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Mrs Lesley Clark  
Headteacher  
Cupernham Infant School  
Bransley Close  
Woodley Lane  
Romsey  
Hampshire  
SO51 7JT

Dear Mrs Clark

### **Short inspection of Cupernham Infant School**

Following my visit to the school on 5 June 2019, 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 second short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in March 2011.

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

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

This vibrant, happy and warm-hearted school, with its strong emphasis on fostering pupils' excitement in learning, is a credit to you, your leadership team and staff. You and your team are passionately committed to infant education and believe wholeheartedly in getting children off to a flying start with their school life. You have responded thoughtfully and determinedly to the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. There have been some challenges along the way with changes in staffing but, undaunted, you are able to demonstrate improvements in all areas.

Parents and carers hold the school in high regard. They feel involved in school life and enjoy hearing about what their children learn. Parents typically highlight the care their children receive from individual staff members, talking about how 'caring', 'approachable' and 'inspirational' staff are. Many parents appreciate the curriculum on offer, commenting on how it 'is varied and exciting', 'ignites children's imagination' and 'makes learning joyful'. A very small number of parents expressed concerns about communication from leaders in the school. However, these views were far from typical. Most parents value your regular communication and the nurture and individual attention their children receive.

Pupils are enthusiastic learners who enjoy talking about their work, fully entering into the spirit of the well-planned topics and activities they are offered. They are

purposeful, busy and productive, making a strong contribution to the school and their own learning. Pupils work and play happily together and you are right to be proud of the school's inclusive values.

Staff also enjoy working in the school and appreciate the teamwork approach. They are proud to be fully involved in improving the school and value the opportunity to be creative and take responsibility for developing meaningful learning activities. You are not complacent, however, and have rightly identified that the positive changes in provision for mathematics need to be fully consolidated across the whole school. You also have correctly identified that matching pupils' fluency in spelling and punctuation with their growing vocabulary requires further work.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Arrangements for safeguarding are effective and children are kept safe in the school.

As designated safeguarding leader (DSL), you and your team of deputy DSLs have a good understanding of risks to children and your duties. You are compassionate and inclusive in your work with families and firmly keep children's safety and welfare at the heart of your work.

Staff have benefited from relevant and up-to-date training on how to identify potential risks of harm to pupils. Reporting of concerns is appropriately detailed and fit for purpose and includes follow-up actions. Leaders pursue decisions made by the other agencies that protect children in order to ensure that concerns are logged and extra support obtained. Pupils know who to speak to if they have worries and have benefited from external speakers to raise their awareness of how to keep themselves safe.

A small number of vulnerable pupils whose persistent absence causes concern are tracked carefully. As a result of tenacious and sensitive work, individual pupils have improved their attendance, and their families are making good attendance at school a higher priority.

During this inspection, I identified that some of the checks made on teachers working in the school were not recorded on the single central record. This administrative oversight was put right by the end of the inspection.

### **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection, we agreed to focus on the following areas: how effectively the most able pupils were being challenged to reach greater depth in mathematics and writing; the quality of provision for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); the contribution the curriculum makes to pupils' cultural and spiritual development; and improvements to the way in which governors oversee the performance of the school.

- With the support of the local authority and through professional development, leaders have improved the teaching of mathematics. You have established an effective approach that helps pupils to become more adept and fluent and make links between different problems. You identified that pupils need to become less reliant on staff, learn more from their mistakes and work out solutions on their own. More pupils than previously are reaching higher standards in mathematical reasoning and problem-solving. You are wisely committed to consolidating these improvements throughout the school.
- Standards in reading are high and have been so for some time. Pupils are inspired by their experience of exciting, high-quality books. Undoubtedly, pupils love to write in your school. They use a rich and sophisticated vocabulary for their age, enjoy learning new words and relish including them in their writing. Pupils have a strong sense of themselves as authors and understand how their writing and its strength of feeling have an impact on the reader.
- During this inspection, I observed pupils in Year 2 carefully crafting strongly worded letters about pollution with real spirit and determination. In Year 1, pupils were writing with empathy from an endangered animal's point of view, fully conscious of the power of words to provoke emotion. In the early years, pupils enthusiastically formed sentences, lists and labels as they went about their different activities, with independence and ease.
- I agree with your view that pupils' composition is a strength. Nevertheless, your careful analysis of standards in writing has revealed some complex challenges. In 2018, outcomes for pupils in writing dipped and the proportion of pupils reaching greater depth in their writing dropped below national figures. You make no excuses but have acknowledged that changes in staffing had an undoubted impact on pupils' achievement in writing. Some pupils do not spell, punctuate or use grammar at the same standard as their vocabulary and composition skills. You understandably do not want to stifle pupils' enthusiasm for writing or diminish the knowledge and skills they already have. As a result, you are approaching improving writing thoughtfully, providing more editing opportunities.
- You are ensuring that the teaching of phonics is consistently high and at an appropriately sophisticated standard for your most able pupils. As a result, all pupils, including those who are confident readers and writers, will benefit from more extensive strategies when sounding out and spelling the sophisticated vocabulary they want to use.
- The small number of pupils who are disadvantaged or with SEND make good progress. Individual planning and staff's 'can-do' attitude support individuals who have particularly complex needs. Your plans for spending of additional funds are detailed, individual and imaginative and are leading to good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Sensitive support is also provided for pupils' emotional needs.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have developed an exciting curriculum that encompasses your already well-established focus on British values, morality and social skills. You have ensured that curriculum planning includes enough interesting content to help pupils deeply understand the experiences they have and the world they are growing up in. Weekly assemblies are intentionally

planned to introduce pupils to the wider world. During the inspection, pupils were engaged in activities related to science week, linking assemblies with lesson content. They learned important scientific facts about recycling. They considered their own responsibilities for disposing of waste and reflected on how they could help to make the world a cleaner and healthier place. Leaders have tracked other aspects of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision across the curriculum. Topics are carefully planned to include explorations of other cultures. You are reviewing your approach to religious education in order to provide more spiritually meaningful experiences for pupils in the long term. Overall, your new curriculum and all its strands relating to pupils' cultural and personal development make a memorable impact on pupils and their parents.

- Following the last inspection, the governing body recruited more members, seeking out personnel with the right sets of skills and backgrounds. Useful training has helped them to define roles and responsibilities more precisely. Governors have also changed the way they review information about the school. They pay more attention to the headteacher's regular reports and prepare more searching questions than in the past. Governors are clearly curious about the school's work and have identified what they need to find out more about. Governors and the local authority correctly identify that these improvements are still in their infancy. Governors' new approaches need to be better established in order for them to be more effective in holding leaders to account.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff build upon the success of the improved approaches to teaching mathematics so that more pupils make good and better progress, particularly those who are most able
- pupils, including those who are most able, improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar, using their knowledge of phonics more effectively to support this
- governors monitor the work of the school more closely and objectively.

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

Janet Pearce  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, senior leaders and governors. I visited all classes in all year groups to speak to pupils, look at their work and observe teaching and learning. With members of your leadership team, we reviewed a sample of pupils' work. We met to discuss safeguarding and I checked the school's recruitment checks on staff working in the school. I spoke to several parents dropping off their children and received one letter. I reviewed 93 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and over 60 free-text comments. All teaching and non-teaching staff were invited to meet with me after school, and I took into account 21 responses to the staff survey.

I reviewed documentation related to curriculum planning, the school improvement plan, records of pupils' attendance, minutes from governors' meetings and a report from the local authority adviser. I also spoke to the adviser on the telephone.