

## School Improvement Visit Report

Spring Term 2017

### I. Visit Information

**School Name:** Gomer Infant School

**Focus:** Report of visit

**Adviser:** Michael Moore

**Local Authority:** Hampshire

**Visit Reference:** Inspection and Advice

**Date of Visit:** 11/01/2017

#### Attendees:

- Executive Headteacher (of Federation)
- Assistant Headteacher
- Science leader
- Governor representative

#### Actions:

Action	Who	Timescale
Continue to develop the forest area so that a balance of literacy, mathematical, scientific and cross-curricular activities result in pupils having concrete experiences before the more formal pictorial and abstract learning takes place.	Senior Leaders	31/03/2017

### **Summary of Main Findings:**

The executive headteacher continues to give uncompromising leadership that sustains improvement and effectively guides school development. The assistant headteacher shares the rigorous approach to judging the effectiveness of school actions against pupil outcomes.

Professional development is highly effective in improving provision overall and also in developing individuals. The skilful design of learning opportunities that include knowledge of pedagogy as well as subject content is a strong feature of the school's provision.

Current predictions for 2017 end of Key Stage outcomes broadly sustain the positive difference between school results and both local and national averages.

The actions in the Federation's strategic plan and the actions discussed by leaders specific to Gomer Infant school are suitable to continue the school's improvement and refinement.

The school is therefore a **low priority** for Local Authority support because leaders at all levels can demonstrate impact in improving provision and there is currently capacity in the team for this to continue.

## II. Main Report

### Activity reason:

LA funded

### Activity focus:

Annual Visit.

### Context:

Gomer Infant School is part of a Federation with Elson Infant School. The Federation is led by an executive headteacher and each school has a designated assistant headteacher.

Gomer Infant School was last inspected in June 2013 and judged to be outstanding. The key improvement area was to maximise the opportunities in the external areas of the school to reinforce and extend the pupils' mathematical skills and knowledge. (Hence the agreed line of enquiry for this review visit).

Only 8% of pupils elicit free school meals funding and 8.4% are SEN. These figures are well below the national average.

To address the enquiry question, "does the school use the outside environment to effectively engage and motivate children and provide a range of high quality learning opportunities?" the following activities were undertaken:

- A guided learning walk across the school during which a brief work scrutiny and discussions with pupils took place. This was to evidence the quality of outdoor learning environments and how the children engaged with them.
- A discussion with the inclusion lead about vulnerable pupils and how learning through outside opportunities assists their learning and well-being.
- A summary discussion with senior leaders and a governor at the end of the visit.

### Commentary:

#### **School self-evaluation**

*Outcomes of most recent Ofsted in brackets*

- Overall effectiveness: O (O)
- Leadership and management: O (O)
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment: O (O)
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare: O (O)
- Outcomes for pupils: O (O)
- Early years: O (O)

Evidence explored during the visit and over time would indicate that this is an honest reflection of the current position of the school. Leaders are clear about what needs to be refined and there is a strong motivation to bring this about.

As well as internal strengths, the school also maintains a positive attitude towards support and challenge and as a result, the precision and continued enhancement of systems is clear. For example, the school is part of a local network of approximately 30 schools who are collaborating on a project on growth mindset. The observable attitudes of both adults and children and in particular their responses to challenge or unexpected 'errors' are reflective of the impact of this collaboration.

The executive headteacher continues to give very clear and uncompromising leadership that sustains improvement and effectively guides school development. A highly effective senior leadership team has been established with the assistant headteacher sharing the rigorous approach to assessing the effectiveness of school actions on pupils' outcomes. Professional development is highly effective in improving provision overall and also in developing individuals.

2016 results continue to evidence the high quality impact of the school on pupil outcomes.

- GLD 82% - above national and steadily rising.
- Phonics – slight dip from 2015, but at 78% is close to national.
- Key Stage 1 - reading 92% meeting the expected standard (with 36% at greater depth); writing 81% (15% above national) and mathematics 83% (10% above national). All three results increased the difference between the national average and the school suggesting a sustained trajectory of improvement despite changes to the curriculum and assessment procedures.
- Key Stage 1 combined (RWM) was 78% and is 18% above national and 12% above local averages.

Current predictions for 2017 end of Key Stage outcomes broadly sustain this positive difference. For example, mathematics predictions are 82% (similar to 2016) but the proportion of 'greater depth' pupils is predicted to double (from 7% to 14%).

The forest school project was extended from individual lessons in the forest to whole mornings last term as a result of its positive effect on both pupils' learning and also their attitudes. The 2013 inspection report stated that, "The external area of the school has been well developed... particularly regarding opportunities to support literacy. The natural next step is to extend this to mathematics." This was observed to be the case during this review. For example, year one pupils were using PE hoops and beanbags to collaboratively explore 'place value'.

Although the cross-curricular activities are different in each year group, the intended outcomes are very similar. For example, the children are developing their teamwork, resilience and problem solving. These aptitudes were later observed in class during the learning walk. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, questioning by adults was focused and stimulated pupils to explain the thinking behind their answers (for example, "how did you check your answer?") Pupils, in keeping with their positive attitudes to learning, then went on to challenge themselves with harder sums.

The children are clearly stimulated by the outdoors and the staff report that they have noticed an increase in the children's self-belief, confidence and learning capacity.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning and work extremely well together. There is an obvious sense of mutual respect between pupils and with adults. Learning support assistants are deployed well and play a very proactive role in supporting pupils in lessons and during interventions both indoors and out.

Part of the skill of adults is also to know when *not* to intervene. This was well illustrated when a reception-aged pupil was drawing a map of the outdoor area on a large piece of paper. He was observed to stop, carefully look around, think and then draw some more detail. After a while he then moved away and walked around. He then returned to his map and added yet more detail. Any adult conversation during this process might have lessened the impact of the activity for this pupil.

There is plenty of evidence available that the outdoor learning opportunities are well designed for learning and results are much more sophisticated than simply engaging tasks. This is because staff have strong pedagogical knowledge as well as subject knowledge and carefully combine the two when designing learning opportunities for their children. The indoors and outdoors is organised so that the key characteristics of learning are well supported.

**Key strengths: (that would support the self-evaluation grade)**

- Excellent understanding from teachers and leaders about the children personally, pedagogy and subject knowledge that are used to design engaging and purposeful learning activities.
- Outcomes in all areas remain high relative to local and national averages.
- The increasing use of flexible grouping across all subjects helps focus high expectations for all abilities of pupil.
- Positive mindsets expressed by the vast majority of pupils who confidently challenge themselves.
- Good use of open questioning and follow up by adults.
- Pupils' behaviour in general and learning behaviours in particular are very positive.
- The impact of the wider leadership team with increased distributed leadership and pro-activity has developed a strong and effective professional learning culture across all work groups involved with the school.

### **Funding:**

LLP core funding (9632E).

HIAS and establishment to inform of cancellation at the earliest convenience, every effort will be made to provide alternative arrangements.

HIAS reserves the right to charge if visit is cancelled by the establishment without mutual agreement. Confirmation of School Visit Form will form the basis of charging at the appropriate HIAS rate unless agreed. Additional work not stated will be charged accordingly.