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1 February 2013

Mrs A Albion
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Albion

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 30 January 2013 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: meetings with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; observation of three lessons, two undertaken jointly with you; and brief visits to two intervention sessions.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is good.

Achievement in mathematics

Achievement in mathematics is good.

- Due to the small numbers in different year groups and the inward mobility that affects some cohorts, achievement fluctuates from year to year. Children join the school with mathematical knowledge and skills that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 so that, by the end of Year 2, standards are typically slightly above the national average.
- Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons and learn well. Staff keep a close eye on progress and provide prompt and effective support to help pupils to stay on track. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and those supported through the Pupil Premium make the same good progress

as other children. Overall levels of attainment are above average by the end of Year 6.

- Teachers have high expectations of all pupils, and work hard to ensure that pupils in the youngest year group in each class, and the least-able, are supported to do well. This emphasis sometimes means that, on occasion, older or more-able pupils are not consistently challenged to extend their thinking or deepen their understanding.
- Pupils work well with each other and enjoy discussing their work. They like practical activities and the opportunity to learn in different ways. In the mixed-age Reception and Year 1 class, children enjoyed finding the hidden pieces of 'numicon' they needed to complete their number sentences.

Quality of teaching in mathematics

The quality of teaching in mathematics is good.

- Teachers plan lessons well to meet the wide range of ages and abilities in each class. They place a strong emphasis on securing skills in number and calculation, which sometimes means that opportunities are missed to develop pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Teaching places an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of mathematical ideas and concepts. For example, when learning about fractions, younger pupils explored objects cut into many equal pieces, filled a jug three-quarters full and stood two-thirds of the way along a line on the school playground.
- Marking is regular and teachers provide written comments about pupils' work. However, some comments are not sharp enough to help pupils to improve their learning and pupils are not routinely expected to respond to the advice provided.

Quality of the curriculum in mathematics

The quality of the curriculum in mathematics is good.

- The school is a mathematically rich environment; mathematics has a high profile in all classrooms where many attractive displays support learning. Computers are used well to support the development of pupils' independent learning skills in mathematics.
- The curriculum is based around plans for mixed-aged classes, adapted from those provided by the former Primary National Strategy. These materials are supplemented by a range of resources and by a published mathematics scheme.
- Mathematics is supported very effectively across the curriculum. Activities such as the 'Enterprise Project' and the many opportunities for pupils to learn outside the classroom help them to make good progress.

Effectiveness of leadership and management of mathematics

The effectiveness of leadership and management of mathematics is good.

- You ensure a strong focus on improving the quality of mathematics provision across the school. You undertake a range of monitoring activities and make sure that the progress of all pupils is checked regularly. Your evaluation of the jointly observed lessons was accurate and you have identified an appropriate range of priorities for mathematics in the school development plan.
- Although you take overall responsibility for leading mathematics, you are sharing some aspects of this with the mathematics co-ordinator. However, as yet, the mathematics co-ordinator is not fully involved in undertaking a role in quality assurance or in leading curriculum development. Governors play an active part in supporting and challenging the school to continue to improve provision in mathematics.
- You have developed effective policies to ensure consistency and progression in calculation across the school. You recognise that this approach might usefully be extended to include other strands of the mathematics curriculum.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring pupils in the oldest year groups in each class, and the most-able, are consistently challenged to extend and deepen their understanding of the mathematics they learn
- further developing the whole-school leadership role of the mathematics co-ordinator
- improving the impact of written feedback to pupils about their work by:
 - ensuring that teachers’ comments identify clearly how pupils can improve or extend their learning
 - making opportunities for pupils to respond to the comments provided.

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

Lee Northern
Her Majesty’s Inspector