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Miss L Hayward
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Dear Miss Hayward

Ofsted 2006-07 survey inspection programme – mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 26 June 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. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

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 five lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are outstanding.

- Pupils enter the school with well below average standards in mathematical development.
- Standards by the end of Year 6 are generally well above average. This represents significantly above average progress when the starting points of many pupils are taken into consideration.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is outstanding; no observed lesson was less than good.

- Pupils benefit from the high standard of teaching and learn that mathematics is an interesting and stimulating subject.
- Highly effective use of interactive whiteboards and a wide variety of activities motivate the pupils to learn.
- Teachers' planning is detailed and meticulous, making sure that all pupils are catered for. Occasionally, higher ability pupils could be challenged further.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. Questioning is used extremely well to help pupils make as much progress as possible and to support the rapid pace of lessons.
- Teachers draw on a wide variety of teaching and learning styles. Group work is well organised and encourages a collaborative problem-solving approach to learning. Excellent use of 'talking partners' was observed in all year groups.
- Pupils' progress is high on the schools' agenda and is discussed with members of staff on a regular basis. Teachers know what each individual pupil should achieve. Assessment and tracking arrangements are highly organised.
- Marking is regular and is very helpful in directing pupils' attention as to how to take the next steps in their learning. Pupils know their targets and are aware of when they have achieved them. There are also clear systems for pupils to self-assess their work and teachers take into account what pupils feed back.
- Classes benefit from high quality support provided by teaching assistants. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported and make excellent progress.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding.

- Teachers' short-term planning is meticulous and usually accommodates the full range of pupils' needs. Occasionally, some higher attaining pupils' could be challenged further, maximising the percentage gaining the higher Level 5 in national tests.
- The school has a comprehensive scheme of work and policy documents which ensure continuity and progression in pupils' learning of mathematics.
- The impact of intervention programmes is good; the school supports those pupils needing extra help.
- Cross-curricular mathematics is a real strength. Links are very well developed with information and communication technology and literacy.
- Pupils have the opportunity to join in with the 'community credit union' which prepares them for their future economic well-being.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of mathematics are outstanding.

- 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.
- The mathematics subject leader has a clear understanding of what areas require development. She has an accurate overview of the quality of teaching and learning in the subject informed by observation of teaching, scrutiny of pupil's work and analysis of data. Her findings are followed up by appropriate action.
- Improvement plans are clear and are regularly evaluated.
- Family learning has capitalised on the enjoyment of mathematics by pupils' parents.

Subject issue: pupils' enjoyment and understanding of mathematics

Pupils have enthusiastic attitudes to mathematics. They never stopped smiling and were bursting to tell the inspector how much they enjoyed their learning. They praised the work of their teachers and how they make learning 'fun' through games and puzzles. Pupils spoke about how investigations and problem-solving activities 'make you really think'. They have many opportunities to discuss mathematics and work with their peers in the lessons and know this helps them learn. They spoke eagerly about how much they enjoy using the interactive whiteboard in lessons and how this helps them to understand concepts more easily.

Inclusion

Inclusion is good. The school has a very inclusive ethos. Observations of lessons indicated that teachers catered for the needs of the majority of pupils. The school is aware of the need to consistently challenge those higher attaining pupils so that they all reach their potential.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensure that higher-ability pupils are consistently challenged so that all of them achieve as well as they possibly can.

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

Glynis Bradley-Peat
Additional Inspector