

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



15 May 2012

Mrs S Wilson  
Headteacher  
Gayton Community Junior School  
Gayton Avenue  
Littleover  
Derby  
DE23 1GA

Dear Mrs Wilson

### **Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: mathematics**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit with Jane Melbourne HMI on 2 May 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 parts of four lessons and short visits to some others.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is good.

#### **Achievement in mathematics**

Achievement in mathematics is good.

- The school's baseline testing at the beginning of Year 3 suggests that attainment on entry to the school is a little below average. Until recently, Year 6 test results were similarly below average, but the school's efforts to improve achievement in mathematics have paid off. Pupils are making good progress and attainment is now above average in each year group.
- Progress is broadly similar for different groups of pupils, including pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs. Currently, boys are making slightly better progress than girls in Years 3 and 4 but the situation is reversed in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils demonstrate their understanding by applying the mathematics they know to tackle problems in a variety of contexts. However, they do not always explain their answers well in written work. In one lesson, Year 5

pupils could explain orally how to interpret remainders in division problems, but their written answers did not reflect their understanding.

- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They enjoy mathematics lessons and generally engage well with the tasks set for them. Relationships with each other and with adults are good.

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

The quality of teaching in mathematics is good.

- The good progress being made by pupils indicates that teaching is effective over time. This judgement is also supported by the school's own lesson observations. Nevertheless, learning and progress were not always good in the observed lessons. In one case, pupils misunderstood the task; in another the task restricted pupils' scope for applying their knowledge; and two lessons had unnecessarily long introductions. However, each lesson also provided evidence of good teaching skills, particularly the way teachers checked on pupils' progress once they were working, providing support or further challenge as necessary through individual or small group discussions.
- Good teaching was also evident in the short afternoon mathematics sessions, where pupils practise their calculation skills and develop their vocabulary. Teachers also plan short catch-up interventions as and when pupils need them to master a topic or to fill a gap in knowledge.
- Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and maintain clear records of their strengths and weaknesses. They use this information well to identify pupils who need extra support to maintain their progress. Pupils are well informed about their current levels and targets because their exercise books contain an up-to-date copy of their assessment profiles.
- Teachers mark pupils' books regularly, writing comments that include praise for correct work and occasionally additional guidance, though pupils' working is sometimes too brief to allow diagnostic marking. Teachers' comments provide limited guidance to pupils on how to improve the presentation of their answers or the quality of their explanation.

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

The quality of the curriculum in mathematics is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is appropriately based on the Primary National Strategy framework, but with adaptations to provide longer blocks of time on each topic, particularly for lower-attaining pupils. Weekly teaching plans have sufficient flexibility to revisit aspects that pupils have found difficult.
- As recommended in its previous inspection report, the school has developed a calculation policy which helps to ensure that learning develops coherently as pupils move up the school. In other areas of the curriculum, teachers share ideas on how to approach different topics but have not agreed a common approach to guide learning over time or agreed distinct expectations for the three sets in each year group.

- Opportunities for pupils to use and apply mathematics are increasingly incorporated, as 'Friday work' in some sets and in a more integrated way in others. However, there is little planning for progression in skills such as presenting written solutions, or explaining and justifying methods. A more positive aspect of the curriculum is the increasing involvement of parents and carers in their children's learning of mathematics.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics is good.

- Senior leaders monitor teaching and learning well by visiting lessons, scrutinising pupils' work and through regular checks on teachers' planning. They have secured consistency across the school in key areas such as assessment, classroom management, lesson planning, and the teaching of calculation. These improvements have contributed to higher achievement.
- The mathematics coordinator is relatively new in post and her role in monitoring and evaluation is underdeveloped. This is restricting her scope to provide leadership, for example on the curriculum.
- Regular meetings are held with teachers to discuss pupils' progress, both to hold the teachers to account and to plan intervention strategies for pupils whose progress has fallen below expectations. For example, an intense programme of support and intervention is currently underway for a group of Year 5 pupils with special educational needs.
- Professional development is well targeted to improve the subject expertise of individual teachers and to address whole-school issues. Recent successful examples of the latter have included liaison with the infant school, training in assessment and guidance on teaching division.

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

- improving the curriculum by agreeing how topics other than calculation should be approached and by establishing expectations for each ability set
- providing more guidance for pupils on how to communicate their solutions in writing, including interpreting numerical answers in context
- increasing the authority and autonomy of the mathematics coordinator by strengthening her role in monitoring, evaluation and curriculum leadership.

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

**Stephen Abbott**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**