

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



16 November 2011

Ms K Warren
Headteacher
Mevagissey Primary School
Old Road
Mevagissey
St Austell
PL26 6TD

Dear Ms Warren

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 4 November 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 five lessons and a discussion with a small group of pupils

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is satisfactory.

Achievement in mathematics

- Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory though improving rapidly following the introduction of a careful and accurate monitoring system which shows individual pupils' progress towards their targets on a termly basis. These monitoring data indicate that almost every pupil is now on target to make at least satisfactory progress with around half making better than average progress. In the past, too few pupils have reached the higher levels in mathematics by age 11 but this is also expected to be closer to national averages in 2012. Some inconsistencies remain in the progress made by pupils in different classes. Key weaknesses in aspects of number remain a barrier for some. Nevertheless, pupils' current work reflects an improvement in attainment and the progress being made by many pupils.
- Pupils show enthusiasm for and positive attitudes towards mathematics. They have a good understanding of simple coordinates and shape, and can construct a range of graphs and charts. While they recognise fractions

represented pictorially, they have difficulty adding fractions and working with equivalent fractions. Many lack confidence when attempting to solve problems, especially number problems. An insecure grasp of multiplication facts is a barrier to calculation and problem solving.

Quality of teaching in mathematics

The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory.

- Teachers show positive attitudes to mathematics and manage activities well. They build constructive relationships in class which allows pupils to discuss their work in detail. In general, teachers have adequate subject knowledge, but some instances of ambiguous or imprecise use of key mathematical vocabulary caused uncertainty in pupils. Although some strong teaching was evident, teaching overall varies in quality with low expectations and challenge in some classes.
- Marking is usually up to date and constructive, but occasionally errors and misconceptions go uncorrected. Teachers use new technology to support lessons well. Despite some good practice, the quality of questioning varies considerably between classes. It can lack challenge. For example, in one lesson on fractions, pupils were restricted to naming simple halves and quarters of a rectangle when many showed an ability to combine them to make a 'visual' mixed fraction, such as $1\frac{1}{4}$.

Quality of the curriculum in mathematics

The quality of the curriculum in mathematics is satisfactory.

- The school works hard to make the curriculum appropriate, varied and interesting. A small group, led by you, are developing problem solving and other challenging aspects of mathematics.
- The subject is well resourced and supplemented by additional sessions, for example, workshops where pupils explain to their parents what 'modern mathematics' looks like. However, because of the inconsistency across classes, pupils sometimes repeat work from previous years, and at times lessons lack genuine challenge. This caps progress for more able pupils.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics

The effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics is satisfactory.

- Leadership in mathematics has recently changed. The new subject leader is ambitious to improve mathematics and has arranged additional training for staff. There is a useful calculations policy in place. The development plan for mathematics, although useful, lacks specific targets and detail and there is inconsistent practice between classes. However, despite the limited time available for direct monitoring, the new subject leader has an accurate view of the relative strengths and weaknesses.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- completing a review of the mathematics curriculum, including short- and medium-term curricular planning to:
 - improve consistency in securing progression in mathematical content across classes lesson by lesson and over time, ensuring that pupils do not unnecessarily repeat work and are suitably challenged
 - ensure sufficient emphasis on securing pupils' confident knowledge of basic number work and multiplication facts.
- driving more rapid improvement by:
 - undertaking a systematic programme of monitoring to identify specific weaknesses and inconsistencies in the teaching, ensuring that all teachers show high expectations of all pupils
 - using the findings of the monitoring to add specific detail to the development plan and support for teachers to improve their practice.

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