Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

7 May 2015

Mrs P Davies
Chingford Hall Primary Academy
4 Burnside Avenue
Chingford
London
E4 8YJ

Dear Mrs Davies

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 6 May 2015 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 evaluation of strengths and weaknesses included: interviews with you, the subject leader, the assessment leader and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader; discussions with a small group of Year 5 pupils; observations of teaching in two classes, conducted jointly with you; a learning walk, conducted with the subject leader; scrutiny of relevant documentation and analysis of a sample of pupils' work.

Leadership and management of mathematics

- Leaders have the very highest expectations for mathematics in the school. The mathematics subject leader is an outstanding practitioner who leads the way by example. The school has a track record of strong achievement in mathematics, but you continue to strive for further improvements. For example, recent work to enhance teachers' mathematical questioning is having a positive impact on improving pupils' reasoning skills.
- Detailed analysis of pupils' answers from termly assessments not only helps the subject leader to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, but also pinpoints topic areas where teaching needs to improve. Training is highly focussed and effective in improving teachers' subject knowledge. Furthermore, the subject leader's weekly discussions with teachers about their mathematics planning have supported a consistent approach to developing pupils' mathematical fluency and problem-solving skills.

- Monitoring of the quality of mathematics teaching includes book scrutiny, analysis of pupils' progress and lesson observations. These checks have a clear purpose and findings lead to actions that improve the quality of teaching. For example, recent checks resulted in enhanced use of practical teaching resources to support learning.
- The mathematics leader's plans to develop the subject further in Key Stages 1 and 2 are clearly focussed and ambitious. However, your aim to improve achievement in number in the Early Years Foundation Stage is presently not captured in a similarly detailed plan.

The curriculum in mathematics

- Transition to the new National Curriculum has been well planned and implemented. Teachers introduce new concepts clearly, such as in the lesson in Year 5 that I observed on calculating elapsed time. They build on what pupils know already so that they develop a strong conceptual understanding.
- Pupils across all classes hone their fluency in mathematics through frequent problem-solving activities that are a significant feature of the curriculum at the school. Evidence in books shows that in most classes pupils grapple successfully with increasingly complex questions that contribute to developing their conceptual understanding.
- The vibrant and number-rich environment, coupled with interesting well-planned indoor and outdoor activities, ensures that the curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage contributes to children developing their early understanding of mathematical concepts. Children are prepared well for their transition into Year 1 through the introduction, for short periods of time during the day, of a more formal curriculum that develops key skills. For example, I observed all children in the Reception class learning how to add numbers such as 7+8 together and record their answers formally in a number sentence. Pupils who had grasped this concept quickly, moved on to tackle questions that involved adding a two-digit number to a single-digit number.

Teaching in mathematics

- Teachers' use of questioning and direction to develop pupils' reasoning skills is a significant strength of the teaching of mathematics at Chingford Hall Primary Academy. Teachers challenge pupils to justify their thinking through statements such as 'prove to me how that answer is right'. Encouraging pupils to develop and substantiate their line of thinking in this way is cultivating confident and articulate pupils who have a deep conceptual understanding of mathematics.
- Teachers' marking and feedback to pupils accurately identifies misconceptions in understanding. The feedback explains errors and what next steps will help move pupils forward. Pupils are given time to practice on new questions and problem-solving activities that are posed by their teachers. As one pupil in Year 5 put it, 'My teacher's next steps always prepare me for the next lesson'.

- The vast majority of teachers check effectively on pupils' learning during lessons. They identify and often pre-empt difficulties astutely and adapt their teaching mid-lesson to meet the needs of their pupils. For example, in Year 6, the class teacher asked probing questions about interpreting pie charts as she circulated amongst the class to ensure that pupils were secure in their understanding. Occasionally, adults (including the teacher) remained focussed on the group of pupils with whom they were sitting and did not check on the learning of other pupils. This resulted in some misconceptions not being spotted or addressed.

Achievement in mathematics

- From starting points on entry that are below or well below those typical for their age, children make progress across the school that results in almost all pupils leaving Year 6 attaining the level appropriate to their age and significant numbers of pupils attaining higher levels (90% in 2014). Progress in mathematics from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 has been in the top 1% of schools nationally for the past three years.
- The significantly larger than average proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium achieve above other pupils nationally, leaving Year 6 over three terms ahead in mathematics in 2014. However, this group of pupils left Year 6 one term behind other pupils in the school although the gap narrowed significantly in 2014.
- In lessons pupils display a thirst for learning. They are enthusiastic and are eager to solve the mathematical problems set by their teachers. Pupils see mathematics as being important because they are taught how it relates to their own lives. Pupils strive to reach their full potential; as one boy explained 'I am ambitious to do my best in maths so that I can do something significant in my life'.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- extending the mathematics action plan to include explicit actions and success criteria to raise achievement in number further in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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 and the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Martin Bell
Her Majesty's Inspector