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Mr D Rose  
Huntington Community Primary School  
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Dear Mr Rose

### **Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: mathematics**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 20 October 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; observations conducted jointly with you of two lessons and brief visits to five other lessons and a one-to-one intervention session.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is satisfactory.

#### **Achievement in mathematics**

Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory.

- Children join the school with mathematical knowledge and skills that are in line with, or slightly above, expectations for their age. Throughout the school, attainment is broadly average and is occasionally slightly above average in some year groups.
- Pupils' progress shows some unevenness but is satisfactory overall. In 2010/11, the Year 6 cohort made good progress to make up ground lost earlier in Key Stage 2.
- The quality of learning is satisfactory overall. Pupils' good recall of multiplication tables follows the school's focus on these skills. Problem solving has now been identified as weaker area. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that they do not routinely solve problems as an integral part of

learning each topic. Pupils' understanding of fractions is insecure, in part because progression is not built coherently from one year to the next.

- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are consistently good and make a positive contribution to their progress.

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

The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory.

- The quality of lesson planning varies. The best identifies prior learning and builds on it with well-defined objectives. Almost all of the teachers select a range of activities and resources to generate interest and meet pupils' needs. However, a lack of precision in tailoring such activities to match the intended learning and to ensure appropriate challenge restricts pupils' progress.
- Strengths of the better teaching include a focus on pupils' understanding, for instance when calculating fractions of quantities, coupled with good use of practical activities, group work and discussion. Teaching assistants are generally well deployed in the main part of lessons.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that they tackle many exercises which are repetitive in nature. Their homework books show better variety, including some problem solving. The space at the end of homework exercises for comments by teachers, pupils and parents/carers is used well. While some teachers' questioning skilfully checks pupils' understanding, not all staff monitored pupils' progress sufficiently closely while they were working independently or in groups.

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

The quality of the curriculum in mathematics is satisfactory.

- Teachers' planning is based on the Primary National Strategy framework, supplemented with a range of resources including, more recently, a published scheme. This provides adequate coverage of the National Curriculum although pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics are not explicitly developed. No guidance is provided for teachers on approaches to adopt or on year-by-year progression with key topics.
- The school has increased its provision of one-to-one intervention for Key Stage 2 pupils who are in danger of falling behind their peers. Questioning that probed the pupils' thinking was a strength of the observed session.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics is satisfactory.

- You have laid the foundations for effective leadership and management of the subject but the impact has yet to be realised. Thorough analysis of data and meetings about pupils' progress now involve the teachers, ensuring that all are focused on raising achievement.

- Mathematics is currently led jointly by you and the subject leader, an arrangement that is enabling the role of subject leader to develop strongly. Monitoring is improving, although scrutiny of pupils' work would benefit from closer attention to depth and challenge in learning and curriculum coverage.
- Your evaluation of the lessons observed jointly was accurate. Your detailed records of observations of mathematics lessons provide considerable insight into the teaching but do not always relate it clearly to the impact on learning, leading sometimes to a slightly generous view of the quality of the teaching. Some of your mathematical criticisms could usefully inform areas for the teachers' development.
- The hard-working team of staff collaborate well, showing a readiness to share ideas and reflect on their own practice as well as learning from other schools. Suitable use is made of support from external consultants.

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

- raising achievement throughout the school by:
  - improving progression within lessons and year by year in key aspects of mathematics such as fractions and shape, space and measures
  - sharpening the precision with which teachers tailor activities to pupils' needs and potential, including in the youngest classes, to ensure that all pupils are suitably challenged
  - increasing the emphasis on problem-solving and investigation and reducing the use of repetitive exercises
- providing guidance for staff on:
  - teaching approaches that promote conceptual understanding
  - securing progression in key mathematical ideas from the Nursery to Year 6
- building on current developments in monitoring to increase the focus on learning, paying particular attention to the mathematical detail.

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

**Jane Jones**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**