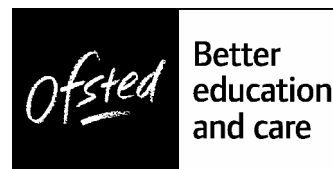


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30 September 2006

Mrs M E Moores  
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Dear Mrs Moores

Ofsted 2006-07 survey inspection programme – mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 28 September 2006 to look at work in mathematics. As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on pupils' enjoyment and understanding of 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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of the subject, mathematics, was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good.

- Children make good progress in the Reception classes. Literacy and numerical skills are developed simultaneously providing children with purposeful opportunities to question and test out ideas and new concepts for themselves. Mathematical development is as expected for their age by the end of the year.
- Standards are just above average by the end of Year 2, which represents good achievement for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Progress is sustained at this level in Years 3 to 6. Standards are above average overall in Year 6. Consistently good results in national tests in Year 6 in recent years reflect this.

- Pupils' personal development and behaviour are very good. Teachers generate an aura of enthusiasm and joy that sparks pupils' willingness to work independently or with a 'talking partner'. As a result, pupils often learn through trial and error, building on their own mistakes to gain a better understanding of the work.

### Quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good.

- Teachers' good subject knowledge and high expectations inspire pupils in oral and written work. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils' learning was accelerated because they asked probing questions of the teacher which extended the work to a broader context.
- Pupils made profitable use of innovative strategies devised by the teacher to self-assess their understanding and progress during the lesson. Consequently, those needing help received it quickly and the teacher gained first-hand information to modify planning for subsequent lessons.
- Pupils' written work is thorough and of good quality. It is indicative of sound knowledge and accurate application of numerical operations.
- Occasionally, the questions set are too repetitive so pupils do more of the same rather than moving on to the more searching questions at the end of the exercise.
- Teachers make good use of refined information from the school's assessment procedures. Ambitious, specific and well-explained learning goals are set for each pupil. These are meaningful. Pupils talk confidently about them and can explain with a reasonable degree of accuracy which have or have not been achieved so far.

### Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is good.

- The curriculum is underpinned by a solid grounding in basic number concepts. The promotion of skills in reading, writing and information and communication technology is thoughtfully woven into lesson planning, as is the correct use of mathematical language.
- Learning through practical experience is a strong feature of the Foundation Stage; it raises children's confidence in being able to explain their findings to each other and to the teacher.
- Teachers encourage successfully the development of reasoning and thinking skills in later years by including them specifically in lesson plans.

## Leadership and management

The leadership and management of mathematics are good.

- The school is self-critical; it is constantly looking for imaginative ways to sustain and extend pupils' interest in mathematics and its wider use.
- The collaborative approach of subject leaders in each of the key stages is effective. It ensures proper progression at the transition points as well as highlighting aspects for attention. For example, this year, all teachers are focusing on sharpening the spontaneity of pupils' response when practising and applying multiplication tables. This target for improvement emanates from a critical analysis of older pupils' work last year which indicated that mental agility could be speeded up through more regular practice.

## Subject issue: pupils' enjoyment and understanding of mathematics

Pupils' enjoyment of mathematics is clearly evident in lessons. Discussions with pupils revealed that some pupils liked the subject because: 'it's good to know when the answers are right'; others, usually the most able, liked the problem-solving best because: 'you have to try different methods to find one that gives a reasonable answer to the question'. Older pupils in particular enjoy testing out practical solutions to numerical and spatial problems. They think that the strategy introduced this term to guide them in problem-solving techniques is very useful. Most said that they would continue to use it in preference to the varied approaches used in previous years.

## Inclusion

Boys and girls of all abilities achieve equally well because good systems are in place to meet their immediate and long-term needs. Hence, standards throughout the school match pupils' capabilities and targets. Good relationships between adults and pupils foster an atmosphere of togetherness and quiet calm in which pupils flourish. Pupils are generous in praise of others' achievements. Their attitudes are a true reflection of the school's mission of care and intent to work in partnership with parents, the church and the local community.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to provide regular opportunities for pupils to practise and manipulate facts from multiplication tables so that they can apply them more quickly in other work
- to introduce a more consistent approach throughout the school to the teaching of strategies for problem-solving.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop mathematics in the school.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

June Tracey  
Additional Inspector