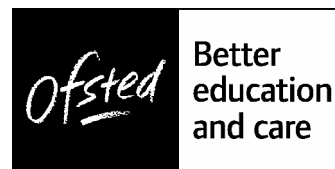


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Mr J M Rogers  
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Dear Mr Rogers

Ofsted 2006-07 survey inspection programme – mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit with my colleague, Jane Jones HMI, on 1 March 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 eight lessons.

The overall effectiveness of the subject, mathematics, was judged to be satisfactory with some good features.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good.

- Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average for their age. Language and communication skills are especially weak.
- Standards in mathematics are broadly average by the time the pupils leave the school in Year 6, which represents good progress over time. Progress is inconsistent however. It is slower in Years 3 and 4 than in Years 5 and 6.

- Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils. More able pupils reach the National Curriculum levels expected for their age but they could achieve more. Their targets could be more ambitious.
- Pupils behave well. They grow in self-esteem in the caring and nurturing environment but they lack confidence in oral work; for example, when explaining mathematical processes using technical language.

## Quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good.

- Teachers use their subject knowledge well to plan lessons. They have a good rapport with pupils, which fosters a productive learning environment.
- The overall good quality of the teaching is due to the strengths of individual teachers rather than to collegiate planning and sharing of ideas and information.
- The presentation and marking of pupils' work has improved since the previous inspection. It is not always clear, however, whether pupils have understood and followed up the teachers' comments.
- Not enough use is made of information from whole-school assessment procedures to identify and intervene when pupils are not making the expected progress.

## Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is very effective; it is structured well around play and practical activities. There is a good bridge between planning for the nursery and the reception class.
- There are shortcomings in the curriculum; problem-solving and investigative work are not included on a systematic basis for all age groups.
- Pupils respond well in lessons that have a strong visual content and which include practical activities.
- Gifted and talented pupils are stimulated by the challenge of thought-provoking work in sessions with a teacher from a local secondary school.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

- Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject but their roles in monitoring, evaluating and initiating action are not fully established. Hence, the overall planning and improvement cycle lacks coherence.
- Analysis of data from national tests is used well to identify aspects of mathematics requiring improvement. The information is not shared sufficiently with all teachers for them to be aware of issues that need tackling in every year group, not just in Years 5 and 6.

Subject issue: pupils' enjoyment and understanding of mathematics

Pupils enjoy mathematics most when it includes practical activities that make the work meaningful and relevant to everyday life. They are least confident when interpreting problems written in words and translating them into numerical calculations. Pupils do not get enough practice in this type of work. Planning does not include sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop and apply reasoning skills in investigative work, nor are there enough opportunities for pupils to develop their oral skills to explain how they arrive at answers.

### Inclusion

Good systems are in place to meet pupils' immediate and long-term needs. The school works closely with families and external agencies. All pupils benefit from the integrated services of the school and the children's centre which are administered as a single unit on the one site. Guidance and support embraces well pupils' all-round academic, personal and physical needs. Their good attitudes and response are a reflection of the personalised care that the school provides.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing subject leadership and management, particularly in the monitoring of teaching and pupils' learning
- planning for the systematic inclusion of 'using and applying mathematics' in schemes of work
- developing whole-school assessment systems to enable teachers to track pupils' progress against challenging targets and to intervene quickly when pupils are not making the expected progress.

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