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Mr P Giorgio
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Giorgio

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 22 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 parts of seven lessons.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is good.

Achievement in mathematics

Achievement in mathematics is good.

- Attainment on entry to the Reception class is in line with national expectations. Children make good progress, so that their skills in mathematics are above average when they enter Year 1.
- Progress in Key Stage 1 is variable, resulting in attainment which is broadly average because too few pupils achieve the higher levels, especially Level 3.
- Progress in Key Stage 2 is good, and often outstanding for some groups, particularly for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and boys of average ability. However, more able boys and girls make only satisfactory progress.
- This overall good progress results in attainment which is above average at the end of Key Stage 2. Girls' attainment was high in 2011, with 100%

achieving Level 4 and 55% achieving Level 5. Boys' attainment was average, as too few achieved Level 5.

- In lessons, pupils enjoy a wide range of practical and relevant activities that develops their understanding and reasoning in all areas of mathematics. Almost all pupils show high levels of motivation, engagement and collaboration. For example, children in the Reception class applied themselves with sustained concentration to design scarves decorated with repeated patterns of increasing complexity for their class teddy bear.
- Scrutiny of work shows that pupils are very competent in number skills, and they have regular opportunities to develop these within problem solving, including real-life contexts.

Quality of teaching in mathematics

The quality of teaching in mathematics is good.

- The quality of teaching has a number of considerable strengths. Teachers have good subject knowledge and their enthusiasm is contagious, resulting in highly motivated learners. Learning is well sequenced, so that pupils can make effective links between previous learning and new learning which deepens their understanding.
- Teachers use questioning well to assess pupils' current level of understanding, to engage and challenge pupils, and to encourage them to explain their reasoning to each other and to the class.
- Teachers' attention to precise mathematical vocabulary has improved pupils' use of the correct mathematical language, helped deepen their conceptual understanding and increased their confidence in solving problems.
- The strongest teaching encourages pupils to identify for themselves what they need to know by the end of the lesson. In these lessons, pupils apply their mathematical skills in finding solutions to their own questions, and making generalisations about their results.
- Assessments are used well to match activities to different pupils' abilities. Support staff are well deployed, providing the right balance of support and challenge for those pupils who have learning difficulties.
- Where teaching is satisfactory some activities are not suitably matched to different abilities, and the learning outcomes are not clearly explained. As a result, pupils are not always sure what they are learning, and sometimes find the task too easy.

Quality of the curriculum in mathematics

The quality of the curriculum in mathematics is good.

- Planning is detailed and takes account of the needs of different groups. It also identifies key learning skills, questions and mathematical vocabulary. Information and communication technology is used well as a tool for

learning and teaching, particularly for interactive learning and for recording progress.

- Problem solving and investigative work are integral to the curriculum. Pupils' workbooks show that they have regular opportunities to practise their mathematical skills in relevant and stimulating contexts. For example, pupils were asked to find out what fraction of the day does 'Zarg the alien' spend on 'Triludian maths'.
- 'Active Mathematics', in which pupils learn and practise new concepts kinaesthetically, provides an opportunity for cross-curricular work. However, opportunities are lost for pupils to consolidate and extend routinely their mathematical skills in other curriculum areas.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics

The effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics is good.

- The subject leader is a strong role model of good practice. She provides good professional support and advice for colleagues. A clear vision for the future development of the subject is shared by you, other senior leaders and the subject leader. Regular monitoring provides leaders with an accurate and honest self-evaluation, and planning identifies the correct priorities for improvement.
- Recent improvements in monitoring pupils' progress have strengthened identification of potential underachievement. However, this monitoring does not always identify challenging targets, especially for more able pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- using the new monitoring system to set challenging targets to ensure that all pupils make good or better progress, especially the more able pupils
- improving links with mathematics across all the subjects in the curriculum.

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