Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Mrs L Plant
Headteacher
Littleport Community Primary School
Parsons Lane
Littleport
Ely
CB6 1JT

Dear Mrs Plant

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 on 26 June 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 two lessons and brief visits to nine other lessons.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is good.

Achievement in mathematics

Achievement in mathematics is good.

- Children join the school with mathematical knowledge and skills that are below expectations for their age. At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, most children reach levels that are in line with national averages in problem solving, reasoning and number. The attainment of all groups of pupils currently at the school is broadly average. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels at Key Stages 1 and 2 has increased because of the consistently good teaching they receive over time.
- All groups of pupils make good progress from their starting points. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress through targeted intervention and effective support. Their independence is promoted particularly well by the provision of resources and the reference folder to which pupils frequently look for support.

- A learning walk across mathematics lessons showed pupils' positive attitudes to learning the subject. Pupils worked well together on a range of practical activities related to fractions.

Quality of teaching in mathematics

The quality of teaching in mathematics is good.

- Teaching strategies and the emphasis on practical tasks in lessons ensure that pupils are actively involved in learning. Good use of talk partners enables them to share and clarify their ideas. Teachers' secure subject knowledge and imaginative resources are effective in supporting pupils' understanding of fractions. In Year 2, for example, pupils divided pizza toppings equally to find fractions of quantities at the class 'Pizzeria'. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support individuals and groups of pupils.
- Adults are skilled in using questions to assess pupils' understanding. They regularly ask pupils to explain their thinking and to justify their answers. Teachers make good use of this information to address errors and misconceptions mid-lesson and to plan future learning. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that tasks are adapted well for different groups of pupils. Teachers support pupils' understanding by breaking down tasks into smaller steps and they demonstrate calculation methods and strategies clearly.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is positive. It praises and encourages their efforts and responds to pupils' self-assessment. Good practice is evident in Year 2 classes where teachers indicate what pupils need to do to improve their work. In particular, teachers respond to pupils' written work by asking supplementary, key questions which challenge and extend pupils' thinking further. This developmental marking has made a significant contribution to increased rates of progress for these pupils. However, marking of pupils' work in other year groups is not as effective.

Quality of the curriculum in mathematics

The quality of the curriculum in mathematics is good.

- Curriculum planning is based on the Primary National Strategy Framework and supplemented by a range of other resources, including an interactive 'learning wall' in each classroom. Planning takes account of assessment information and pupils' prior knowledge and ensures appropriate continuity and progression in different year groups. A whole-school policy ensures consistency in teaching calculation strategies across the school. Scrutiny of pupils' books indicates that work is varied, for example on fractions. Pupils regularly use and apply their knowledge and skills in fractions, decimals and percentages to solve problems in mathematics and in learning about other curriculum subjects, especially science.
- The school has placed a greater emphasis on supporting disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in lessons and has modified the curriculum accordingly. A recent and successful early intervention program

in Key Stage 1 is addressing particular gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills, increasing their confidence levels, and contributing well to their good progress.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics

The effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics is good.

- You have established a cohesive and systematic team approach to the leadership and management of mathematics. Leaders at all levels, including the 'link' governor, are clearly focused on raising attainment and accelerating pupils' progress. Monitoring includes formal lesson observations and more informal 'learning walks', conducted jointly by the subject leader with you and the deputy headteacher. This helps to ensure a broad overview of mathematical developments across the school.
- The detailed monitoring of pupils' progress ensures early identification of those pupils who are not making sufficient progress so that appropriate action can be taken swiftly. Regular pupil-progress meetings provide you and class teachers with the opportunity to engage in professional dialogue, which identifies possible barriers to learning for individuals and groups of pupils leading to specific strategies and additional support to address them. These meetings also allow the identification of training needs of staff.
- Effective action has improved the quality of teaching and, as a consequence, pupils are making better progress. This is particularly so for higher attaining pupils as evident in the increased proportion of pupils achieving higher National Curriculum levels at the ends of both key stages.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising attainment across the school by ensuring that teachers' marking of pupils' work consistently informs pupils how to improve and asks challenging questions to extend their thinking.

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