

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



2 March 2011

Mrs H Bartlam  
Headteacher  
The Leys Primary School  
Leys Avenue  
Dagenham  
Essex  
RM10 9YR

Dear Mrs Bartlam

### **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 3 February 2011 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 six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is satisfactory.

#### **Achievement in mathematics**

Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory.

- Attainment is low. It has improved since 2009, particularly at Key Stage 1. However, few pupils reach the higher levels at age 7 or at age 11 and boys underperform in comparison to girls.
- In recent years, pupils have made inadequate progress: in 2009 the school was in the lowest 10% of all schools nationally. Pupils who speak English as an additional language or have special educational needs and/or disabilities made the weakest progress. However, this position is improving and progress in lessons observed and as indicated in pupils' work shows it is now satisfactory.
- The school recognised that pupils were not doing well enough in mathematics and made several key changes in September 2010. These included requiring pupils to reach national expectations in mathematics

each year and alterations to staffing. Teachers are implementing the changes and, as a consequence, progress is improving although pupils' fragile understanding of number remains a key weakness. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the vocabulary of shape but are less secure on the core attributes of shapes and solids; as a result they are unable to discuss properties confidently.

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

The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory.

- The school has taken steps to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics. Strengths include good relationships between adults and pupils, leading to positive attitudes to the subject. A wide range of practical resources makes lessons more interesting and relevant. The purpose of activities is made clear to pupils and teachers generally pay careful attention to precise use of mathematical vocabulary and standard methods of calculation in number work.
- Several areas of weakness remain. These include limited challenge and expectation for pupils, especially for more able, and few opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking at length or to use increasingly sophisticated language as a result of infrequent or narrow questioning by teachers. Links between aspects of mathematics are not made explicit and when pupils undertake a problem-solving activity, they do not readily use known methods of calculation. These factors restrict pupils' progress.
- The use of regular assessment is inconsistent between classes. Pupils are unsure of their learning targets.

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

The quality of the curriculum in mathematics is satisfactory.

- An appropriate emphasis on number has helped map out more frequent opportunities for work on problem-solving and using data. The full impact of these changes is yet to be seen. However, a heavy dependency on worksheet activities remains and is a key factor in limiting the level of challenge. Pupils have few opportunities to use technology. They say that the work is often 'too easy', especially in number and that homework, when set, does not always meet their learning needs.
- Pupils say that they like mathematics although they would like more enrichment activities. Pupils who need additional support receive it through a strong team of teaching assistants and thoughtful one-to-one support.

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

Leadership and management in mathematics are satisfactory.

- The leadership of mathematics has very recently changed. The new subject leader has already completed a useful audit and accurate

evaluation of the quality of provision. She has also committed to undertake and provide additional professional development and has plans to share activities with other schools. This approach offers much promise.

- The appointment of a new deputy headteacher who has experience of mathematics consultancy has added capacity to leadership of the subject. There are plans for monitoring of teaching and learning. While, the targets set for the school are not ambitious enough to rescue low attainment rapidly, recent actions and the accuracy of self-evaluation show that the capacity to improve is now satisfactory.

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

- establishing a rigorous and frequent monitoring programme to:
  - assess the quality of teaching in all classes
  - monitor pupils' progress and review it regularly against their targets
  - gauge the impact of curriculum changes and act on the outcomes of the monitoring to drive improvement, refining the school's strategic targets accordingly
- improving the quality of teaching by:
  - ensuring that pupils have frequent opportunities to explore and discuss mathematics
  - improving the effectiveness of teachers' questioning to ensure that misconceptions are identified and resolved
  - increasing the challenge, particularly for the more able pupils
- raising attainment to national averages and securing pupils' more rapid progress.

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

**Ceri Morgan**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**