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Ms F Watson  
Headteacher  
St Anne's and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School  
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Dear Ms Watson

### **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 16 November 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 pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of one lesson and three part lessons.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is satisfactory.

### **Achievement in mathematics**

Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory.

- Children's knowledge and skills are below those expected for their age when they enter school. They make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the end of Reception, their mathematical attainment is broadly average, and their calculation skills are good.
- Pupils' learning and progress are satisfactory through Key Stage 1. Attainment has been above average in recent years but current Year 2 pupils are working at levels that are broadly commensurate with their age.
- Following a dip in achievement in Key Stage 2, pupils' learning and progress are improving and are currently satisfactory. Attainment by the end of Year 6 has fluctuated over recent years but has been broadly average overall. Current Year 6 pupils are working at average levels.

- In recent years, average-attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and English as an additional language have made greater progress than lower and higher attaining pupils. Girls have sometimes outperformed boys. More rigorous tracking of different groups is highlighting and helping to reduce gender differences.
- Pupils' conceptual understanding and their calculation skills develop securely, though some pupils find more difficulty in using and applying their skills to solve mathematical problems.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics, behave well in lessons, listen attentively and work with good application and concentration.

### **Quality of teaching of mathematics**

The quality of teaching of mathematics is good.

- Vibrant displays of mathematical vocabulary, rules and conventions, in almost every classroom, encourage pupils to learn independently.
- Whole-class teaching is often good. Teachers use interactive whiteboards to explain mathematical ideas clearly, and provide practical activities which develop pupils' conceptual understanding effectively.
- In the best lessons teachers ask searching questions and ask pupils to show and explain their answers. This helps the teacher to adjust the pace of the lesson to ensure that every pupil understands.
- Periodic assessments are used well to measure pupils' progress. However, day-to-day assessment does not always lead to the provision of well-matched and challenging activities that extend the learning of higher and lower attaining pupils sufficiently in every lesson.
- Teachers ensure that pupils understand what they are expected to learn, and check at the end of the lesson whether they have succeeded.
- Teachers mark pupils' work accurately to ensure that misconceptions are identified and remedied. There are examples of highly effective marking where pupils are set individual targets and given clear pointers for improvement, but this practice is inconsistent across the school.

### **Quality of the mathematics curriculum**

The quality of the mathematics curriculum is satisfactory.

- An imaginative and well-structured Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, dovetailed neatly into the Year 1 curriculum, ensures smooth mathematical progression for younger children.
- Very clear guidance for teachers on how to develop pupils' mathematical vocabulary and their mental, calculation and presentation skills enables pupils to build effectively on their prior learning in these areas.
- Although pupils' mathematical skills are developed in other subjects, opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve problems are unevenly provided across the school.

- Good intervention, based on accurate assessments of pupils' attainment and progress, is helping to close gaps and improve the achievement of all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management of mathematics**

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

- As a recently appointed headteacher, your influence in developing team spirit and involving teachers in reviewing and improving pupils' progress is already evident in the ambition and drive shared by teachers and leaders.
- The subject leader makes a good contribution to the school by teaching the subject well and by evaluating and improving the teaching of other members of staff.
- Monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' work has correctly identified inconsistencies in the matching of tasks to pupils' needs, challenge and marking, which are now being tackled.

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- developing the using, applying and problem-solving aspects of the curriculum
- making more effective use of the information from day-to-day assessment to ensure that lower and higher attaining pupils in particular benefit from consistently challenging activities that are well matched to their different learning needs
- encouraging self-assessment by providing pupils with pointers for improvement when their work is marked and clear targets which they are able to recall and aspire to.

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**