

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



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Mr S Calvert  
Headteacher  
Marchwood Church of England Infant School  
Twiggs Lane  
Marchwood  
Southampton  
SO40 4ZE

Dear Mr Calvert

**Ofsted 2010–11 survey inspection programme: the quality and impact of partnership provision in schools for children in service families**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 11 and 12 October 2010 to look at the school's contribution to the quality of provision and partnerships for children who are in families of service personnel.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of partnerships, including the quality of the partnerships between schools and agencies and between schools and parents, I looked at how effective the partnerships are in improving children's personal well-being and learning. I also considered the nature of the support given to these children, including those in the most vulnerable circumstances, or those who have a particular special educational need and/or disability, and the arrangements to ensure the continuity of provision when children move in and out of your school.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included meetings with you, your staff and children. In addition, I met two groups of parents, the Army Welfare Officer and a member of the local authority's behaviour support team. I also spoke on the telephone to a representative of the local authority minority ethnic and traveller achievement service and scrutinised a range of school documentation, including information about the children's achievement and attendance.

The school's contribution to the quality of provision and partnerships for children who are in families of service personnel is good.

## Key features

- Your school's philosophy of 'Learning for life' is demonstrated very clearly in the value you place on the diverse experiences of the families you serve, including those from military backgrounds. Your impact, as an experienced headteacher, has been immediate. Parents are positive about the changes you have made and value your high visibility at the start and end of the day. They also recognise the commitment of your staff, saying that they feel listened to and respected. This effective communication with parents is at the heart of your school's constant drive to improve outcomes for children and underpins your current focus on community cohesion.
- Pupils from service backgrounds are polite, friendly and enthusiastic when talking about their learning. They enjoy school and this is seen in the calm and harmonious way children and adults work together. Sometimes they feel sad when parents are deployed on active service but they know that they can get support from family, teachers and friends.
- Your school's accurate monitoring of pupils' progress provides you with good information about the achievement of children from different groups, including those who are vulnerable. You make good use of this data to identify patterns of underachievement and put in place well-devised support. Astutely, you recognise that you are in a position to make even better use of this data. For example, you now have more detailed information about service children in the Early Years Foundation Stage which will enable you to monitor their progress even more closely.
- Unvalidated end of Key Stage 1 data for 2010 indicate that overall the attainment of service children was above the national average. While slightly below their peers, particularly at the higher levels, this represents a similar good rate of progress.
- The attendance of children from service families is lower than their peers. However, for the majority, attendance is similar to/or above the national average. Attendance is high for around a third of these children. A small minority of service children have particularly low attendance. This is often because of extended absence during term time when parents return from deployment or when children from the Commonwealth visit their families overseas. You are currently working with all families to improve attendance across the school, while being mindful of the particular circumstances experienced by service families. You are right to take such a compassionate view. Service parents say that they really appreciate your sensitive response to their requests.
- Support for service children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is targeted exceptionally well. Very effective use is made of information received by the school when children join. Communication with parents is excellent who say that they feel closely involved in the ongoing assessment of their children. They say that they contribute to the planning process and are empowered by having strategies that create consistency between the school and home. Consequently, parents note discernible progress in terms of their children's learning, behaviour and/or

social skills. In one example, the school liaised successfully with the family and army to extend a posting so that there was a more consistent experience for the child.

- Your school's intervention programmes are targeted at the specific needs of all children, but are equally well matched to children from service backgrounds. For example, the emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA) runs successful programmes that help children who have social and emotional needs. This provision is also useful in signposting families to external support services. You provide a range of extended services for all families, including after-school care. You monitor the take-up of these by service families. Service children are well represented at after-school clubs such as football and multi-skills.
- Many existing partnerships with external agencies are already strong and others are developing quickly. You currently make considered and timely use of the behaviour support team, occupational therapy, and speech and language therapy services. Links with the local authority minority ethnic and traveller achievement service have been initiated recently in response to a growing proportion of children who have English as an additional language. Along with the local junior school, you are also beginning to form strong links with the Army Welfare Officer.
- Transfer to the school is managed well. Parents say that teachers are welcoming and support children to settle and make friends quickly. One parent noted that the school had been especially flexible and reassuring when they applied for a place before their quarters had been finalised. A few parents felt that, in the past, there had been missed opportunities to discuss their family's circumstances with teachers and that some transfer information had been underused.
- Your school values its close connections with the Armed Services, particularly the 17th Port and Maritime Regiment. You actively encourage Army representation in many aspects of school life. The Army regularly support the May Fayre. The energetic parent-teacher association welcomes service families and you were pleased to have recently gained the support of a number of Fijian parents. Armed services are also represented on your governing body.
- Year 2 pupils visit the Army camp each year. There they enjoy activities such as working with fire hoses, riding on landing craft and learning about the work of the Army. In the spring term, many servicemen had the opportunity to come to the school for a special 'Dads lunch' and then support activities for their children. This event was oversubscribed and the school organised a second event in the summer term. Children also attended the homecoming parade that was held last year in Southampton. Service parents really valued this and appreciate it when you and the children celebrate their work.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop the work with children and their parents who are in families of service personnel.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection.

Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

**Chris Wood**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**