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Mr R Cook  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Cook

### **Ofsted 2013–14 subject survey inspection programme: mathematics**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 10 October 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 four lessons and brief visits to other lessons and additional activities.

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

#### **Achievement in mathematics is outstanding.**

- The majority of children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skill development in mathematics that is typically lower than expected. Throughout their time in school, nearly all pupils make outstanding progress so that by the time they leave Year 6, standards are high. The majority reach standards that are higher than expected nationally.
- The school's leaders take great care to ensure that disabled pupils and those who have special needs and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make similar outstanding progress to the others. From very low starting points, this has resulted in pupils known to be eligible for free school meals reaching standards that are the same as the national average overall by the end of Year 6.

- By the time pupils leave Year 6, their ability to reason and problem solve is very impressive, and is underpinned by great fluency with number. For example, in one lesson pupils worked in groups to prove or disprove mathematical statements. They discussed the merits of the statements drawing on their own examples that demonstrated well-developed mental arithmetic skills, a logical approach to problem solving, and fluency with negative numbers, percentages and the links between different mathematical algorithms. In all classes, pupils show a great enthusiasm for mathematics and an excellent attitude to learning.

### **Teaching in mathematics is outstanding.**

- The quality of teaching is always good with much that is outstanding. Teachers are expert at posing problems in an exciting and interesting context that enthuses pupils to work hard together to reach a solution. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils were working fluently with digit combinations to help the Big Friendly Giant to remember the pin number of his mobile phone.
- Teachers and other adults have excellent subject knowledge. Consequently, pupils benefit from work that is pitched at just the right level for them. Teachers expertly check pupils' progress in lessons and over time. This means that pupils benefit from timely extra help if it is judged that they need more support to consolidate their learning and overcome misconceptions.
- In all lessons it is evident that the ethos of the school is to stretch pupils' thinking. To this end, teachers are highly skilled at questioning and challenging pupils so that they successfully take the next steps in their learning. For example, in one lesson the teaching assistant observed a group of pupils discussing whether a number that had four digits must be greater than 1,000. At the appropriate time, he posed one question about decimal numbers that successfully broadened the group's reasoning.

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

- All groups of pupils make outstanding progress because the curriculum is tailored very well to meet their needs. For example, a teaching assistant provided precisely targeted support to a group of Year 3 pupils to help them to better understand the base value of digits in numbers, following their teacher's accurate identification of their difficulties in that morning's lesson.
- A major strength of the curriculum is the emphasis on problem solving and reasoning as a means by which pupils further develop their fluency when handling numbers. As one pupil reported 'We like problems because it gets your brain thinking more.' During the inspection, pupils of all ages were seen successfully and independently solving problems or carrying out investigations involving shape, number, measures and data handling.
- Useful links are established between mathematics and other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils have well-planned, regular opportunities to practise and apply skills in all aspects of mathematics. However, the timing of this

work in other subjects is not as well aligned as it could be with the stage when associated skills are taught in mathematics lessons.

**Leadership and management of mathematics are outstanding.**

- The mathematics coordinator leads staff training expertly, for example the recent work to promote mathematical language and discussions in lessons has had a clear impact on strengthening teaching and learning. She also keeps a careful check on the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils. There is no complacency in this high-performing school. All staff demonstrate very professional attitudes as they strive for continual improvement.
- You are fervent in your approach to maintaining high standards in teaching and in achievement. When you identify that an aspect of the school's work could be better, you are dynamic. For example, the main priority in the school's improvement plan is the more rapid progress in mathematics of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals. Expectations of teaching and progress in this area are very high and teachers are being held to account to ensure that the priority is met. Consequently, the school has experienced a sustained improvement in achievement over the last three years.

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

- planning the mathematical activities in other subjects in a more timely fashion so that they enable pupils to consolidate recent learning in mathematics lessons more effectively and help teachers to review the success of their teaching in embedding learning.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop mathematics in the school.

As explained previously, this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection.

Yours sincerely

**Tim Bristow**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**