

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



1 February 2013

Mrs B Evans
Headteacher
Hyde Park Junior School
Hyde Park Road
Mutley
Plymouth
PL3 4RH

Dear Mrs Evans

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 28 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: interviews with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; observation of three lessons and a visit to a local cemetery to observe pupils completing a mathematics trail.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is outstanding.

Achievement in mathematics

Achievement in mathematics is outstanding.

- Results in national Key Stage 2 tests have been consistently well above average over the last three years. In 2012, an impressive proportion of pupils achieved the highest level. Pupils make outstanding progress because lessons are highly motivating and enjoyable. Pupils are challenged by some very demanding tasks, for example drawing box and whisker plots when working in statistics.
- Pupils enter school at the start of Year 3 well drilled in basic number skills. The school then extends their mathematical development so that pupils make excellent progress. Pupils respond well to the highly motivating teaching and have good understanding of the concepts they are learning.

- Pupils who have learning difficulties are well supported through additional help in small groups. This work is connected with the topics being covered in pupils' main lessons and helps them overcome any gaps in their knowledge and gain more confidence. Groups of pupils also use an on-line package to support them with their calculation skills.
- Pupils have a large number of planned opportunities to use and apply their mathematics. Where possible, lessons are planned for pupils to discover mathematical connections for themselves; for example, learning about capacity by calibrating a bottle which can be used to measure different volumes. Pupils write criminal investigations based upon mathematical problems. These are trialled and then updated before sharing with other Year 6 pupils. Pupils also have opportunities to work outside in mathematics; for example, visiting the local graveyard to identify lengths of lives and other facts based upon the data on gravestones.

Quality of teaching in mathematics

The quality of teaching in mathematics is outstanding.

- Teaching is outstanding: it allows pupils to make excellent progress and become confident mathematicians. The questioning of pupils is very skilful and makes sure pupils develop a very good understanding of concepts. Work is very challenging and, for the most able, extends well beyond the Key Stage 2 levels. However this sometimes exposes gaps in teachers' subject knowledge, leading to mathematical errors in teaching.
- Staff assess pupils' learning well. Teachers take regular feedback to check on any misconceptions and use pupils' responses for discussion. A feature of lessons is the many opportunities for pupils to work independently with limited input from teachers. This allows excellent discussions and ensures pupils persevere with problems without being given help too early. Marking in mathematics is not as detailed as it is within pupils' writing books. It gives praise and feedback on how well pupils have achieved but does not always identify activities for pupils to extend their mathematics.
- Pupils use computers to explore mathematics as well as using specific programmes to help develop numerical dexterity and multiplication tables.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics and are keen to take part in lunchtime clubs. These are run by pupils and give those attending and those organising opportunities to develop their mathematics through games and problem-solving activities.

Quality of the curriculum in mathematics

The quality of the curriculum in mathematics is outstanding.

- The curriculum is very well developed, and focuses on ensuring many opportunities for pupils to use and apply mathematics across a wide range of applications. Staff use a wide variety of resources which are not linked to any specific published scheme.

- Pupils enjoy practical activities and the chance to work within the local area, for example within a park or graveyard. This gives pupils a very good understanding of mathematics beyond the classroom.
- The school provides very good targeted interventions for individuals and groups to make up for lost ground. These pupils can also attend additional classes outside of normal school time.

Effectiveness of leadership and management of mathematics

The effectiveness of leadership and management of mathematics is outstanding.

- You have been key to the way in which mathematics is taught within the school. The philosophy of engaging lessons that help develop confidence and independence, as well as ensuring excellent progress, is shared by all staff. The subject leader gives very good support and advice to staff within the school and also as part of the support offered to another local school.
- The routines to ensure that teaching is of the highest quality and that staff are held to account for the progress their pupils make secures their outstanding achievement. This management expertise is also why the school is playing a major part in supporting other schools.
- Lesson observations are focused upon pupils' progress and the teaching that helps them. Advice and further support is available to ensure the quality of teaching is constantly improving. Areas for development are clear, tackled well with good ways of measuring their impact.
- The school has recognised the need to update its calculation policy which gives support for parents and carers in helping their children.
- The school has successfully reduced the gap between the achievement of pupils supported through the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after, and those whose parents are serving in the armed forces, and all pupils overall.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving teachers' subject knowledge at the higher National Curriculum levels to reduce any possible misconceptions
- ensuring marking within mathematics books is as detailed and helpful as that within pupils' writing books.

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
Michael Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector