

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



22 February 2013

Mr J Jarvis  
Headteacher  
Boughton Monchelsea Primary School  
Church Hill  
Boughton Monchelsea  
Maidstone  
ME17 4HP

Dear Mr Jarvis

### **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 with Tim Bristow HMI on 14 February 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; and observation of seven lessons. It also included a meeting with members of the governing body.

### **The overall effectiveness of mathematics is good.**

#### **Achievement in mathematics is good.**

- Achievement is now as high as it has ever been. As long ago as 1863, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, when visiting the school, described the standard of arithmetic as 'fair'. Over the interceding 150 years, the standards of mathematics have varied but have been good for over 30 years.
- Attainment is high, with particular strengths in basic number work and data handling. In 2012, over half of the pupils achieved the higher levels in national tests at age 11. The school operates within a selective school system and each year up to half of the pupils go on to a local grammar school.

- Pupils throughout school use their skills to solve problems. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils were encouraged to use data to calculate different types of averages as part of solving a wider problem. They were able to do this successfully because they had strong number skills.
- The youngest pupils are given frequent opportunities to sound out, count and manipulate simple numbers in a mathematically rich environment that includes many posters, shapes and mathematical uses of new technology. As a consequence, pupils develop a confidence in their number work. In one lesson, pupils were encouraged to make their own bar charts and then interrogate them to solve various problems.
- Overall, pupils make good progress in mathematics in each key stage. Middle and high ability groups do especially well. Rates of progress vary slightly between classes. Occasionally teachers allow some misunderstandings to remain.

### **Teaching in mathematics is good.**

- Teachers and other adults use precise mathematical vocabulary routinely. As a consequence, pupils also do so. Adults model good attitudes to the subject and generate a positive approach throughout the school to solve problems. Pupils respond to this high level of expectation with real enthusiasm.
- Particular strengths in the teaching include strong relationships, detailed planning with lesson content thoughtfully adapted to suit the range of abilities, and good use of additional resources.
- Although all teachers have good subject knowledge, with some examples of especially strong mathematical understanding, the quality of their response to pupils' questions varies with occasional evidence of teachers 'seeking out' the correct answer rather than responding to what a pupil said. In some classes, the presentation of pupils work varies with some examples of casual errors. However, all teachers seek tirelessly to ensure pupils understand their mathematics. Marking is of good quality.
- Pupils receive extra help if they are at risk of underachievement through a variety of additional support which includes the work of a strong team of teaching assistants and occasional intervention groups.

### **The curriculum in mathematics is good.**

- The curriculum rests on a secure basis of strong number work leading to accurate problem solving both in number and other aspects of mathematics. For example, graphs are interpreted not just drawn. In exploring averages, Year 6 pupils were able to come up with a range of statistics to decide if a set of spelling test results showed a good class performance in spelling or not. Pupils are taught to be flexible in their choice of methods of calculation.
- The curriculum is adapted to suit the needs of all pupils although it is especially suited to the more able. The school enters pupils in national mathematics competitions with some success. It is now exploring ways in

which links with areas of mathematics can be made more evident in other subjects, such as science or in themes and topics.

### **Leadership and management of mathematics are good.**

- Mathematics is given a high level of importance by all in the school. The subject leader, who is also the deputy headteacher, leads the subject with enthusiasm and energy and is passionate about pupils doing well. He has implemented an accurate system for tracking pupils' progress and moderates judgements others make about pupils' attainment to ensure consistency.
- The school is well resourced. A link governor in mathematics helps to ensure the wider school community has a secure knowledge of relative strengths and weaknesses in the subject. For example, the school has planned a mathematics forum for parents to launch the new school calculation policy.
- In-school monitoring of mathematics is regular but is conducted annually rather than termly. This limits opportunities for identifying and sharing good practice. The support structure for professional development of teachers is based in a cluster of local schools, but it is emerging rather than secure due to staff absences in other schools.

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- increasing the frequency of monitoring of mathematics throughout the school and finding ways of sharing the good practice evident in school
- ensuring that mathematical opportunities are taken in other subjects and within topic themes.

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

**Ceri Morgan**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**