

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



11 October 2010

Mrs M Hartley
Headteacher
Clifton Primary School
Clifton
Penrith
Cumbria
CA10 2EG

Dear Mrs Hartley

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 29 September 2010 to look at work in mathematics.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is good.

Achievement in mathematics

Achievement in mathematics is good.

- The school's records indicate that children enter school with mathematical attainment that is broadly typical for their age. Children's attainment at the end of Reception is above average in all aspects of mathematics, which indicates good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school is working successfully to overcome a legacy of underachievement in upper Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2. The school's thorough monitoring records show that most pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress and attainment by the end of Year 2 is average.
- Pupils' learning and progress are good in Key Stage 2. Attainment by the end of Year 6 has risen consistently over recent years and is currently above average.

- Boys, girls, more able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make equally good progress overall.
- Although pupils' understanding of mathematical ideas develops securely alongside their increasing knowledge and skills, pupils have difficulty in using and applying their knowledge and skills to solve mathematical problems.
- Behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons are exemplary. Pupils enjoy a challenge, are keen to succeed and work diligently, both independently and in groups.

Quality of teaching of mathematics

The quality of teaching of mathematics is good.

- Teachers use assessment effectively to provide challenging and interesting activities that are well matched to pupils' different learning needs.
- Interactive whiteboards are used particularly well to illustrate mathematical ideas and encourage pupils to improve their reasoning skills, for example, when investigating the properties of shapes.
- Teachers make effective use of paired discussions and mini-whiteboards to help them to assess pupils' learning, identify and correct misconceptions.
- Teachers' use of time and the pace of lessons are usually good, although the activities provided for younger children are occasionally too rushed to promote a clear understanding of the topic.
- Setting curricular targets for individual pupils is at an early stage of development. Consequently, pupils are not always sure of how well they are doing or what they need to do to reach the next level.

Quality of the mathematics curriculum

The quality of the mathematics curriculum is satisfactory.

- Clear curriculum guidance for teachers on key aspects of mathematics, such as calculation, shape and data-handling, ensure that pupils are able to build on their prior learning in these areas.
- Although valuable cross-curricular activities are provided and involve the use of computers, opportunities for pupils to use and apply their knowledge and skills to solve mathematical problems are limited.
- The curriculum is adapted successfully to meet the needs of pupils who require learning support and the requirements of more able pupils.
- Intervention strategies have proved effective in closing gaps in performance and improving progress.

Effectiveness of leadership and management of mathematics

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of mathematics is good.

- Your vision, direction and energy, as headteacher, provide strong momentum and underpin the school's good capacity for improvement in mathematics. The subject leader provides good support, particularly by teaching mathematics well and leading by example.
- The use of monitoring, reviewing pupils' progress and setting challenging targets are proving effective in raising attainment.
- Regular monitoring of lessons, teachers' planning and assessments helps to identify and remedy any weaknesses promptly. However, seeking and acting upon pupils' views has only minimal influence upon curriculum planning.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving pupils' capacity to use and apply their knowledge and skills to help them investigate and solve mathematical problems
- making greater use of individual targets to help pupils to know exactly what they need to do to improve
- developing systems to gather and act upon pupils' views to inform curriculum planning.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop mathematics in the school.

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Colin Smith
Additional Inspector