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Mr B Dorgan  
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Dear Mr Dorgan

Ofsted 2007-08 survey inspection programme – mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 10 October 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 four lessons.

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

#### Achievement and standards

Achievement is outstanding. Standards are well above average by the time pupils leave the school at age eleven years.

- Children's mathematical development on entry to the school is typical for their age. Their progress is good in the Reception class and Key Stage 1 and accelerates further in Key Stage 2. Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6, as reflected in year-on-year results in national tests. The proportion of pupils exceeding the standard expected for their age is exceptionally high.
- Pupils achieve well in all subjects but mathematics is a particular strength of the school's work. The school is proactive in anticipating and responding to pupils'

learning needs from the start of their schooling. Support from a well-directed team of learning assistants in the younger age groups, and from an experienced teacher in Key Stage 2, enables pupils with identified needs of any form to work confidently alongside other pupils in mainstream lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve results that are frequently above what might be expected.

## Quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good.

- Teaching is consistently good, some is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations. They demand the best from pupils in oral and written work and pupils respond very well, gaining in confidence and self-esteem.
- Very good relationships between teachers and pupils foster a lively and productive climate for learning in which all pupils thrive. They gain personal satisfaction from their learning, and it shows in their good attitudes and determination to do well.
- All activities and written exercises contain elements of challenge as well as providing good opportunities for consolidating learning. This stretches pupils' thinking skills and develops their curiosity about the use and application of mathematics. Pupils' work is marked thoroughly and teachers follow up marking with questions.

## Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is good.

- The curriculum in the Reception class has been redesigned this year. It is exciting, stimulating and relevant to children's ages. It is hastening their progress. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is flexible, allowing for a quick response to national initiatives and to pupils' specific needs.
- The school is innovative in its practices, for example, in sending home mathematical games for homework in Key Stage 1. These make learning fun as well as helping parents to understand how their children's operational skills and concepts of number are developing.
- Regular practice of mental mathematics underpins pupils' success in every aspect of the subject. This, combined with a traditional approach to the teaching of mathematical skills, secures pupils' confidence in being able to 'have a go' at whatever task is put before them. They enjoy mathematics.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are outstanding.

- The subject leader's work is exemplary. It makes extremely good use of information from assessment to check on and influence the progress of every pupil.

- The subject leader has a very good overview of the curriculum, teaching and pupils' progress. Teachers understand well the part they play in contributing to the continuity of pupils' progress as they move through the school.
- Self-critical evaluation leads to a constant search for ways to improve further, for example, by varying resources and teaching techniques to fit the exact needs of pupils in a particular class.

Subject issue: pupils' enjoyment and understanding of mathematics

Teachers' enthusiasm for the subject is a significant factor in pupils' learning and success in mathematics. It generates lively debate in whole-class discussions. Pupils are not afraid to voice questions or to challenge each other's thinking. Consequently, they gain confidence in talking through mathematical concepts before tackling written exercises. Word problems are integral to the work in all classes. Pupils have clear strategies for dealing with them, which they apply systematically. There is good evidence of open-ended investigative work being used to stimulate lateral thinking but this aspect of the subject could be included more frequently in the curriculum for each class.

### Inclusion

Children's potential is nurtured from the moment they join the school. Pupils' self-confidence in coping with mathematics, at whatever level, is developed well because the school invests heavily in high quality teaching and additional support. This pays dividends. Pupils leave the school with secure foundations in mathematical skills that will serve them well as they progress to the next stage of education. The school's ethos is underpinned by the way that everyone is valued and is keen to make a contribution.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- providing more regular opportunities for pupils to carry out investigative work in mathematics.

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