling, punctuation, handwriting and grammar. As a result, the quality of writing seen in literacy books was of a good standard for the majority of pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, this good standard is not transferred across all subject areas because teachers do not insist that pupils continue to write, spell and punctuate to the same high standard.
- I explored the actions that leaders are taking to ensure that pupils with prior middle and high attainment at the end of the Reception class made good progress by the end of key stage 1. This was because, in 2016, this group did not make progress in line with this same group nationally.
- The effective phonics programme, together with the high profile given to reading, ensures that pupils now make good progress. Pupils could confidently demonstrate how to use phonics to decode unfamiliar words. They enjoy reading and read regularly to adults. The school's tracking system shows that they are developing reading skills in line with national expectations and prior attainment.
- Although the school's phonics teaching supports spelling well, at key stage 1, teachers do not always check carefully enough to see that pupils form letters correctly. As a result, incorrect formation is accepted because it looks correct. This needs to be addressed in order to ensure that pupils develop neat handwriting that does not slow them down as they progress through the school.
- Finally, I considered how effective leaders' actions have been in improving

attendance and reducing persistent absence for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. I found that the attendance of some pupils is below the national average but absence is almost exclusively related to complex medical needs. Pupils are very well supported and encouraged to attend school regularly. The school works well to help those who experience occasional difficulties, usually caused by temporary housing arrangements. Overall, pupils' attendance is in line with, and for many groups better than, the national average.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- expectations for writing in all subjects are as high as they are in literacy
- the challenge for pupils with mathematical abilities typical for their age is demanding enough to ensure that more of them are working at greater depth by the end of each key stage.

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

Yours sincerely

Lou Anderson  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

- In every class, I jointly observed learning and scrutinised pupils' work across the school with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- I visited lessons, talked to pupils about their learning and listened to them read.
- I talked to pupils in all year groups, in classes and less formally in the playground and lunch hall about their experiences of school and discussed their awareness of how to keep themselves safe.
- I held meetings with you, leaders at all levels and two governors.
- I held informal discussions with parents in the playground at the beginning of the day.
- I considered 117 responses to Ofsted's online survey Parent View and 63 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- I scrutinised documentation including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, documentation relating to safeguarding procedures, the single

central register of recruitment checks, information relating to pupils' progress, information relating to behaviour and attendance and minutes of governing body meetings.