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Miss J Parker
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Parker

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 4 February 2014 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 five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is outstanding.

Achievement in mathematics is outstanding.

- Results in national tests at Key Stages 1 and 2 have been consistently above average over the last three years. In 2013, a large majority of the Year 6 cohort achieved the higher levels. Pupils are challenged by some very demanding tasks, for example creating and testing algebraic formulae to work out the number of squares around irregular shapes.
- Children enter school with skills similar to other children nationally. In nursery and reception their mathematical development accelerates rapidly through high-quality teaching in a mathematically rich environment.
- Throughout the school, pupils respond well to the motivating teaching and have good understanding of the concepts they are learning. A much higher than average proportion of pupils make expected and better-than-expected rates of progress.

- Pupils develop a love of mathematics. So much so, that all pupils working towards Levels 4, 5 and 6 choose to stay behind after school for extra mathematics lessons with you, the senior teacher and the mathematics co-ordinator.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs receive high quality support through additional small-group work. This work is matched precisely to their needs and helps them overcome any gaps in their understanding. Teaching assistants deliver skilfully individual programmes of support and ensure pupils do as much as they can for themselves.
- Pupils have frequent opportunities to solve mathematical problems and to apply their mathematical knowledge in real-life situations. For example, Year 4 and 5 pupils used units of time, miles and kilometres to track their teacher's bike ride from London to Paris. Pupils regularly work as 'maths detectives' to solve puzzles. The local environment is used well to help their understanding; for example, marking out life-size plans of house designs in the field next door.

Teaching in mathematics is outstanding.

- Teaching across the school enables pupils to make outstanding progress and become confident mathematicians. Careful questioning develops pupils' conceptual understanding rapidly. Challenging work for the most able pupils, taken from Key Stage 3 programmes, makes pupils think hard.
- Teachers routinely use effective questioning and pupils' responses to identify any misconceptions. A consistent feature of all lessons observed was effective use of checking of pupils' learning by all adults as they moved around classrooms. Pupils' mathematical vocabulary is enhanced by plentiful opportunities to work in pairs to discuss solutions to problems.
- Daily opportunities for pupils to act on teachers' marking are helping them overcome misconceptions, make corrections, or take next steps in their learning. Marking in pupils' books is detailed, accurate and identifies next steps through simple prompts such as 'try this' or 'next, do this'.
- Information and communication technology is used well to support pupils' mathematical learning. Children in reception used tablet computers to capture photographic images of different 2D and 3D shapes. Teachers used these images well, presenting them on interactive whiteboards, and prompting children to describe carefully the features of each shape.

The curriculum in mathematics is outstanding.

- The curriculum places a high priority on developing pupils' conceptual understanding and problem-solving skills. Adults dip in and out of different schemes depending on the topic being covered and what provides the best match to pupils' needs. Very occasionally, calculation work lacks the variety needed to make pupils think hard about every question.
- The mathematically rich environment in nursery and reception enables children to immerse themselves in a world of mathematics, for instance by

writing Chinese numbers in sequence, making models of shapes and using large scale dominoes for play.

- Pupils enjoy the links made in the curriculum to other topics and subjects. For example, when reading 'One for Snail, Ten for Crab', pupils enjoyed finding how many different animals there could be with a total of 14 legs. Older pupils planned and costed trips to France and Spain, which involved researching internet prices, local markets and methods of travel to establish the cheapest options. Such opportunities provide pupils with a very good understanding of mathematics beyond the classroom.

Leadership and management of mathematics are outstanding.

- With the mathematics leader, you have established a vibrant mathematical community. Engaging lessons, taught consistently well by all staff, help develop pupils' problem solving abilities and ensure excellent progress.
- Leaders at all levels, including governors, are knowledgeable, well informed and up-to-date with their understanding of mathematics both within the school and nationally. Performance management is used very effectively to identify target groups of pupils and ensure all make the progress of which they are capable.
- The mathematics leader is highly capable and well respected. Good support and advice has brought about improvements to teaching and the curriculum. Working within a local network of schools enables some of this expertise to be shared beyond the school. The school recognises it could pursue this avenue even further.
- Detailed subject plans identify precise actions to bring about further improvements. Analyses of teachers' planning and pupils' work, focussing on the development of pupils' problem-solving skills and their progress, are used well to identify teachers' individual training needs.
- Staff take ownership of their performance. They act swiftly on feedback from lesson observations and strive to improve their practice. Advice and support is always available to ensure that teaching is always improving. This, in part, is why pupils' achievement is outstanding.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensure written calculation questions make pupils think hard and require them to demonstrate their understanding in a variety of ways
- extend your work and impact within the network of local schools to a broader audience.

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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Richard Light
Her Majesty's Inspector