



# **Objective Professional Development Review**

## **Furzeham Primary and Nursery School**

**08/02/24**

This OPD review was carried out by Incyte International.  
The review uses the evaluation and criteria stated in the relevant and current  
inspection framework to help ensure objectivity and consistency.

# Introduction

## OPD Review team

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## Information about this review

The review was carried out by two external consultants on behalf of Incyte International.

- The on-site review took place over one day.
- The review activities included:
  - a focus on Phonics, Modelled Writing, Early Years and Science.
  - professional dialogue took place between Headteacher, Deputy Head and leaders responsible for phases and the areas focused on.
  - the observations for learning and teaching took place in nine lessons jointly with senior leaders,
  - discussions took place between the reviewers with groups and individual pupils during lessons and in arranged meetings with parents,
  - analysis of pupils' work during lessons and separately took place as part of in-depth evaluation of Writing, Maths and Science.
- The reviewers observed pupils' behaviour and attitudes in lessons, meetings, at break and lunchtimes including observations of any safeguarding practice. documentation was analysed before and during the review including: a copy of the School Development Plan and Self Evaluation Report

## Information about the academy/school

- Furzeham Primary and Nursery School is a one-form entry primary school located in the centre of Brixham in the Torbay region of the south west. There are currently 250 pupils on roll. The school is for children aged 3 to 11 years, which includes a nursery along with breakfast and after school club provision..
- Furzeham Primary and Nursery School joined the Thinking Schools Academy Trust in November 2022.
- Transience for 22/23 was 8% which is in line with national levels.
- The percentage of children on the SEN register, including those with statements and EHC plans is 11%, which is slightly below national levels. 1.6% have EHCPs with further plans having been recently submitted.
- The school is situated within a census ward of average deprivation (0.22) which is slightly above the national average. 31% of the school's population is in receipt of Pupil Premium funding.

**Date of the last Ofsted report: 1 May 2019 (Prior to conversion to Academy)**  
**The school was judged to be Good**

**Last Ofsted report:**

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - improving communication with parents so that there is an increased confidence about how leaders respond to their concerns and a better understanding of the school's approaches to managing inappropriate behaviour.
  - ensuring that current assessment systems provide leaders with accurate information on the progress made by pupils with SEND.
- Eradicate any incidents of low-level disruptive behaviour by ensuring that pupils are engaged in activities appropriate for their starting points.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that pupils' outcomes are raised further by:
  - extending pupils' vocabulary and developing their understanding of words in different subjects and contexts to help them understand what they have read,
  - improving the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation.

# Summary Findings

This is an exceptional school. Leaders are unwavering in their drive for excellence. The school has exceptionally high expectations for all pupils and staff. All want pupils to achieve their very best, and they consistently do. This includes disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Since Furzeham's previous Ofsted Inspection leaders have rightly focused on securing consistency of assessment for all groups of pupils across the wider curriculum. They have been successful in this with self and peer assessment taking place within all lessons. Leaders have also engaged in a process of producing documentation to support the teaching of the broader curriculum and now have a clear plan for completing it for all subjects.

The early years provision is excellent. It is the bedrock of the school. Children have an exceptional start to their education.

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They love school and enjoy attending regularly. They are a pleasure to speak to. Pupils are friendly, welcoming, and proud of their school. Lessons are calm, orderly, and free from disruption. The purposeful and positive relationships between staff and pupils are a joy to observe. Pupils are confident that their teachers will deal swiftly with any issues should they arise.

Leaders are reflective and welcomed the next steps which were identified during this review.

## Main report

### The Quality of Education

#### Curriculum Vision – Intent

- Leaders have adopted a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all pupils the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. The curriculum intent for Furzeham is based on the 'key pillars' of Creativity, Coastal, Community and Communication. It matches the needs of the local community and provides pupils with regular opportunities to achieve success.
- The school's curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning. Leaders confidently articulate this progression using a set of tiered curriculum documentation which shows learning journeys for pupils between the ages of 3 and 11. A next step for the school is to further develop its curriculum by creating documentation highlighting progression in each of the school's 'Key Pillars'. There is an opportunity to link this to the Department of Education's guidance on character education.
- Pupils at Furzeham have opportunities to study a broad and balanced curriculum. The strength of the quality of learning offered to pupils was highlighted in positive parent comments such as, 'From pre-school onwards all teachers are involved in the teaching of my son, and they provide experiences that motivate him and develop him as a curious learner'.
- Leaders have a strong commitment to providing a curriculum which is successfully adapted to be ambitious and meets the individual needs of all pupils. This intent is clearly recognised by staff who adapt their teaching to meet the diverse needs of pupils, as demonstrated by the whole school teaching of focused and purposeful interventions, which often provide older children and their peers with reading support. It is also recognised by parents who comment,

'My son has been taught as an individual. I trust that teachers have his best interests at heart, as they embrace him for who he is'.

## **Implementing the vision**

- The work provided to pupils is ambitious and enables them to meet the aims of the school's vision. Lessons allow pupils to cumulatively build knowledge within regular opportunities, including making explicit links with real life situations, and the consistent use of 'cold calling', providing ample opportunity to recall prior learning. Opportunities for self and peer assessment are consistently embedded for all groups of learners in all lessons. A next step for the school is to develop opportunities for pupils to evaluate their learning over time, for example by using writing progress walls, and to further develop the use of knowledge organisers to support pupils' retention of key learning.
- Staff have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and are provided with effective professional development to support any identified needs. Staff's subject knowledge allows them to present subject knowledge clearly, systematically check pupils' understanding and provide clear guidance on next steps. In most subjects, they are supported by clear curriculum documentation, which is now being developed for all curriculum areas. The impact of this was observed across several lessons, including a Year 2 Science lesson where the teacher's effective questioning encouraged pupils to reflect on their prior learning, generated ambitious vocabulary such as, 'A prediction is a scientific guess' and 'as scientists we test and observe'. Similar levels of support were identified in all lessons, with all adults making strong contributions to learning.
- Teachers create enriching environments with a focus on providing opportunities to foster an enjoyment of learning. During the review, examples of this included role play opportunities, developed from the book 'Room on the Broom' and a photograph of a 9-foot tuna! Resources are accessed by pupils through well-established routines, which demonstrate high expectations for their behaviour and conduct.
- In many cases, teachers adopt their learning within lessons to ensure that pupils move onto the next stage of their learning as soon as they are ready. A next step for the school is to continue to develop resourcing and curriculum documentation, based on the strong practice identified in subjects that were reviewed, to ensure that high quality learning continues to be provided across the breadth of the curriculum.

## **Pupils' academic achievement and personal development– Impact**

- Pupils develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve well. This is reflected in high quality work that pupils produce in their books and for display in vibrant shared areas. This is clear in the dining hall which showcases a selection of high-quality creative work and displays highlighting opportunities to discuss topics such as tolerance and healthy lifestyles. Impact of learning is also reflected in results from national tests, which show positive progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' strong academic achievement is supported by their consistently high levels of respect for others. They play a highly positive role in creating a school environment in which commonalities are identified and celebrated, difference is valued and nurtured, and bullying, harassment and violence are never tolerated.
- At Furzeham, pupils consistently have highly positive attitudes and commitment to their education. Their motivation and persistence in the face of difficulties was highlighted through

discussions with leaders. It was also evidenced by comments such as, 'I enjoy supporting my friends in lessons as it is important that everybody learns.'

- All staff oversee a wide range of activities to support pupil's personal needs and modifications are made to individual provision to ensure that all can succeed. Pupils' personal development is further strengthened through the school's effective PSHE scheme, which includes opportunities to explore a range of pertinent issues. PSHE sessions provide regular opportunities for collective reflection and act as a stimulus for discussion of a wide range of cultural, social, and curricular topics. Recent examples of this work have seen pupils discussing how to deal with emotions and the importance of female role models. Focus on personal development has led to pupils having a strong sense of pride in their school. As a Year 1 pupil stated, 'everybody at this school is very kind'.

## Phonics

- The leadership team has worked closely with staff to develop a systematic pathway for the teaching of phonics across the curriculum, where all pupils are provided with opportunities to develop a breadth of skills which extend their prior learning. Leaders' robust strategies to develop phonics and reading continues to raise pupils' acquisition of knowledge, which is leading to positive outcomes across the curriculum.
- The school retains a sharp focus on ensuring that younger children, and those at the early stages of reading, gain the phonics knowledge and comprehension necessary to read and the skills to communicate. Routines for the teaching of phonics are well embedded across the school, including regular high quality assessment for all pupils. The use of language and images is consistent in all classes, which supports children making positive transitions as they move throughout school.
- Communication is a strength and results in staff and pupils clearly understanding the vision to develop a strong reading ethos across the school. A continued focus for leaders is to further promote phonics with the small number of parents who have limited engagement with school.

## Modelled Writing

- The teaching of writing is a strength at the school. Through the delivery of carefully planned teaching sequences, based on the 'talk for writing' approach, staff ensure that pupils can build on their prior knowledge and understanding to develop high quality writing skills.
- A strong standard of teacher subject knowledge, which is consistently demonstrated through the adaptation of learning activities, supports pupils of all abilities to make progress within writing lessons. This is supported by clear and consistent opportunities for peer and self-assessment. Strong practice was evidenced in early years lessons where clear routines, engaging activities and positive relationships produced inquisitive learners who were proud to show visitors their writing progress. This led to comments such as, 'I'm writing this sentence – I love my mum' and 'I am writing about a journey into space to capture moonmaids'.
- Learning environments, including outdoor spaces, are used well to support the development of pupils' writing skills and encourage their independence. A next step for leaders is to provide all staff with opportunities to observe this strong practice and to continue to moderate writing with other Trust schools.

## Mathematics

- Using the TSAT curriculum, teachers deliver maths lessons which provide pupils with the opportunities to acquire new knowledge and to apply their reasoning and problem-solving skills. The maths leader has worked closely with staff to embed the TSAT curriculum across

the school, focusing on the provision of retrieval activities and the provision of regular peer and self-assessment activities for all learners.

- Teachers' strong subject knowledge, demonstrated through their adept modelling and scaffolding of new methods, ensure that pupils quickly acquire the skills needed to extend their learning. Pupils talk confidently about their learning in maths, sharing that retrieval activities 'are important as they help us to remember what we did at the start of the year'.
- Throughout the school, pupils are actively engaged in their learning and are provided opportunities to explain their thinking. This was demonstrated in a Year 5 class where a pupil clearly explained the long division method and in a Year 2 lesson where a pupil explained, 'we use our calculations to help us solve problems'.
- In lessons, teachers' confidently use their ongoing assessment to ensure that they address misconceptions. This involves a rigorous approach to the teaching of vocabulary and the consistent application of written methods and visual representation.

## Science

- The school's Science curriculum has been carefully designed to provide pupils with a series of progressive learning experiences to develop their knowledge and skills. Coherently planned lessons, which incorporate Furzeham's Key Pillars of learning, provide pupils with regular opportunities to recall their prior learning and apply it in new contexts.
- A strength of the curriculum is the development of clear learning journeys for pupils from nursery to Year 6. These provide pupils with progressively more challenging vocabulary to articulate their learning. Lessons have a clear focus on the skills of scientific exploration, leading to pupils articulating phrases such as, 'a prediction is a scientific guess' and 'the best scientists test and observe'.
- Teacher's strong subject knowledge, which is developed through well targeted professional development, allows them to provide precise guidance and challenging questions, to further accelerate progress. Pupils value the opportunities for self and peer assessment to reflect on their learning. For example, when discussing a teacher's guidance a Year 6 pupil stated, 'I was encouraged to research the side effects of alcohol and smoking, which allowed me to fully understand the negative impact of these habits.'
- Pupils' pride in their scientific learning is increased by their regular opportunities for reflection and the effective use of stimulating resources. Activities are regularly linked to pupils' real-life experiences, and they regularly work collaboratively to increase their understanding of this subject.
- The next stage for leaders is to continue to implement a similar standard of curriculum planning in all subject areas.

## Early Years

- Children in the early years make the best possible start to their lives at Furzeham School. Provision in this phase is excellent and is a bedrock of the school which ensures that children have an exceptional start to their education.
- Children settle quickly and begin learning as soon as they arrive. Strong care and nurture ensure that children swiftly learn the routines and expected behaviours of daily school life. The curriculum is highly effective in ensuring that children are extremely well prepared for Year 1.
- Adults work skilfully to further children's personal development. In addition, staff have created a learning environment that deliberately supports children to blossom. Children are taught how to work independently and in groups. They learn the importance of sticking at tasks and finishing them.

- Pupils with SEND are extremely well supported. They receive targeted support at every level. This includes in their lessons and in individual intervention sessions. Staff are highly skilled at identifying pupils' educational needs, and leaders ensure that pupils get the help they need quickly. All of this means that pupils with SEND overcome learning barriers, flourish, and achieve well.

## **Effectiveness of Leadership and management**

### **Including the governance of the school/academy (where appropriate)**

- Leaders are unwavering in their drive for excellence and have exceptionally high expectations for all pupils and staff. All want pupils to achieve their very best, and they consistently do. This includes disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Leaders have developed a well-focused school improvement plan which has provided staff with the opportunities to develop the subject and pedagogical knowledge to teach an ambitious curriculum. Staff, including additional adults, have very strong subject knowledge. Leaders have ensured that all staff receive highly effective training to deliver the ambitious curriculum.
- Leaders have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and its next steps. Their judgements are based on secure evidence and demonstrate ambition for all pupils within the school.
- Shared accountability is a feature of the school's continuing success. Staff regularly work with colleagues to monitor teaching and learning. This process has seen staff reflecting on their professional growth and has led to them embedding sustainable changes through the implementation of carefully considered practice.

## **Safeguarding (based on limited evidence collected)**

- Contextual safeguarding underpins elements of the school's curriculum for personal development. Key themes such as hope, kindness, love and tolerance are regularly explored within lessons. This teaching is responsive to local needs and clearly focuses on supporting those pupils who are identified as being most vulnerable.
- Procedures for signing in visitors are clear and appropriate information is shared on how to share safeguarding concerns if they arise.
- Leaders are aware that safeguarding underpins all aspects of school life and show a clear determination to place pupils' safety at the forefront of all decisions.



## **Key Next Step recommendations for further development**

- Leaders to create documentation highlighting progression in each of the school's 'Key Pillars'.
- Leaders to consider curriculum development using, for example, the Department of Education's guidance on character education.
- Subject leaders to develop opportunities for pupils to evaluate their learning over time, for example by using writing progress walls, and further develop the use of knowledge organisers to support pupils' retention of key learning.
- Leaders to continue to develop resourcing and curriculum documentation, based on the strong practice identified in subjects that were reviewed, to ensure that high quality learning continues to be provided across the breadth of the curriculum.