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Ms S Dixey  
Headteacher  
Etwall Primary School  
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Dear Ms Dixey

### **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 February 2012 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.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is good.

#### **Achievement in mathematics**

Achievement in mathematics is good.

- Children's attainment on entry is broadly in line with national expectations. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage to reach above average standards.
- Progress across Key Stage 1 is satisfactory but improving, as shown by the school's current monitoring data. By the end of Year 2, attainment is above average overall although the proportion of pupils attaining Level 3 was average. Variations between the progress made by different groups is minimal.
- Progress is good across Key Stage 2. In 2011, attainment was well above the national average with 100% of pupils achieving Level 4 and 64% Level 5: three quarters of the boys reached this higher level. Previously, girls' and boys' performance was the same. Pupils with special educational

needs and/or disabilities now make good progress because they receive well targeted and individual support, in class and in withdrawal groups.

- In lessons, pupils show a good application of basic skills. They work well together on a wide range of practical activities and games. They are confident, well motivated and fully engaged in their learning. Their positive attitudes make a significant contribution to their learning and progress.
- Scrutiny of work shows that pupils are very competent in number skills. Opportunities for all pupils to use their mathematical skills in problem solving and real-life contexts are more limited.

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

The quality of teaching in mathematics is good.

- Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of all abilities. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and they use resources well to support active learning, through 'talk partners' and mini-whiteboards for example. Recent training has ensured that teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' learning. They provide good support and challenge for pupils through skilful questioning, to ensure that pupils can manage tasks for themselves.
- Numbers and the number system are taught well. Pupils have good mental strategies. Teachers make clear links between prior and current learning, and they encourage pupils to make connections in their learning.
- In the best lessons, teachers promote independent learning by involving pupils in identifying the key processes required to achieve the learning outcome. These 'steps to success' encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning, assessing for themselves what progress they have made within the lesson and at the end. Teachers use probing questions to encourage pupils to explain their strategies, and they use pupils' misconceptions well to deepen understanding.
- When teaching is satisfactory, pupils are not always encouraged to be efficient in their mental and written strategies.
- Assessments are frequent and rigorous, enabling leaders and teachers to set challenging individual targets. However, marking does not consistently help pupils to know how to improve their work.

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

The quality of the curriculum in mathematics is satisfactory.

- The school uses the Primary National Strategy framework to inform medium-term plans, which have a strong focus on the development of skills. Teachers modify their planning daily using their knowledge about how well pupils understand new learning. Skills in using and applying mathematics are not developed explicitly in the schemes of work
- The school's good calculation policy provides clear guidance on the most effective methods, including those for older pupils. It is shared with

parents who also receive a booklet on how mathematical skills are taught. Parents are also provided with the termly targets for each year group.

- Leaders are aware that information and communication technology is an area for development, although recently purchased web-based programmes are being used effectively to enhance provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics is good.

- The subject leader has been in post for two years and since then attainment in mathematics has risen sharply. Together, you monitor mathematics rigorously. This in-depth analysis ensures that leaders identify the right priorities. However, the improvement plan does not have measurable success criteria to assess the impact of actions.
- Monitoring of pupils' progress is good. Underachievement is identified and interventions are implemented quickly to secure better progress.
- The subject leader, who is currently in the first year of a two-year mathematics specialist course, is using her expertise well to support staff and to lead training. Nevertheless, her expertise is not always used to coach and model outstanding practice for colleagues.

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

- securing greater consistency in the quality of teaching by:
  - sharing more widely the existing outstanding practice, especially by involving pupils in assessing their own learning
- strengthening the curriculum by:
  - ensuring that using and applying mathematics are an integral part of planning so that all pupils deepen their conceptual understanding
- ensuring even greater accuracy in self evaluation by:
  - evaluating progress made towards targets for improvement with measurable success criteria.

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

**Mary Hinds**  
**Additional Inspector**