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Mr S Jones
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Jones

Ofsted 2011–12 good practice survey: primary mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 8 June 2011 your work in mathematics, with a particular focus on arithmetic.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting as well as wider dissemination of good practice. 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.

Evidence was collected through: interviews with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documents; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of two lessons and parts of three lessons.

Features of good practice

- Your contribution, as headteacher, towards the development of mathematics within the school is outstanding. The way in which you have harnessed the talents of the school's leadership team and provided clear guidance and direction has led to high staff commitment towards common goals. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of mathematics have ensured consistency in teaching and learning, leading to pupils' exceptionally good progress and high attainment.
- The quality of teaching provided by senior staff is outstanding and good teaching is evident among recently appointed members of staff. Teachers' particularly good use of interactive whiteboards in explanations and discussion of mathematical images leads to pupils' clear understanding of different methods of calculation. Mental starter sessions are used very effectively to encourage pupils to develop a flexible use of mental strategies and acquire a good sense of number.

- The use of assessment within lessons is extremely good. Teachers' probing questioning and requirement that pupils explain their reasoning develop their understanding of mathematical concepts and associated vocabulary particularly well. Teachers take careful note of what pupils record on their whiteboards and in their books to gauge their understanding and act promptly to identify and remedy misconceptions.
- Lively and stimulating provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage successfully engages children in real-life mathematical experiences and develops their understanding of number and enjoyment in learning.
- The way pupils are grouped and lessons are taught focuses specific attention on higher-attaining pupils. They often work with classes of older pupils on more advanced aspects of mathematics and receive significantly extended challenges in Year 6. Lessons are quickly paced and very challenging and the activities provided are carefully tailored to pupils' different learning needs. These factors enable all pupils to succeed and many to reach high levels.
- The mathematics curriculum is particularly well designed and carefully structured to develop pupils' proficiency in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Investigating and problem-solving have a high profile in mathematics lessons and across the wider curriculum. Consequently, pupils become adept in reasoning, making decisions, testing hypotheses and solving problems.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is exemplary. They listen attentively, work industriously and show pride in the presentation of their work. Pupils thoroughly enjoy mathematics, are not afraid to make mistakes, and work together harmoniously.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- extending the already constructive and diagnostic marking of pupils' work to incorporate the next steps pupils need to take to improve further.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop mathematics at Coxhoe Primary School.

As I 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 will be sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Colin Smith
Additional Inspector