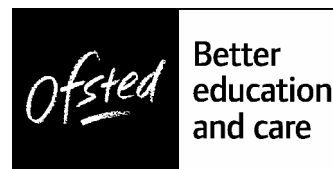


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Mrs A Fletcher
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Dear Mrs Fletcher

Ofsted 2006-07 survey inspection programme – mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during our visit on 30 November 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.

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were significantly above the national average in 2004 and 2005. Results improved further in 2006.
- All groups of pupils make at least satisfactory progress. In each class, teachers are responsible for the progress of the pupils; in particular, the focus on the performance of the two groupings of targeted pupils ensures regular accountability and that no individuals underachieve.
- Pupils' attitudes towards mathematics are good; they work with enthusiasm and, when they have the opportunity, collaborate with each other impressively. Work in books was generally well presented and thoughtfully completed.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- In all lessons the level of challenge and teachers' expectations were high. Teachers know the pupils very well and relationships are good; this enabled teachers to challenge the pupils in a very supportive environment.
- Teachers ensure pupils clearly understand what they are expected to learn in all lessons. There was a clear focus on the correct use of mathematical vocabulary.
- Where the teaching and learning were best, pupils were expected to give clear explanations of their reasoning to each other as well as to the class. Very good use of interactive strategies, such as thinking time, mini-whiteboards and collaborative work, enabled the pace of learning to remain good for all pupils.
- In one lesson, aspects of the task did not match the needs of the lower attaining pupils, which led to some misconceptions being reinforced rather than corrected.
- Effective use is made of assessment data to identify pupils who would benefit from targeted support. The regular discussion of their progress ensures appropriate strategies are employed to maximise progress.
- The pupils' own curricular targets could be used more effectively; the targets need to be referred to more regularly giving pupils greater ownership and understanding of the areas they need to develop and thus greater responsibility for their own learning.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- Teachers' short-term planning is appropriately detailed and most accommodates the full range of the pupils' needs.
- The involvement of the school in a learning network focused on developing the pupils' problem-solving skills is reflected in the lessons and pupils' books. However, the school does not assess the pupils' progress in 'using and applying mathematics'.
- Good use is made of the analysis of the pupils' test papers and teachers' end of year assessments to identify areas of weakness of their classes; the information is used profitably by the next class teacher to adapt the curriculum.
- Provision for the most able pupils is good with extension and enrichment opportunities offered, including productive links to the local secondary school.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of mathematics are good.

- Robust self-evaluation systems enable you to accurately judge the quality of provision in mathematics throughout the school and to set suitable targets for its improvement.

- There is a clear focus on improving pupils' achievement; this has resulted in rising standards at the end of Year 6 for the last three years.

Subject issue: pupils' enjoyment and understanding of mathematics

- The lessons observed and discussions held with pupils indicated a pleasing level of enjoyment from boys and girls of all abilities. They commented particularly favourably on the appropriate level of challenge in lessons.
- The collaborative style of some lessons provided good opportunities for pupils to extend their understanding through explaining their reasoning to their peers.

Inclusion

- The school has an inclusive ethos. Observations of lessons indicated that teachers catered for the needs of all the pupils in most lessons. The close tracking of pupils and the targeting of those at risk of underachievement ensures all pupils progress well.
- The school analyses the attainment and progress of all groups of pupils carefully. In mathematics, the boys' attainment, particularly at Level 5, is significantly above that of girls, possibly related to the competitive element that boys enjoyed in some lessons. The teachers' awareness of the gender gap ensures opportunities in lessons are equitable.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to develop the use of pupils' curricular targets so as to give them greater responsibility for their own progress
- to introduce a system to assess pupils' progress in 'using and applying mathematics' (AT1) so as to improve the teachers' understanding of the progression of skills and more accurately identify the pupils' next steps in learning.

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

Andrew Olive
Her Majesty's Inspector