

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Miss Lyndsey Cook  
Headteacher  
Southsea Infant School  
Collingwood Road  
Southsea  
Hampshire  
PO5 2SR

Dear Miss Cook

### **Short inspection of Southsea Infant School**

Following my visit to the school on 21 June 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 have created an inclusive environment, underpinned by your motto, 'we all matter'. You know the individual pupils in your care well. Many parents are supportive of the school. They described Southsea Infants as a 'community-minded school' with a 'village feel' and 'smiling teachers'.

Pupils love their school and the many friends they have. They say that their teachers are kind and fair, and that 'they make us feel brainy'. Pupils enjoy many aspects of school life like playtimes, swimming and the wide range of after-school clubs, such as dancing and tennis. They say that they get to do lots of fun things at Southsea Infant School. Pupils work well together and persevere in their learning tasks. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, pupils were solving a problem involving addition and subtraction. They were actively discussing their different methods, supporting each other well.

Your resource base for pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties is an important part of the school. The strong, inclusive practice that permeates the school benefits all pupils. Pupils understand diversity and that some of their friends have differing needs.

The previous inspection report highlighted several strengths, including high attainment, good behaviour, and clear and ambitious leadership. You have maintained these strengths. In Year 2, in 2017, the proportions of pupils who attained the expected standards and greater depth in reading and writing were above those seen nationally. In addition, the proportion of pupils who met the

expected standard in mathematics was above the national average. However, you are not complacent and strive for pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics to be more secure.

You have successfully tackled the area for improvement identified at the last inspection. Leaders reviewed the feedback policy while being considerate to staff workload. The updated policy is applied consistently throughout the school. Pupils know how to improve their work and edit well.

You and your leaders' sharp and evaluative monitoring ensures an accurate view of the strengths and areas for development. You recognise that not all pupils present their work neatly and legibly. We also agreed that improving the range of engaging activities to support learning and development of the children in early years should now be a key priority. In addition, you acknowledge that the evaluation of the impact of the pupil premium funding could be sharper.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and the school's leaders and governors fulfil your statutory safeguarding duties well. Procedures and processes are understood and followed by staff to ensure that pupils are safe. Any necessary actions are completed without delay and are followed up in an efficient manner. Pre-employment checks demonstrate leaders' thorough action in ensuring the suitability of all staff and volunteers to work in school. Safeguarding training is regular.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They know who to speak to if they have any worries. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations such as when online and when visiting the beach.

Most pupils attend school regularly. Leaders closely track the attendance of individuals whose absence is a concern. They work with families effectively to reduce this absence. Earlier this year, you received a letter from Portsmouth City Council congratulating the school on diminishing persistent absence.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed that the focus would be on: the teaching of mathematics; how leaders use the additional funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make strong progress; and how effectively leaders ensure that the curriculum enables pupils to achieve well.
- Attainment in mathematics is high, and pupils make strong progress. Pupils have a deep understanding of concepts because of the effective use of practical apparatus to support their learning. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils were using a range of equipment and visual representations to successfully consolidate their understanding of fractions. The mathematics leader uses assessment information well to identify swiftly any pupil who is falling behind. The right additional support is put in place and reviewed regularly to ensure that it is having the required impact. My classroom visits, including the scrutiny of pupils' work, showed that pupils have many opportunities to consolidate their

understanding of number and apply this to problem-solving tasks. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning skills.

- You and your leaders have established a clear strategy to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well. You have a good understanding of the barriers to learning faced by these pupils. Thorough analysis of gaps in learning ensures that provision is right for individual pupils. Timely intervention, including pre-teaching in all subjects, has led to attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils being in line with their classmates. Governors are ambitious for this group of pupils and regularly check on their attainment and progress. However, you, leaders and governors do not have a sharp understanding of the impact of each of the wide range of strategies that are used across the school. As a result, they are not able to plan future spending based on which strategies have proved the most successful in raising pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced, enriched by the experience of visits and visitors. In early years, in 2017, boys did not attain as well as girls. Leaders responded swiftly to this. You recognised that there was a need to increase boys' physical development skills in order to improve their writing outcomes. Leaders therefore redesigned the curriculum. As a result, provisional information for 2018 shows a stark increase in pupils' physical development and writing outcomes, especially for boys. However, you are not complacent. You acknowledge that standards in presentation and handwriting are inconsistent across the school.
- Children in the early years are well cared for and are happy at school. However, adults do not use assessment information precisely enough. They do not plan sufficiently engaging and varied opportunities for children to use their literacy and numeracy skills during their play, particularly, but not solely, in the outside area.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all pupils have opportunities to practise their reasoning skills in mathematics
- they review the impact of the pupil premium strategy more effectively so that leaders and governors know the success of specific interventions
- presentation and handwriting is consistently high across the school
- teachers in the early years provide engaging and motivating activities that build on accurate assessment of children's learning and development 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 Portsmouth. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lea Hannam  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and your deputy to discuss the school's effectiveness. We visited lessons to observe pupils' learning, talk to pupils and look at their work. Together, we looked at the quality of pupils' work in their books. I considered 45 responses from parents to the Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 29 free-text comments. I spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day. I also had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority and met with the middle leader responsible for mathematics. Responses to the staff and pupils' questionnaires were also considered. I met with the vice-chair of the governing body. I had a formal meeting with a group of pupils to discuss their views about the school. I evaluated the school's safeguarding arrangements. A wide range of documents was examined, including: the school's self-evaluation; school improvement planning; information about pupils' progress; minutes of governing body meetings; the pupil premium strategy; the school's website; and various policies.