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Mrs E Bridon
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Bridon

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 15 March 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; observation of three lessons, one undertaken jointly with you; and brief visits to four other lessons.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is good.

Achievement in mathematics

Achievement in mathematics is good.

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with mathematical knowledge and skills below, and sometimes well below, those typical for their age. They make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 so that on entry to Year 3 they have reached standards that are broadly in line with, or slightly below, the national average.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2, and attainment by the end of Year 6 is typically average or above average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 or higher has been above the national average in each of the last four years. Inspection

evidence supports the school's assessment data which show that current pupils are on track to meet challenging targets by the end of Key Stage 2.

- Pupils' good progress across the school is reflected in the quality of work in their books and their learning in lessons. Rigorous use of assessment data ensures that a strong focus is placed on the rates of progress made by all pupils. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' progress through their work in supporting pupils' mathematical development.
- Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons and show good attitudes to learning. They listen very well and respond eagerly to questions. Pupils in Year 1 particularly enjoyed making pictograms from 'smarties' and interpreting their results.

Quality of teaching in mathematics

The quality of teaching in mathematics is good.

- Common strengths to the teaching are positive classroom relationships and well-established routines that support learning well. The school makes good use of classroom and outdoor environments to enhance pupils' mathematical development.
- Where teaching was most effective, teachers ensured that learning was set clearly into context, so that pupils knew what they were learning and why. The use of 'talk partners' ensured that all pupils were involved in answering questions. A brisk pace, coupled with appropriately challenging work, meant that all pupils were able to make good progress. In one lesson, the teacher used success criteria very effectively to clarify the key steps needed for the pupils to meet the lesson objectives.
- In some instances of less effective satisfactory teaching, too great an emphasis was placed on skill development at the expense of opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematics. Where this happened, pupils did not check to see if their answers made sense or if other methods would be more appropriate for similar problems. Although teachers have high expectations of what all pupils might achieve, pupils' books show that higher-attaining pupils occasionally complete the same work as other pupils, particularly when developing procedural fluency.
- Marking is regular and teachers provide praise and encouragement for pupils to improve their work. However, this marking does not require pupils to respond to the help provided.

Quality of the curriculum in mathematics

The quality of the curriculum in mathematics is good.

- The school uses the Primary National Strategy materials for planning a broad and balanced, well-organised mathematics curriculum. Although mathematics is mainly taught as a discrete subject, it is also threaded successfully throughout the curriculum. While the school has focused on

developing pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics, the impact of this work remains inconsistent across the school.

- The curriculum is well resourced and is supplemented by several distinctive elements of additional provision. For example, after-school workshops for pupils and their parents and carers to learn mathematics together are well supported and a small number of high-attaining pupils in Year 6 take part in a morning 'maths club' to deepen and extend the mathematics they learn in lessons.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics

The effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics is good.

- Leaders and managers have an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses and have good plans to bring about further improvement. The regular monitoring of pupils' progress ensures that any underachievement is quickly identified and support provided. The analysis of assessment information provides a basis for identifying weak topics and gaps in pupils' understanding. It also informs adaptations made to the curriculum to strengthen the approaches to teaching these topics in future years.
- The school has a regular programme for monitoring the quality of teaching. During this academic year, the programme has been focused mainly on providing support for newly qualified teachers at the school, so its impact more widely has been reduced. Although the school leader's evaluation of the lesson observed jointly was accurate and identified key mathematical elements of the teaching, records of monitoring have tended to be generic rather than emphasising the mathematical detail of the teaching approaches used. In addition, the evaluation of teaching does not focus sufficiently on the impact of teaching on learning, in the lesson, or by drawing on a range of evidence over the longer term.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- providing regular opportunities for pupils to use and apply their knowledge to solve a range of problems, including in real-life contexts
- paying closer attention to mathematical detail when undertaking monitoring activities and placing a greater emphasis on the impact of teaching on learning, including over the longer term.

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

Lee Northern
Her Majesty's Inspector