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Mrs J Witton  
Headteacher  
Lakeside Primary School  
Sandy Lane  
Doncaster  
South Yorkshire  
DN4 5ES

Dear Mrs Witton

### **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 5 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 mathematics leader, two governors, staff and pupils; analysis of pupils' work; observation of lessons; and scrutiny of relevant documentation.

### **Leadership and management of mathematics**

- You and members of the senior leadership team undertake a range of activities to check on the quality of teaching in mathematics. These checks enable identification of action needed to improve provision in mathematics. You diagnosed accurately strengths and areas for development following joint observations with me.
- The subject leader is a capable practitioner and role model for effective teaching of the subject. She has provided training to staff on the new national curriculum. Nevertheless, she acknowledges that she has not observed enough teaching directly to gauge precisely aspects that are being taught well and where individual teachers would benefit from additional guidance.
- Governors undertake 'learning walks', including discussion with pupils, to gather information for themselves about the effectiveness with which the action plan for mathematics is being implemented. Governors have set

clear measures of success that enable them to evaluate at the end of each year the extent to which the schools' actions have been successful. However, the school's action plans for mathematics do not contain frequent or precise milestones relating to pupils achievement. As a result, governors are limited in their ability to check whether pupils are on track to achieve such targets and if their plans need to be amended accordingly.

### **The curriculum in mathematics**

- Senior leaders have implemented the new national curriculum in Year 1, and Years 3 to 5. This has ensured that sufficient focus has been placed upon developing pupils' skills in calculation and their understanding of place value. Nevertheless, not enough of the work given to pupils enables them to develop their skills in solving problems in mathematics, or to develop their ability to reason.
- Senior leaders have introduced a new calculation policy and mathematics scheme to ensure that teachers are developing their understanding of progression in pupils' learning. While this is helping to ensure progression in calculations and place value, other aspects such as geometry and measurement receive less coverage.
- Senior leaders have put in place a range of intervention programmes to support pupils who are falling behind or who have special educational needs. This is helping to strengthen pupils' knowledge and understanding in aspects of the subject and overcome misconceptions.
- Senior leaders acknowledge that pupils are not given enough chances to apply their skills in mathematics in a range of other subjects. The subject leader recognises that long-term curriculum plans need to take greater account of how pupils can apply mathematics in other subjects.

### **Teaching in mathematics**

- Senior leaders have ensured that each classroom is well resourced and that teachers convey the importance of learning in mathematics. Consequently, display of pupils' work in mathematics is celebrated and examples of high-quality work are shown to act as a motivating factor to engage pupils in their learning. Pupils can refer to displays of 'working-walls', which help to provide visual support during lessons.
- The quality of teaching varies across the school. Hallmarks of the strongest teaching are: regular use of modelling so that pupils can see how to undertake calculations and develop their understanding of number structures and relationships; clear explanations of mathematical concepts that build upon pupils' prior knowledge; and quick diagnosis by adults of how well pupils are doing during lessons with tasks or level of support adapted accordingly.
- Weaker aspects of teaching pupils include use of repetitive activities that lack challenge and do not deepen pupils' learning. Sometimes, pupils choose from activities that have different levels of challenge, but teachers do not always guide individuals to the one that is best suited to them.

Adults' checks of pupils' learning during lessons does not always identify quickly enough misunderstanding or where learning can be moved forward quickly. Not enough account is made of pupils' prior learning to provide activities that can build quickly upon their knowledge and skills.

- Senior leaders have focused upon improving the quality of teachers' marking and the clarity of feedback provided to pupils. In almost all classes, marking is detailed and pupils are provided with clear guidance on how well they have done and what they have to do next to improve.

### **Achievement in mathematics**

- Children join the school with knowledge and skills that tend to be below those typical for their age. They make steady progress during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2, attainment is below average. Pupils make faster progress across Key Stage 2, so by the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as other pupils in the school. The progress of disadvantaged pupils currently in Year 6 has lagged behind that of others in the class. Gaps in attainment have widened and, on average, disadvantaged pupils are five terms behind their peers. In the majority of other year groups, however, gaps are beginning to close due to the additional support that these pupils are receiving.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning in mathematics. They told me that teachers make learning interesting through the use of mathematical games and resources that help them to understand the methods that they using when they do calculations.

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

- continuing to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils so that the gaps in attainment narrow between these pupils and others in the school
- ensuring that pupils receive more chances to develop their skills in reasoning and solving problems in mathematics and to apply their learning in other subjects
- enabling the subject leader to be more involved in observing teaching so that she can provide adults with more precise guidance on how to improve.

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

**David Carter**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**