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Dr K Richmond
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Dear Dr Richmond

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 26 November 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, governors and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is good.

Leadership and management of mathematics are good.

- Following the inspection in May 2013 when the school and mathematics were judged to require improvement, you, the governors and other leaders have taken effective action to strengthen teaching and achievement which are now good.
- You and other leaders have ensured that teachers receive appropriate training to strengthen their teaching. Classroom observations and checks on planning and pupils' work in books are used accurately to identify areas for development. One useful strategy was to take advantage of the expertise of the local authority to improve teachers' subject skills and knowledge. In consequence, additional expertise in leadership and teaching has been introduced into the school and become embedded in practice.

- A focus on mathematics when managing the performance of teachers has made an important contribution to the improvement in achievement of pupils. Half termly meetings, in which staff discuss the progress of individual pupils, are effective in ensuring that individuals make good progress.

The curriculum in mathematics is good.

- You have ensured that the curriculum has the appropriate emphasis on problem solving, fluency and reasoning throughout the school. For example, in the Reception class, children were examining clues using measure and patterns to try to identify a burglar. It was evident through their discussion with each other that their reasoning skills were developing well. In Year 6, the teacher began the lesson with a mathematical challenge, which required pupils to write the most complicated equation they could think of to make the number 60. Pupils demonstrated a high degree of fluency in their responses.
- Pupils' regular opportunities to practise and apply mathematics skills in other subjects are contributing to the improvement in their achievement. For example, in history and geography, pupils have been developing their problem-solving skills by investigating travel options to Australia and also carrying out problems in the context soldiers living and fighting in the trenches in World War 1.
- You have taken a measured approach to changes in assessment. Training links with the local authority and a close partnership with another local primary school with which you plan assessment changes and moderate each other's assessments have ensured that your plans to implement fully a new assessment procedure by April 2015 are progressing well.

Teaching in mathematics is good.

- Teachers are good at teaching problem-solving activities. Pupils report how much they enjoy the weekly opportunities to complete these activities either in mathematics lessons or in other subjects. For example, in Year 2, pupils had to solve problems that required them to draw on their addition, subtraction and multiplication skills.
- One important focus in lessons is the emphasis on ensuring that pupils of different abilities master the skills and understanding that are necessary in mathematics. For example, in a Year 4 class, pupils demonstrated a secure understanding of the place value of digits, including decimals, so that they could complete calculations involving money that were pitched at the correct level for their ability.
- Pupils benefit from good guidance and advice from teachers on their written work and from well-trained teaching assistants within lessons.
- In some classes, the teaching of reasoning is not as well developed as in others. For example, problems presented to pupils are not phrased as well as they could be to ensure that pupils have to employ their reasoning skills.

Achievement in mathematics is good.

- In 2014, standards rose in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Year 2 and Year 6. Consequently, nearly all pupils left Year 6 well prepared for mathematics at their secondary school. Nearly half the pupils gained the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2, which is a marked improvement on previous standards. The reason for this rise in standards is that across the school all groups of pupils now make good progress.
- There are very few disadvantaged pupils in the schools. For this reason it is not possible to make accurate judgements about the achievement of this group when compared to the others.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitude to mathematics are good. Pupils demonstrate confidence when tackling problems. They draw on past experience when solving problems and work well together to reach a conclusion.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that teachers build in more opportunities to develop pupils reasoning skills when carrying out problem solving and investigation activities.

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

Tim Bristow
Her Majesty's Inspector