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Mr Gary Wilder OBE  
Executive Headteacher  
Furze Infants' School  
Bennett Road  
Chadwell Heath  
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RM6 6ES

Dear Mr Wilder

### **Short inspection of Furze Infants' 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 good in September 2013.

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

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a full section 5 inspection.

You and the leadership team have established an atmosphere which is calm and extremely welcoming. Furze Infants' School is a harmonious and joyful place for pupils to learn. Staff are committed to ensuring that pupils have the very best experience in an environment which is safe and secure. They achieve this despite the limited space available for whole-school activities.

You have tackled, successfully, the areas identified for improvement at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers use assessment information well to ensure that pupils make strong progress. Pupils' books show that they use the high-quality guidance given by their teachers to improve their work. Middle leaders have developed their roles and responsibilities effectively. They have designed a curriculum that ensures learning is interesting and appealing to all pupils. You hold middle leaders to account so that the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment in their areas of responsibility improve. You and other senior leaders also regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning across the school. You use the findings of this monitoring to identify, accurately, the future training needs of staff. Strong teachers share best practice effectively, so that the quality of teaching overall is

constantly meeting pupils' needs. Work with the federation junior school staff has increased this capacity to support Furze Infants' School teachers to improve their classroom practice. As a result, teachers, particularly those new to the profession, are developing effective classroom skills. Leaders have rightly identified that they need to use the successful coaching method they have introduced more widely to improve teaching further, so that standards remain high across the school.

Governors speak confidently about the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are committed to ensuring that pupils are kept safe, achieve highly and have their views heard. They monitor the work of the school effectively. For example, they have a clear overview of the impact of the pupil premium spending, and how this is ensuring that those pupils entitled are having access to the wider curriculum offer. They have an understanding of the school's changing population and how this is something to celebrate. They share leaders' aims that children have high ambitions for themselves, and continue to thrive.

Pupils' behaviour for learning is very positive. They listen attentively and respectfully to each other. Pupils show they respect all adults in the way they respond in lessons and around the school. In class, they are eager to share their learning with visitors. In all areas of the school, children are happy and show they like being around each other. They have high ambitions for themselves. For example, one pupil wants to be an architect and knows they need to be good at mathematics. Another wants to be an author, so that they can share amazing words with others. They say the head of school knows all their names and is very kind. They are extremely proud to be at Furze Infants' School.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

School safeguarding records are up to date and fit for purpose. Leaders, including governors, have a clear oversight of the procedures and policies. As a result, they ensure that training for staff fully reflects statutory guidance. Staff know the importance of sharing information, so no child slips through the net. Information is shared effectively with the federation junior school so that families can be supported through the transition from infant school, if required. Staff, governor and volunteer vetting is robust. This ensures that suitable people are working with children. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using online technology. They appreciate the work the staff do to keep them safe. One pupil said: 'Everyone, especially the teachers and dinner ladies, help us feel safe.'

### **Inspection findings**

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed three lines of enquiry. The first was about how leaders are working to decrease the numbers of pupils who are persistently absent from school. In 2017, this figure was above the national average.
- Leaders could show that, last year, a larger than usual number of pupils were absent due to an outbreak of chicken pox. This affected overall attendance

figures. The school's robust systems ensure that information regarding any absence is shared quickly. An attendance officer is employed to work across the two federation schools. Pupils who may be at risk of dropping below 95% attendance are identified so that families can be supported to prevent any further decline in attendance. An extensive range of strategies has resulted in a 2% drop in the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent. For example, the school's work around engaging parents and carers in the importance of their children attending school regularly has had a positive effect. As a result, attendance is currently 96%, which is an increase on last year.

- I also explored how the school uses the funding for disadvantaged pupils to ensure that these pupils achieve as highly as they can. This is because the proportion of disadvantaged pupils working at the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics was lower than the national average in 2017.
- Leaders ensure that pupil premium funding is used to support not just academic progress, but also pupils' social and emotional development. This is a real strength of the school and benefits the learning of the pupils who are eligible for support. This, together with additional teaching groups for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, is helping to improve their confidence. As a result, pupils have time to improve their skills so they can successfully tackle challenges and work at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have ensured that disadvantaged pupils' progress is a high priority for all. At the pupil progress meetings, gaps in learning are identified. These are then addressed through well-targeted support by a team of highly trained support staff. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make strong progress in English and mathematics across the school. Leaders continue to track the progress of the most able disadvantaged pupils, and current information indicates that a greater proportion of these pupils are on track to exceed national expectations.
- I also assessed how well pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported. This was in order to understand how leaders ensure that this group of pupils across the school make strong progress from their starting points.
- The school makes excellent use of expertise, including educational psychologists, speech and language therapists and counsellors. The information they provide enables teachers to meet pupils' individual needs well through well-planned lessons. The provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is highly effective, and has resulted in some pupils making substantial progress over time.
- Through the inspection, lesson observations and work in books showed that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are taught well. For example, I saw a number of pupils thoroughly enjoy sessions where they were learning to take turns in communicating with adults. The 'What have I got in my bin?' lesson brought squeals of delight from the pupils. Some pupils have individual work stations to help support their learning. Teachers also ensure that these pupils are fully included in class activities, where appropriate. The school works closely with parents to ensure that they understand how to support their children to make strong progress from their starting points. These pupils are well prepared for the

next stage of their education as a result of the excellent transition work between the federation schools.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they extend the use of the successful strategies used to improve teaching more widely across the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Sara Morgan  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with the executive headteacher and senior leadership team to review the school's self-evaluation, agree the key foci of the inspection and plan the inspection activities. I visited classes with the head of school to observe pupils' learning and to look at their work. With middle leaders and the head of school, I scrutinised a number of pupils' books, alongside assessment information, from across the school. I talked to members of the school council and listened to pupils' views in classes and around the school. I met with the vice chair of governors, a local authority adviser and the designated safeguarding officer. I evaluated a range of school documents, including the single central register, and considered the 22 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. I also considered the one response to the pupil questionnaire and the 11 responses to the staff questionnaire.