

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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Dr R Ashdown
Headteacher
St Luke's Primary School
Grange Lane North
Scunthorpe
DN16 1BN

Dear Dr Ashdown

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 3 July 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 four joint lessons with yourself.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is good.

Achievement in mathematics

Achievement in mathematics is good.

- Standards are well below the national averages because of the complex nature of the pupils' needs. However, all pupils make good and often significant steps in their learning to indicate that achievement is good and often rapid for those pupils with profound and multiple needs.
- The school has introduced a series of well-focused strategies to raise achievement for all pupils. As a result the historical trend of boys outperforming girls has been reversed this year where the school's latest set of data show that girls have performed better than boys.
- The enthusiasm and good levels of active participation from pupils particularly in cross-curricular activities illustrate their pleasure and enjoyment in learning mathematical concepts and skills. Having watched a video clip of athletes performing long-jumps, Year 6 pupils collaborated

well to measure each other's jumps on the playground with great delight and energy.

- Whenever appropriate, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning particularly when learning and practising mathematical skills using information and communication technology. For example, one pupil ordered objects of different lengths independently and with sustained concentration using mathematical software.

Quality of teaching in mathematics

The quality of teaching in mathematics is good.

- The teaching observed was good overall. Lessons are well planned and structured to meet the complex individual needs of almost all pupils. However, the learning objectives are not always sufficiently clear enough to identify precisely what pupils will be expected to have achieved at the end of the lesson, especially those pupils who are operating at higher levels.
- Teachers and support staff work very well as a team. All staff use questioning techniques to check and reinforce learning and maintain a brisk pace. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and make good progress during their lessons. In the best lessons staff use the correct mathematical language both verbally and through signing to make links in pupils' learning and to deepen pupils' conceptual development. Nevertheless pupils have insufficient opportunities to hear and say the correct mathematical language in all lessons.
- Good assessment systems are in the place. Staff use accurate data to inform planning, to monitor pupils' progress, to create pupils' achievement portfolios and to identify gaps in learning.

Quality of the curriculum in mathematics

The quality of the curriculum in mathematics is good.

- The mathematics curriculum has recently been redesigned to ensure that pupils are provided with sufficient opportunities to revisit skills within all mathematical topics to deepen their understanding. This new approach uses the Early Years Foundation Stage and National Curriculum as the framework for progression and continuity.
- New resources encourage pupils to explore and investigate number, number patterns and relationships by seeing and doing calculations physically. Pupils quickly see the visual representation of numbers and use this to add numbers together confidently and accurately. This practical approach is used to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in all mathematics topics.
- Further opportunities for pupils to use a wide range of materials are built into the curriculum, as are opportunities for teachers and pupils to use interactive whiteboards successfully. The curriculum provides carefully designed programmes for pupils with profound needs.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics

The effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics is good.

- Both you and your deputy have taken a dual role as mathematics leader for the past year. Pupils' progress is monitored accurately and you have an excellent overview of the progress all groups of pupils make. This enables you to respond quickly to any underachievement and to continually review the quality of teaching and the curriculum.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and based on regular monitoring. As a result the right priorities have been identified to secure continuing improvement. However, the action plan does not have measurable targets for improvement based on pupil outcomes.
- Your drive for ensuring that all pupils have positive and successful mathematical experiences has resulted in a highly motivated team of staff who share your vision. You have secured sound subject knowledge for all staff through focused and informed professional development and training. This has recently raised the profile of mathematics and the quality of teaching and the curriculum. The success of this is already securing faster rates of progress this year for all pupils in mathematics. This represents good capacity to continue to improve further.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- refining lesson objectives so that they are more sharply focused to meet the needs of all abilities, especially more able pupils
- ensuring that key mathematical vocabulary is used effectively by all staff and by the pupils
- identifying clear and measurable targets so that the impact of actions can be evaluated accurately.

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