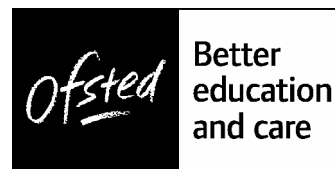


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09 February 2007

Miss Debbie Thompson
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Thompson

Ofsted 2006-07 survey inspection programme – mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 9 February 2007 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 six parts of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement is good. Standards are broadly average.

- Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. There is evidence of outstanding progress in Year 2 due to very high quality teaching.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with learning difficulties and disabilities make very good progress because they receive very effective, well-targeted support.
- The school does well to enable almost all pupils to reach Level 2, the standard expected by age seven, given their low attainment on entry. However, the proportion of pupils who reach Levels 2B and 2A is lower than that seen in most schools.

- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Most pupils work hard and behave well.

Quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good.

- Teachers plan lessons carefully to build on pupils' previous learning. They use a very good range of methods and resources, including interactive whiteboards, to motivate pupils and enhance their understanding.
- Eye-catching classroom and corridor displays celebrate the pupils' work in mathematics and support their learning by providing visual clues and reminders that pupils can use in lessons.
- Assessment arrangements are outstanding and give teachers a very clear picture of each pupil's attainment and progress.
- Well-briefed teaching assistants work very effectively alongside teachers to support pupils and develop their understanding of mathematical language.
- Occasionally, teachers do not ensure that pupils have a full understanding of key concepts before moving them on to the next stage of learning.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is good.

- The curriculum is well-planned to build on pupils' learning from one year to the next.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to use and extend their mathematical skills in other subjects, such as art, ICT and science.
- The school has rightly identified the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to use and apply mathematical knowledge and skills and to develop independent thinking skills. The recent introduction of 'thinking hats' is a good first step towards this end.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are outstanding.

- Excellent teamwork between you and your subject leader give the subject a very high profile and ensure its continuing development.
- Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning coupled with in-depth analysis of test results and data on individual pupils' progress give staff and governors a very clear view of where improvements are needed. This feeds into high quality development planning which, in turn, leads to prompt action to remedy identified shortcomings.

Subject issue: pupils' enjoyment and understanding of mathematics

Pupils thoroughly enjoy mathematics lessons. They take part with enthusiasm and particularly like opportunities to use the interactive whiteboards. They are developing a good understanding of mathematical concepts, although this is sometimes hampered by their limited language skills. On occasions, pupils have not sufficiently understood a new concept before moving on to the next stage in the process.

Inclusion

This is an outstanding feature of the school's work. Pupils with learning difficulties do better than similar pupils nationally due to well-planned support and intervention. Girls and boys achieve equally well and are well-motivated to learn. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make good progress and achieve well.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- increasing the proportion of pupils who reach Levels 2B and 2A in national assessments
- ensuring that pupils have fully understood key concepts before moving them on to the next stage of learning
- providing more opportunities for pupils to develop independent thinking skills and to use and apply their mathematical knowledge in different situations.

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

Carole Skinner
Additional Inspector