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Mrs E Spooner  
Headteacher  
Kemball Special School  
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Dear Mrs Spooner

### **Ofsted 2014–15 subject survey inspection programme: mathematics**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 15 October 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 senior leaders and other staff; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observations in lessons.

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

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

- The deputy headteacher and mathematics subject leader work very effectively together under your leadership to ensure that pupils make good or better progress.
- The subject leader has a clear, accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement in mathematics. She carries out a wide range of activities to monitor the quality of teaching, and provides support for teachers to secure their further development. As a result, teachers new to working within the sector are sharpening their skills, and teaching is improving.
- Governors receive information annually on pupils' achievement in mathematics. However, the information they receive is not clear enough about whether pupils are on track to make the amount of progress that is expected of them. Therefore, they are unable to hold leaders fully to account in a timely way.

- All staff are included in professional development opportunities. They speak highly of the impact on their practice from observing that of their colleagues both within the school and elsewhere.
- Rigorous systems are in place to ensure that assessment levels awarded to pupils are secure. Teachers meet regularly with colleagues from other local mainstream and special schools to compare pieces of work and check each other's assessments.

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

- Senior leaders have ensured that all staff are aware of the implications of changes to the national curriculum. They have worked together to review their practice and adapt their curriculum planning accordingly. Long-term plans have been created, informed by the school's existing curriculum, and the revised programmes of study for Years 1 and 2 as these reflect the levels of ability of pupils in the school.
- Teachers draw up detailed weekly plans that set out activities and targets for groups of one or two pupils, and the level of support they should receive when tackling tasks. Daily records are kept by all class staff outlining pupils' responses and progress made on an individual basis. Therefore, the teacher is able to identify exactly what learning has taken place, and what may need to be revisited.
- Older pupils receive accreditation for their mathematical learning. A range of courses accredited by ASDAN are offered and a small group of more-able pupils are working towards an Entry Level qualification in mathematics. This ensures that all pupils receive a recognised qualification at the appropriate level for their ability.

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

- Teachers and other adults have detailed knowledge of each pupil's interests, needs and level of ability which they use when planning lessons. This ensures that each pupil receives input that is sharply focussed on the next steps in their learning. Adults gather evidence to demonstrate learning, and ensure this learning is secure before moving a pupil on to the next stage at the appropriate time.
- Teachers are mindful of the age and ability of their class when planning activities, and make learning fun. For example, adults had organised a 'laundry' activity for a class of pupils aged three to seven years with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Pupils were involved in songs; sensory activities with water and bubbles; an activity on a tablet computer which created bubble effects and turn-taking. All of this was underpinned with a plethora of activities involving numbers to five with opportunities to count, recognise numbers and respond to sensory stimuli.
- Teachers manage large teams of staff effectively, ensuring that pupils are engaged in learning but also able to work on their own when they can. Support staff use lesson plans and records in order to ensure that learning continues exactly as the teacher intended.

- Occasionally, teaching is less effective and planned activities rely more heavily on rote learning and do not ensure that a pupil's response comes from an understanding of the underlying concepts.

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

- Pupils join the school at different stages of their education. All have complex needs, and work at levels significantly below those that would normally be expected for their age. Attainment of pupils generally falls within the range p-scale 1 to Level 2.
- A detailed system is in place to assess pupils' skills accurately, set challenging yet realistic targets and track the very small steps of progress made towards these. The school sets ambitious targets for the progress of individual pupils which are related to national expectations and help ensure pupils make good progress.
- The school tracks carefully the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those from minority ethnic backgrounds. There is no discernible difference between their progress and that of other pupils in the school.

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

- ensuring that the quality of teaching in mathematics is consistently good or better, making maximum use of opportunities to deepen pupils' mathematical fluency
- enabling governors to hold leaders to account for the achievement of pupils by providing clear, regular reports which include information about whether pupils are on track to make expected progress or not.

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

**Gaynor Roberts**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**