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8 December 2014

Mrs A Pleasants
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Pleasants

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 2 December 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, observations of mathematics lessons, discussions with pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation and analysis of pupils' work.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is outstanding.

Leadership and management of mathematics are outstanding.

- Leaders are highly ambitious and have very high expectations. They have a relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching. They ensure that each of the rounds of lesson observations has a different mathematical focus and follow them up with additional training and helpful feedback to teachers.
- Leaders seek and act on pupils' views and check through their work. As a result, leaders have a very clear and accurate view of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning which in turn leads to the stringent tackling of any barriers pupils have to their progress.
- Leaders have invested in high-quality training for staff. The subject leader has a mathematics specialist teacher qualification and has provided extensive training to prepare staff for the new national curriculum, including how to teach the 'Singapore bar' method, including its use in

problem solving. Teachers have time for professional reading and opportunities to attend courses after which they identify in detail the impact the training will have on their teaching. As a consequence, teachers are highly trained and knowledgeable.

- Leaders actively seek out and use best practice. Their work with teachers from other schools has led to improvement in mathematics teaching in other schools.

The curriculum in mathematics is outstanding.

- The curriculum is planned thoroughly to make sure it meets the needs of all groups of pupils. The transition towards the new national curriculum has been well organised and crafted carefully. It has involved teachers teaching some new areas of mathematics, in the spring 2014 term, that underpin the content assigned to their year group.
- The curriculum is highly focussed on developing pupils' mathematical fluency. Pupils have frequent mathematical learning challenges at the start of the morning and twice-weekly small-group work based on errors they have made in weekly assessments.
- Problem solving and reasoning are threaded through all of the school's work in mathematics. For example, Year 5 pupils were asked to explain to the teacher why a particular number was a prime number and Year 6 pupils identified all of the possible places four knights could sit around King Arnold's round table. Through solving problems, pupils apply their mathematical knowledge and skills and develop fluency of working with number.
- The school has identified the potential to strengthen arrangements for transition from Year 6 into Year 7 through working with secondary school on what has been taught in Year 6 and approaches used.

Teaching in mathematics is outstanding.

- High-quality teaching, delivered in interesting and exciting ways, engages pupils fully in their lessons. Teachers use visual images and other resources, such as interactive whiteboards, very well to explain mathematical ideas and concepts. They provide problems set in real-life or unusual contexts. In a Year 4 lesson on area, for example, the teacher skilfully used a scenario based on the ground inside of his chicken coup to challenge pupils to think about the possible sizes of coup to cover a set area.
- In lessons and when working in small groups, pupils collaborate readily on tackling errors in their work. The detailed and high-quality attention given by adults to tackling pupils' errors and misconceptions enables progress to be secure and rapid. Adults deepen pupils' thinking to make sure they have a full understanding of the idea before moving on to the next stage.
- Teachers' high-quality marking identifies quickly any errors or misconceptions that pupils have made. Teachers give very clear follow-up advice or challenges to which pupils respond the next day. The dialogue

between teacher and pupil helps the teacher to pose the right questions pupils need to understand the mathematics fully.

- Teachers use guided mathematics sessions to focus on key areas of learning and to deepen pupils' thinking. In Year 6 for example, pupils thought about factors of 60 and wrote down systematically all of the factor pairs. With the teacher, they then discussed and calculated which number below 100 has the most factors and efficient methods of checking.

Achievement in mathematics is outstanding.

- Pupils' attainment is well above the national average and has risen in each of the last three years so that in 2014 almost 60% of pupils attained the higher Level 5. From their starting points in Year 3 pupils make rapid progress.
- The gap between boys' and girls' achievement has closed over the last three years. Similarly, the gap between the achievement of pupils whose circumstances make them disadvantaged and their peers has narrowed to show less than a term's difference.
- Pupils are very keen to learn and to succeed. They are highly fluent in mathematics. Their work and responses in lessons indicate they have quick recall of number facts, and are able to calculate mentally and in writing using efficient methods. They are able to solve problems by thinking about which skills and methods they need to solve the question.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- working with the local authority and secondary school and academy staff to improve the transition between Year 6 and Year 7.

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

Allan Torr
Her Majesty's Inspector