

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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Mr J Rushton
Headteacher
Our Lady's RC Primary School
Holly Road
Aspull
Wigan
WN2 1RU

Dear Mr Rushton

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 5 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 two lessons and parts of five lessons during a learning walk.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is good.

Achievement in mathematics

Achievement in mathematics is good.

- Children's mathematical skills on entry to Reception varies from year to year but are often below those expected for their age, particularly in calculation and shape, space and measures. Children make good progress so that when they enter Year 1 their attainment is broadly average.
- When the whole school was last inspected in November 2010, mathematics was identified as an improving area. This had been reflected in the above average attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 in the previous academic year. Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. The recent test results for Year 6 pupils indicate that attainment remains above average. The school provides good quality individual and group support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, enabling them to make good progress.

- Pupils' behaviour is excellent in lessons and pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They listen attentively and take great care and pride in the presentation of their work. Pupils work well in pairs as well as collaborating in groups, particularly when challenging each other to think.
- Pupils' conceptual understanding is secure. Pupils apply their skills well to solve mathematical problems. They say they enjoy these activities but would like more opportunities to solve real-life problems.

Quality of teaching in mathematics

The quality of teaching in mathematics is good.

- Teaching of mathematics in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Planning ensures that a good range of activities and resources is provided for children to enjoy while they explore and learn mathematics. These opportunities enable children to develop their mathematical ideas and, through discussion, they are beginning to use appropriate vocabulary for adding, subtracting and sharing.
- Good teaching continues through the school. Teachers and teaching assistants are enthusiastic; they have good relationships with pupils which help to engage pupils in their learning. Teachers have high expectations throughout lessons. They use their subject knowledge well to plan interesting and lively lessons. Assessment is used effectively to plan work to match pupils' differing needs but activities do not yet consistently provide sufficient challenge for more-able pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Teachers ask good questions to challenge pupils' thinking which helps to deepen their conceptual understanding and consolidate their mathematical skills. Frequent monitoring throughout whole-class and group activities ensures that pupils' understanding is checked and any misconceptions are addressed quickly. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is effective giving praise as well as helping pupils to know how to improve their work and what they have to learn next.

Quality of the curriculum in mathematics

The quality of the curriculum in mathematics is good.

- Teachers use the Primary National Strategy materials to inform lesson planning, providing pupils with a well-balanced mathematical curriculum. Mathematics is taught as a discrete subject coupled with occasions when pupils use their skills and knowledge in other subjects. However, this is not sufficiently widespread to help pupils understand the importance of mathematics across the curriculum.
- The curriculum is designed successfully to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Well-trained teaching assistants provide a range of support programmes as required throughout the school.
- The school makes very good use of homework to help consolidate skills learnt in lessons. Pupils from all classes can access their homework through the internet whereby teachers can ensure the work is generally

challenging and appropriate. During lessons teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards. However, pupils have few opportunities to use a range of information and communication technology (ICT) tools to use and apply their mathematical skills and develop independent learning.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics

The effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics is good.

- Over the last three years, the leadership team has been rightly focused in the drive to improve mathematics, particularly calculation. All staff have worked together successfully to review policies, particularly the calculations policy, ensuring a consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics. Leaders and managers communicate high expectations, enthuse staff, and have a clear vision for the continual improvement of mathematics.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and is used effectively to set clear and realistic improvement priorities. A coherent programme of monitoring includes lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and talking with pupils. Evaluation links securely to planning and staff training. Rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress and regular pupil-progress meetings quickly alert teachers to those pupils in need of support.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that pupils reinforce their mathematical skills through increasing the opportunities they have to solve real-life problems within mathematics and across the curriculum
- increasing the challenge for more-able pupils further by ensuring activities consistently take account of their starting points
- providing pupils with more occasions to use a wide range of ICT resources to support their independent 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

Sue Sharkey
Additional Inspector