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Mrs I Baxter  
Headteacher  
William Reynolds Primary School  
Westbourne  
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Dear Mrs Baxter

### **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 29 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; observation of two lessons; and learning walks to observe mathematics in all the classes. In September 2011, William Reynolds Junior School merged with William Reynolds Infant School to become William Reynolds Primary School.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is good.

#### **Achievement in mathematics**

Achievement in mathematics is good.

- Results in national Key Stage 2 tests have risen markedly over the last four years. Attainment was low in 2009 and by 2011 attainment has risen to be securely average. Pupils make outstanding progress because lessons consistently emphasise the importance of understanding the work covered as well as developing new subject knowledge.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and aptitudes below those expected for their age. Over the last few years, the progress made by these children has been variable. Often, the proportion meeting or exceeding the expected level in calculation is well below that in the other areas of mathematical development.

- In Key Stage 1, standards have remained doggedly low. Recent initiatives to drive up standards are starting to have an impact but the fascination and enthusiasm for number and mathematics shown by older pupils are not seen in some classes.
- Pupils use and apply their mathematics in a wide variety of activities. The school's data for 2010/11 show that standards in this key element are broadly in line with other areas of mathematics. Pupils say that they enjoy investigating problems and also how the work often links with the topics that they are covering in other lessons. They also enjoy using practical equipment to help develop a better understanding.

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

The quality of teaching in mathematics is good.

- In the best lessons, pupils are challenged by work which is well matched to their abilities. Lesson plans identify an area of knowledge and a mathematical concept to be covered within the lesson as well as the development of a skill. This is linked to an element of using and applying mathematics, and often involves reasoning or communication. All of this successfully supports the school's philosophy to develop mathematical understanding.
- Staff assess pupils' work well. In books, marking creates a dialogue between staff and pupils, with pupils extending their work in response to staff's comments. Staff make good use of interactive whiteboards and a variety of teaching aids to develop pupils' understanding. Pupils use computers within mathematics as well as using specific programmes to help develop the numerical dexterity and multiplication tables.
- Staff generally have good subject knowledge and high expectations that pupils use correct mathematical language and methods. For example, when multiplying whole numbers by 100, a group of pupils explained that they were not 'adding two zeros' but moving the digits two places to the left and then installing the zeros as place holders. However, occasionally, staff only focus on the technique to be covered and make errors which could lead to misconceptions later on. For instance, while to say 'multiplication makes a number bigger' is correct for the positive whole numbers being used by the pupils, it is not true for fractions, decimals and negative numbers, which these pupils will meet higher up the school.

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

The quality of the curriculum in mathematics is good.

- The curriculum is well developed, and reflects a clear understanding of the way in which pupils use and apply mathematics across a wide range of applications. Within the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make discoveries about number through carefully devised activities as well as through child-initiated play opportunities.

- In Key Stage 1, schemes of work are being developed to help accelerate pupils' learning. At times, mathematics in this key stage lacks the vibrancy seen elsewhere in the school.
- The school provides very good targeted interventions for individuals and groups to make up for lost ground. These pupils can also attend additional classes outside of normal school time. The school extends this work to help parents and carers support their children's work.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics is good.

- You, along with your deputy, have made excellent improvements to the achievement of pupils in Key Stage 2. These embedded successful strategies, coupled with the initial work on raising achievement in Key Stage 1, demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further.
- Very well established routines ensure that work in mathematics is monitored and staff are held to account for the progress their pupils make and the quality of their teaching.
- Lesson observations, which are commonplace in Key Stage 2, are now established within Key Stage 1. These are very focused and include opportunities for staff to devise their own improvement targets which are then evaluated during the next round of observations. Areas for development are set for individual staff as well as for whole-school priorities.
- The school has devised a comprehensive calculation policy which builds upon the joint work of the separate schools before the merger.
- The very close monitoring of pupils' progress, which is aligned to the raising achievement plan, ensures that all staff are aware of how well pupils are achieving. This also helps identify where any additional help and support is needed for individual pupils.

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

- building upon the success in Key Stage 2 to ensure that pupils make improved progress across Key Stage 1 to reach at least average attainment by the end of Year 2
- ensuring that lessons consistently engage pupils to develop a fascination in, and mastery of, number.

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  
**Michael Smith**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**