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Mr Robin Nodding
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Nodding

Ofsted 2006-07 survey inspection programme – mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 27 September 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 three lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement is outstanding. Standards are average.

- Pupils enter the school with well below average attainment. Over the last few years, standards have shown a strong upward trend although varying year-by-year due to the small numbers in each cohort. Achievement has improved steadily; it has been consistently above average and now is very high. Early indications from the results of national tests in 2007 suggest that standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 2 and average at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Pupils know their targets and what areas of mathematics they need to improve in order to reach them. The school is aspirational for its pupils and its high commitment to inclusion means all pupils make at least satisfactory progress and usually considerably more.

- Pupils are enthusiastic about their work in mathematics. They say that they enjoy their work because it is challenging and often involves a variety of different activities, including practical work.
- Behaviour in lessons was of the highest standard and reflects pupils' enjoyment. Pupils were confident and all were able to work independently when required.
- Pupils' very good progress in mathematics makes an excellent contribution towards developing important key skills for their futures.

Quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are outstanding.

- Teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils and know them well. Work is well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and require them to explain solutions rather than just giving numerical answers.
- Play is incorporated well into the planning and teaching for younger pupils so that they are able to acquire mathematical skills through well focused activities.
- Highly effective teaching assistants support the work of teachers very well.
- Learning objectives are very effectively shared with 'success criteria' identified by the pupils. These are then reviewed at the end of the lesson.
- Teachers enhance pupils' reasoning skills through effective questioning, expecting them always to justify answers and explain their reasoning.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge, including a good overview of the best way to teach topics so that pupils learn effectively. They use resources, including interactive whiteboards, well to motivate and enthuse pupils.
- Teachers assess work well and help pupils to overcome problems. Ongoing assessment in lessons enables teachers to target pupils who have problems or misconceptions.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is good.

- The school has developed good schemes of work based on the Primary National Strategy materials and adapted for mixed-age classes.
- Good use is made of the first half an hour of each day for teachers to target areas of 'catch up' for pupils. This time is often used to remediate problems that have occurred in lessons or prepare weaker pupils so that they are able to work alongside their peers in lessons. Time is also used for cross-curricular work, for example practising number bonds and facts in French.
- Good links are made across the curriculum so that mathematics is used well in various subjects, particularly science but also other subjects such as history.
- 'Using and applying mathematics' is identified within schemes of work and is seen as important for pupils to be able to transfer skills. However, although some lessons make good use of investigations, these are not

always consistently planned across all classes. Increasing opportunities would fit well with your commitment to making the curriculum more creative.
- Teachers regularly share their subject knowledge and ideas on effective teaching, particularly ways to introduce tasks.
- Support for parents to help their children has been planned but, as yet, has not taken place because of the change of personnel within the school.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good.

- You, your deputy headteacher and the mathematics co-ordinator have worked well to ensure that effective systems and structures are in place and are being updated appropriately.
- Procedures for tracking pupils' progress are used effectively to identify those in danger of not making good progress. They are given additional support or booster lessons prior to end of Key Stage 2 tests.
- Subject leadership is good and improving with experience. It focuses on ensuring continuing high quality teaching and learning.
- Lesson plans and teaching is systematically monitored and the subsequent evaluation has been used to improve elements.

Subject issue: pupils' enjoyment and understanding of mathematics

Pupils say they enjoy mathematics because it is interesting and teachers use a variety of activities, explaining why the mathematics is important as well as how to do it. Good use is made of activities that allow pupils to apply their mathematics to different situations, including cross-curricular work. The school provides booster lessons but regular 'catch-up' sessions mean that teachers are able to rectify pupils' misconceptions or errors quickly rather than relying on intervention late on.

Inclusion

Inclusion is outstanding. The school has high expectations of pupils who respond by working hard and making excellent progress. Work is well planned in the mixed-age classes. Very effective use is made of teaching assistants to ensure all pupils work well during lessons. Those with learning difficulties make excellent progress, similar to their peers.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- planning a coherent programme of investigations matched to the scheme of work
- supporting parents on how best to support their children by sharing methods of calculation and techniques for mental calculation.

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

Michael Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector