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Mr Jonathan Clay  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Clay

### **Short inspection of Cupernham Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 20 March 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 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You lead the school with care, enthusiasm and honesty. As one parent said: 'The headteacher has a real presence. He tackles issues head-on.' You are supported well by your effective deputy headteacher and year leaders, who share your determination that all pupils receive a good education. Teachers and learning support assistants are proud of the school and work hard to fulfil your vision. They are appreciative of the training and support leaders provide, which help make sure that pupils achieve their potential. The vast majority of parents and carers are very complimentary about the school's work, highlighting the good progress that pupils make and the nurturing, supportive environment. As one parent wrote: 'I am very grateful for the investment that the school staff have made in my children's lives.' Another wrote: 'My children have thrived at Cupernham, grown in confidence and made huge steps in their learning. I would highly recommend this school to other parents.'

The school's vision of 'dream believe achieve' is central to the school's work. It can be seen in pupils' positive attitudes to learning in class and the work they produce. Pupils say that they enjoy learning and are full of praise for their teachers, who 'get the best out of us' and 'make sure we work hard'. The curriculum is designed to be broad, balanced and inspiring, with numerous opportunities which help to increase pupils' resilience and to aid their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils in Year 3 excitedly told me about a recent visit to Butser Farm, where they had made Stone Age jewellery and dug up fossils because they are studying the Stone Age in class. Pupils, parents and staff appreciate the 'fabulous

finish' to projects, when parents are invited into school to see the work pupils have produced. Assemblies and personal, social and health education are valued by pupils as times to reflect on current issues and important events. For example, pupils maturely reflected on the achievements of the scientist Stephen Hawking, who died the week before the inspection.

Participation rates in extra-curricular activities are high, including in the very popular annual school production and in several sporting activities, including swimming in the school's own pool. Music is encouraged and very popular. All pupils in Year 5 get the opportunity to learn a brass instrument and the regular singing assembly is enjoyed by all. Most popular by far is the weekly 'carousel' where pupils across all year groups join together to experience something they may not have come across before. Activities include gardening, arts, scriptwriting, animation and 'flight club', where pupils learn about the technical demands of flying.

Leaders have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors challenge you on these appropriately, including through useful visits to check the impact of leaders' actions. In addition, you value the advice and support of the local authority. The school has responded well to the areas for improvement since the last inspection, which were to strengthen the quality of teaching and ensure that pupils have time to make improvements to their work. Teaching is now much more consistent, with pupils being challenged from their different starting points in a more systematic way. Consequently, pupils make good progress over time, including disadvantaged pupils. This is especially the case in reading and writing, where attainment is consistently above national averages. Pupils enjoy reading the whole-class texts and then discussing their views with each other in class. Pupils write in detail and accurately across a broad range of subjects. You rightly recognise where elements of the school could be improved further and act on these well. For example, work to improve the provision in mathematics and for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is well under way and already making a positive difference for current pupils.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders and governors have made sure that staff are well trained in child protection, safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures. They know how to recognise any potential issues that may indicate that a child is at risk. They know how to pass on concerns and are rightly confident that leaders will take these seriously. Leaders diligently record all concerns and act appropriately to keep pupils safe, including through liaising with outside agencies. Recruitment checks on the suitability of staff working in the school are thorough.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They say that pupils are friendly towards each other. Bullying is rare, but should it happen, adults will quickly sort it out. The pupils I spoke to could all identify an adult they would go to if they had any concerns. The curriculum helps to keep pupils safe. For example, e-safety is a key priority, with pupils understanding the importance of not giving out personal

information online.

## **Inspection findings**

- At the start of this inspection, we agreed to look at: the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements; the effectiveness of leaders in managing pupils' behaviour, the effectiveness of teaching in ensuring that pupils are challenged from their different starting points; the quality of support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities; and the quality of provision in mathematics.
- Pupils at Cupernham behave very well. Lessons typically have a calm, industrious atmosphere. Pupils move around the school sensibly and play together happily at playtimes. Training in how to manage the behaviour of some pupils who have complex needs, along with a relatively new tracking system for behaviour, means that staff are better equipped to de-escalate any issues which may arise. Exclusions have declined markedly in the last year, as pupils meet your high expectations of their day-to-day conduct.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a systematic approach to ensuring that teaching challenges pupils from their different starting points. Staff plan learning opportunities which match pupils' different needs, for example by ensuring that pupils catch up to where they need to be, or are given harder work to stretch them further. Learning support assistants are deployed effectively to provide additional support for pupils of all abilities. Pupil premium funding is used well to ensure that most disadvantaged pupils make good rates of progress. Pupils said that teachers set work at the right level to challenge them in their thinking. As one said: 'The work makes my brain hurt by just the right amount.' As a result of the improvements to teaching, current pupils are making more rapid progress than previously, particularly most-able pupils.
- Leaders have reviewed provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Additional support and training, including from local agencies and from the local authority, are improving how the school manages the learning and emotional needs of these pupils. For example, learning support assistants now provide much more targeted support for individual pupils. In particular, better communication is helping staff to provide proactive support which meets the needs of pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs. Leaders work especially hard to find solutions which meet pupils' differing and individual needs.
- Over time, pupils' progress in mathematics has not been as strong as in English. Leaders recognise this. They have provided additional training to help teachers better meet the demands of the national curriculum. Staff especially praised the work of middle leaders in supporting them as they adapt their teaching in mathematics. As a result, pupils are becoming more adept at using additional mathematics resources to support their learning, particularly in the younger years. Pupils are also developing their reasoning skills more effectively throughout the school and their overall understanding of mathematics is deepening. Consequently, pupils' progress in mathematics is accelerating, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and most-able pupils.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- strategies to improve pupils' rate of progress in mathematics are securely embedded throughout the school
- staff refine, review and evaluate the use of additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, to ensure that provision more effectively meets pupils' differing and specific learning, social, emotional and mental health needs.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Old  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, senior and middle leaders, and with the chair of governors. I also spoke to a representative from the local authority on the telephone. I observed learning in eight classes with leaders. With middle leaders I scrutinised a range of pupils' work. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including information about improvement planning, governance, monitoring visits, behaviour records, safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. I considered the 63 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the 60 free-text responses, and spoke to parents at the beginning of the day. I considered the 43 survey responses submitted by pupils, spoke to pupils at play time and met with a group of eight pupils. I took account of the views of staff through the 15 responses to the confidential staff survey and during meetings with staff throughout the day.