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Mr S West
Headteacher
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Dear Mr West

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 28 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; observations conducted jointly with you and the mathematics subject leader of four lessons and brief visits to five other lessons.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is satisfactory.

Achievement in mathematics

Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory.

- From above average attainment on entry, pupils make satisfactory progress. A decline in attainment to average in 2010 has been reversed. The school's data and inspection evidence indicate pupils are currently on track to reach above average standards in national tests in 2012. Progress rates vary across the school for different groups of pupils but are satisfactory overall. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress from their starting points.
- Scrutiny of Year 6 pupils' work indicates that work on fractions is frequent and varied. Pupils confidently manipulate and interchange fractions, decimals and percentages, and use a variety of strategies efficiently to find the proportions of quantities. Though pupils solve some problems,

opportunities to develop different approaches and use and apply mathematics across the curriculum are not routinely and systematically planned.

- The vast majority of pupils show positive attitudes and apply themselves well to tasks, especially when they are actively involved in learning. For example in a Year 6 lesson, pupils understood the concept of ratio and learnt the associated notation well as they enthusiastically discovered the effect of mixing paints using different proportions.

Quality of teaching in mathematics

The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory.

- In most lessons observed, good quality, practical resources aided pupils' understanding of the current topic of fractions. Teaching assistants were deployed well to support individuals and groups of pupils. Teachers' questioning probed pupils' understanding effectively. In other lessons, opportunities for teachers to model the efficiency of calculation strategies were missed and the work set for higher attaining pupils did not provide sufficient challenge. Scrutiny of Key Stage 2 pupils' books showed that while marking of pupils' work indicated progress towards learning objectives, it did not consistently inform pupils of their next steps in learning.
- In addition to regular reviews of each unit of work and more precise use of pupils' monitoring data, teachers are increasingly using homework, also known as 'Learning Logs', to inform future provision. At home, pupils are given a mathematical idea to explore and show what they are capable of in varied and creative ways that clearly stimulate their interest. Developments such as these in the formal and informal use of assessment have resulted in teachers planning lessons that more closely match pupils' needs, abilities and learning styles.

Quality of the curriculum in mathematics

The quality of the curriculum in mathematics is satisfactory.

- The Primary National Strategy Framework provides the basis for teachers' planning and ensures progression in skills as pupils move through the school. Teachers are making good use of the publication, 'Overcoming Barriers' to address particular gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding. They use a variety of supplementary materials to support the teaching of mathematics. However, the overuse of worksheets restricts opportunities for pupils to record their working independently.
- Following monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of calculation strategies, the school has developed a new whole-school calculation policy, in consultation with staff and pupils, to ensure greater consistency of methods being taught.
- The school has revised its provision for supporting disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Action plans for intervention work

are now more tailored to pupils' specific needs. Though rates of progress for these pupils vary, they are satisfactory overall.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics

The effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics is satisfactory.

- Leaders at all levels, including the governing body, have made good use of support from the local authority since September 2011. Governors are increasingly holding the school to account for its performance. Assessment information is being used more rigorously to identify those pupils who are in danger of falling behind their targets. 'Pupil progress meetings' with staff are now held more regularly to identify strategies to support individuals and groups. Consequently, the capacity to further develop mathematics further in the school is satisfactory and improving.
- You are gaining a wider picture of the quality of teaching by looking at data, scrutinising pupils' work and having discussions with pupils. The evaluations of the lessons that you and the mathematics subject leader jointly observed with me were accurate and rightly identified strengths and improvement areas.
- Much of the work you have developed is at a relatively early stage, but is beginning to pay dividends. The proportion of good teaching has risen and, as a result, pupils are making better progress.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising attainment and accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics across the school by ensuring:
 - regular opportunities for pupils to develop different approaches to problem solving, to use and apply mathematics in other subjects and to record their work independently
 - greater levels of challenge for higher attaining pupils in lessons
 - teachers' marking of pupils' work enables them to know their next steps in learning.

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

Sarah Warboys
Additional Inspector