

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



9 July 2015

Dame Alison Peacock
Executive Headteacher
The Wroxham School
Wroxham Gardens
Potters Bar
Hertfordshire
EN6 3DJ

Dear Dame Alison

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 18 June 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 staff and scrutiny of the school's development plan for mathematics and system for assessing pupils' progress. I also observed teaching, looked at pupils' work, and spoke with pupils about their work.

Leadership and management of mathematics

- Under your leadership, the school has responded well to the challenge of introducing the new mathematics national curriculum. You are using it as an impetus to further raise expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers across Key Stages 1 and 2 have fully embraced the changes.
- The school's commitment to staff development has ensured that all members of staff have been well prepared for changes in the mathematics curriculum and associated assessment arrangements. Appropriate training and strategies such as 'lesson study' have been used to help teachers to focus on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress.
- Systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work in mathematics are effective. Observations of teaching are a regular feature of school life at Wroxham, not only by school leaders but also teachers who visit the school for training and development. Recently, lesson study has brought a more developmental approach to lesson observation. A group of teachers worked together to look at how concrete materials can be used to help higher-achieving pupils develop the concept of equivalence in fractions.

- You have recently modified the system that the school uses to check and monitor pupils' progress in mathematics. New assessment arrangements are helping teachers to identify which pupils are in-line with, below, or above the school's expectations of pupils' attainment in mathematics.

The curriculum in mathematics

- The school has made very good progress in introducing the new mathematics curriculum. It is being taught, as required, in Years 1, 3, 4 and 5. New assessment arrangements are helping staff to establish where learning has weaknesses and to plan appropriately to close gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- The subject leader for mathematics is passionate in her leadership of the subject. Her excellent subject knowledge and high levels of professional expertise are having an impact not only on standards within her own classroom but also across the school. She has established effective systems to ensure appropriate coverage of the new curriculum and has overseen developments of a new system for assessing pupils' progress.
- The mathematics curriculum encourages pupils across the school to become fluent in their use and application of number. The focus on mental calculation is constant with formal methods of recording introduced at appropriate times. Consolidation of learning comes through problem-solving activities rather than unnecessary repetition of similar tasks.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, regular assessments are made of children's progress in mathematics. Children are encouraged frequently to use and understand number. For example, they collected and recorded the number of different mini-beasts found while pond dipping.

Teaching in mathematics

- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in mathematics. They work hard to ensure that pupils make good progress and attain high standards. By the time pupils leave the school, the vast majority are confident and competent in the use and application of mathematics and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- In most mathematics lessons, pupils are able to choose from a range of activities which provide different levels of challenge. Pupils say that they always choose work that challenges them as this is the 'most interesting' and 'helps them to learn'. Pupils' attitudes towards selecting the most challenging task were apparent in the work in their books and also during the observed lessons. However, pupils do not always set their work out neatly and this occasionally leads to unnecessary errors being made.
- Teachers use questioning exceptionally effectively to establish how well pupils are learning and to challenge pupils to think harder. Teachers also encourage pupils to express themselves clearly and fully. During the lessons that I observed, pupils often gave detailed responses and provided clear explanations of how they arrived at their answers.
- The school has used changes to the curriculum and assessment to focus on mastery within mathematics lessons. Pupils of all abilities work together

on the same aspect of mathematics and when pupils complete work, they are challenged to apply their mathematical knowledge and deepen their understanding through challenging investigations or solving problems.

- Pupils work hard in lessons. They show good resilience when facing challenges and often collaborate to overcome difficulties. The work in pupils' books shows that pupils rarely spend time repeating similar activities once they have demonstrated understanding of a concept.

Achievement in mathematics

- Pupils achieve exceptionally well in mathematics. From starting points on entry to the school that are broadly typical, pupils make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. By the time they start Year 3, pupils are around one term above the national average. Progress across Key Stage 2 has been significantly above the national average for the past two years, as has attainment. At the end of Year 6, pupils are, on average, one year ahead of other pupils nationally.
- Teaching assistants provide highly effective support, which helps to ensure that pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs achieve well. The school's philosophy is that all pupils have the right to high quality teaching. Teaching assistants, therefore, are part of a 'team around the child' rather than a provider of 1-1 support. All members of the team, including the teacher and other adults who work with the class, are responsible for pupils' progress.
- The pupils I spoke with said that they enjoy mathematics. They particularly like the opportunities that they are given to choose from tasks with varying levels of difficulty, which is a feature of most mathematics lessons. Pupils also said that they enjoy investigations in mathematics lessons. They said that they 'have to think much harder' when they have problems to solve and that 'time goes quickly'.
- The most-able pupils make good progress. They routinely choose the most difficult challenges within mathematics lessons and enjoy collaborating with friends, working together to solve problems.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- making sure that all pupils present their mathematics work in a neat and well-organised way.

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

Paul Tomkow
Her Majesty's Inspector