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Mrs K Snape
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Dear Mrs Snape

Ofsted 2006-07 survey inspection programme – mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 12 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 parts of lessons.

The provision in mathematics is improving. Consequently the overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory but with good developing features.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- In 2005 standards were above average but not significantly so by the end of Year 2. This represented satisfactory progress for pupils whose mathematical development on entry to the school was broadly average. In 2006 standards were broadly average and lower than those in 2005 but with above average proportions attaining the higher levels. Standards in Year 2 lessons were broadly average and achievement was good.
- Pupils' standards by the end of Year 6 in 2005 were also above average but not significantly so. This represented satisfactory achievement for pupils who entered Year 3 with broadly average standards. Early indications from the 2006 results of

a more able cohort suggest standards improved and are above average. During the inspection, standards in Key Stage 2 were observed to be broadly average overall with pupils making satisfactory progress.

- Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to the opportunities provided. As a result, they gain in confidence and gradually learn to express themselves more fluently in mathematics.

Quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are presently satisfactory overall but are improving with one lesson observed judged to be outstanding.

- Teachers are experienced, have a sound knowledge of mathematics and a good rapport with the pupils. Information and communication technology is used regularly by teachers and pupils have good access to computers to aid their learning. Where teaching is best, lessons move at a very brisk, structured pace and the pupils actively take part in the lesson. However, where teaching is less strong, pupils' attention is not always fully engaged and consequently the pace of learning drops with some pupils remaining passive and not achieving their potential.
- Although teachers make the learning objectives known to pupils in each lesson, they do not always ensure that all are suitably challenged or that individual pupils are aware of what level of challenge is expected of them.
- Regular assessment of pupils' progress is made and monitored. Pupils' work is frequently marked; however, the quality of marking varies and does not always help pupils to know how to move to the next step in their learning.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- Schemes of work support teachers in meeting the needs of most pupils.
- Pupils' skills in mathematics are developed by other subjects taught in the school where opportunities arise. However, there is a limited range of enrichment activities, an area that the subject leader is planning to address.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory but with some stronger elements; such as the rigorous analysis of pupils' answers in formal tests to inform teachers how well pupils are learning.

- The subject leader has a clear vision of improvement and has planned and implemented a number of initiatives; however they have yet to impact fully. Departmental self-review is carried out, albeit at a basic level, and priorities for improvement are clear.
- Pupils are regularly assessed and the resulting data is effectively tracked to show pupils' progress and identify those in danger of underachievement. However, the

subject leader recognises that target setting is an area for development to help pupils know how to improve.

- Whilst the subject leader regularly monitors pupils' work, the monitoring of teaching and learning in mathematics lessons has not taken place recently. Consequently the sharing of good practice and reduction of inconsistencies has not yet been fully addressed.

Subject issue: pupils' enjoyment and understanding of mathematics

- Pupils say their enjoyment is best when they are involved in problem solving, working with their partners and when playing mathematical games. Pupils get least enjoyment from lessons where there is less fun planned in the learning.
- Pupils are developing the ability to see links between the various areas of mathematics and are in the early stages of knowing how to draw on their previous learning to help solve problems.

Inclusion

- Overall, inclusion is satisfactory. Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress; however, boys did less well than girls in the Year 6 national tests in 2005 and 2006. More able pupils generally do well and those with learning difficulties achieve at least as well as other pupils. Monitoring of pupils' progress is used effectively to identify and plan for their needs.
- Pupils relate appropriately to each other, respect staff, and develop personal qualities securely.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing appropriate target-setting and guidance for pupils in order that they know how to improve to achieve their potential
- developing the monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure inconsistencies are minimised
- sharing the better teaching and learning practice observed in some lessons across the school in order that pupils' achievement may be raised.

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

Mark Wilson
Additional Inspector