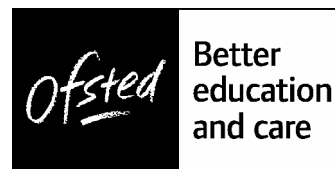


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14 December 2006

Mr P Sutton  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Sutton

Ofsted 2006-07 survey inspection programme – mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 7 December 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 lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- The 2006 results show that pupils reached above average standards at the end of Year 6. These pupils had also reached above average standards at the end of Year 2 and had made satisfactory progress since then. However, many of the pupils who had previously attained highly, particularly the boys, did not meet their targets.
- Pupils now enter Key Stage 1 with broadly average attainment. They make satisfactory progress to reach average standards by the end of the key stage.
- Pupils behave well and work hard throughout the lessons.

## Quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory.

- Teachers explain methods clearly and question pupils well, helping them to develop correct use of mathematical language.
- Pupils produce a good quantity of correct work and can describe their methods, although they cannot always explain why the method works.
- Lessons are carefully planned, but opportunities are missed for designing activities that focus on helping pupils to understand and encouraging them to think hard.
- Marking is regular, and the best specifies the strengths and weaknesses as well as providing guidance on how to improve. Monitoring of pupils' progress during lessons effectively checks whether work is correct but does not routinely establish how well it is understood.
- Pupils are involved in assessing their own progress. In the best cases they identify accurately how learning skills, such as collaboration, have helped them make progress and the extent to which they have met the learning objectives.
- Some teaching does not meet all pupils' needs; in particular it is too easy for higher attainers and pupils do not benefit enough from the plenary sessions at the end of lessons.
- Teachers and pupils do not assess pupils' progress against targets frequently enough to ensure that teachers identify underachievement and lack of challenge quickly.

## Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- It is carefully programmed to deliver a broad and balanced mathematics curriculum.
- Joint planning of work for parallel classes enables them to receive equivalent curricular opportunities. Nevertheless, it does not ensure progression between and within years for all pupils or entitlement to hands-on use of computers for all topics in the programme of study that should be met through this medium.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

- Astute evaluation of last year's attainment has led to appropriately targeted support this year and a greater emphasis throughout the school on pupils' progress in mathematics. The school recognises that mathematics performance had declined during its recent focus on literacy.
- Curriculum development planning is pertinent and has clear success criteria.
- Lesson observation and subsequent professional development do not support well enough the gradual improvement in learning and teaching. In particular, there is room for a sharper focus on evaluating how much all pupils learnt.

Subject issue: pupils' enjoyment and understanding of mathematics

Pupils display a passive enjoyment of mathematics rather than keen involvement in it. They like learning new things and many enjoy thinking about challenging problems although they are given them too infrequently. Pupils are able to complete their work correctly but do not understand it well because methods are sometimes introduced with insufficient emphasis on why they work.

Inclusion

All groups of pupils are currently making at least satisfactory progress. Tracking of their attainment against targets has led to appropriate support, including for pupils in the group that underachieved last year, the higher attaining boys.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- increase the challenge, particularly for higher attainers, and the focus on understanding
- use monitoring of pupils' learning more effectively to raise the quality of teaching
- assess pupils' progress against their targets more frequently
- enhance progression for all pupils through curriculum planning.

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

Gill Close  
Her Majesty's Inspector