

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



19 April 2018

Mrs Nicola Cowcher  
Headteacher  
Calmore Infant School  
Calmore Drive  
Calmore  
Southampton  
Hampshire  
SO40 2ZZ

Dear Mrs Cowcher

### **Short inspection of Calmore Infant School**

Following my visit to the school on 22 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 a high degree of care, enthusiasm and diligence. Staff, governors and parents have confidence in your leadership. As one parent said: 'The wonderful headteacher definitely leads by example.' Another wrote: 'The vibrant headteacher is welcoming to parents and children every morning. She really knows the children well.'

You have maintained the school's strengths since the last inspection and improved on them further. Pupils achieve highly because you are determined they do so. You use your in-depth knowledge of how children learn best to create a learning environment which nurtures their talents successfully. Governors, other leaders and staff share your vision and work hard to achieve it. Staff are exceptionally positive, demonstrating that you have built a strong culture among staff as they seek to continually improve their professional practice. Teaching is typically very well organised, fully involving pupils in their learning. Parents praise teachers' hard work and dedication. As one wrote: 'The teachers are all very approachable and my child has made great progress.' Another said: 'The teachers are extremely passionate about what they do. They put their heart into teaching.' Every parent who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, said that they would recommend the school to others.

Pupils behave well both in classrooms and around the school. They play together happily in the playground and move around school sensibly. Typically, pupils

concentrate very well during lessons. Pupils are responding well to the changes you have made to make the curriculum more interesting and engaging. They say they enjoy learning and thinking hard. Pupils show increasing resilience and know not to give up when work is challenging. Reading is a particular strength and books are often used to stimulate pupils' curiosity across the whole curriculum. For example, in Year 1 pupils were excited to grow real 'magic' beans as part of a science experiment after reading the story of 'Jack and the beanstalk'.

The curriculum is enriched with a variety of extra-curricular activities, trips and visits. You make purposeful use of local resources such as the study centre and local secondary school to equip pupils with 'expert' skills and knowledge to share with their peers. Recent skills learned include screen printing and how to use chemicals in scientific investigations. Staff are especially proud of pupils' high participation rates in sports such as athletics, football and curling and celebrate success in local sporting competitions. Music, too, is a strength. On the day of the inspection, several parents visited the school for the Year 1 recorder concert. Earlier in the day pupils enjoyed singing tunefully in assembly.

You, leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for further development. Governors are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and support the school's work strongly. They hold leaders to account very well, asking the right questions during meetings and visiting the school to check the impact of your work. You and your skilled leadership team draw thoughtfully on research to secure successful improvements. For example, at the last inspection inspectors asked the school to improve pupils' achievement in mathematics. You have responded to this successfully, changing how mathematics is taught and raising expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, standards have risen, and mathematics is increasingly a strength of the school. Inspectors also asked that you improve the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation. This too has been achieved. Pupils' books are now well presented and pupils' handwriting developing very well.

Your work to ensure that teachers' planning considers pupils' different starting points precisely, along with raised expectations of what all pupils can achieve, has helped to increase pupils' outcomes. Pupils leave the end of key stage 1 having made strong progress to attain standards which are above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Nevertheless, you are rightly focused on improving pupils' outcomes still further. You have identified that a higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils should reach the greater depth standard. Alongside this, your work to further improve pupils' writing is well underway.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff receive comprehensive training so that they understand their safeguarding responsibilities well. They monitor pupils' welfare carefully and report concerns promptly. You are tenacious in your determination to ensure that pupils get the support they need. Records show that when concerns are raised you act

robustly to help keep children safe, including utilising local authority support where needed. You carry out appropriate checks on the suitability of adults to work with children. Governors check staff understanding of safeguarding, ensure that regular reviews of safeguarding are carried out, and act promptly on any recommendations for refinement of practice.

The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe, for example when crossing roads and when using the internet. Pupils say that pupils are kind to each other. They say they feel safe in school and all I spoke to could identify a grown-up they could talk to if they were worried about anything. All parents who responded to the Ofsted survey, Parent View, agreed that their children are safe in school.

### **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection, we looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, including: the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements; the effectiveness of teaching in mathematics; the quality of pupils' writing across the curriculum; the quality of provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities; and most-able pupils' achievement, particularly the most-able disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics dipped at the end of key stage 1 in 2016. You formed a local 'hub' of schools and utilised useful training and support from the local authority to research how to improve pupils' mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills. Your new approach to teaching mathematics is now strengthening these skills very well. Pupils use numerous mathematical resources to help them to understand mathematical concepts. Teachers quickly respond to what pupils can and cannot yet do, ensuring that pupils' understanding is deepened, for example by making them explain their thinking. In 2017, pupils at the end of key stage 1 achieved much higher results. Current pupils are making even better progress, particularly the most able pupils. Pupils told me that they really enjoy learning mathematics, with some proudly showing me where they have been successful in their learning.
- In 2016, pupils' attainment in writing at the end of key stage 1 was just below the national average. In response, you prioritised improvements to pupils' writing. The teaching of writing is now more systematic, allowing pupils to develop foundations in their sentence structure and grammar. Timely extra support helps pupils who are in danger of falling behind to keep up. Teachers also plan exciting activities which enthuse pupils about writing, such as in the early years where children wrote a letter to the Easter bunny about where the best hiding places are for their eggs. New approaches are having a positive impact. Last year, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 rose to above the national average. Current pupils are making strong and improved progress. However, you recognise opportunities to further develop pupils' writing across the whole curriculum, for example by providing more frequent opportunities to write at length and for different purposes, in foundation subjects.

- Your award-winning nurture group provides a calm and safe environment for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs to learn and develop. Improved tracking of pupils' development is allowing you to provide more carefully targeted additional teaching which is helping pupils to make better progress than previously. Pupils show improved communication skills, develop more confidence and are more independent in their learning. When we visited, some pupils in the nurture group were determined to finish a difficult jigsaw puzzle accurately, while others excitedly told us about their wellie walk around the school where they spotted signs of spring. The care these pupils receive is helping them to achieve well.
- In 2016, a lower-than-average proportion of pupils secured the greater depth standard in reading, writing and mathematics. You have raised expectations of what pupils can achieve so that teachers now provide pupils with challenging work more readily. In 2017, the proportion of pupils working at greater depth increased to above the national average in reading writing and mathematics. However, fewer disadvantaged pupils were working at this standard in writing and mathematics. Consequently, you have improved your tracking and identification systems, and are now much more focused on ensuring that the most able disadvantaged pupils make rapid progress in each year group. This is making a big difference, especially in the early years.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recent changes to the teaching of writing are reviewed and refined, so that pupils make good progress across the whole curriculum
- most-able disadvantaged pupils make more rapid progress.

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, other leaders, and seven governors. I also spoke to a representative from the local authority on the telephone. Together, we observed learning in all classes. With leaders, I scrutinised a range of pupils' work. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including information about school improvement planning, governance records, monitoring visits, safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. I considered the 112 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View,

including the 107 free-text responses, and spoke to parents at the beginning of the day. I observed pupils playing outside, spoke to pupils during lessons and met with a group of pupils. I took account of the views of staff through the 10 responses to the staff survey and during meetings with staff throughout the day.