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Mrs S Parker  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Parker

Ofsted 2007-08 subject survey inspection programme: mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 29 February 2008 to look at work in mathematics.

As outlined in our initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on the effectiveness of the school's approaches to improving the quality of teaching and learning in 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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

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 two lessons.

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

#### Achievement and standards

Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory and standards are average.

- According to the school's records, many children enter the Nursery class with knowledge and skills below those expected for their age. By the end of the Reception year, most children are working securely within the learning goals expected for their age, which indicates good mathematical development.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2.
- The school is working successfully to overcome a legacy of underachievement in Key Stage 2. Inadequate teaching and inaccurate assessments, in the past, have contributed to a slower rate of progress for many pupils. The school's rigorous tracking records show that most pupils are now making satisfactory progress,

and standards are rising. In Year 6, standards are average and higher than they were in the national tests of 2007.

- Pupils' achievement in handling data is good. Their calculation skills are secure but they experience difficulty in using and applying their skills when trying to solve mathematical problems.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics, particularly when using information and communications technology (ICT) to enhance their learning. They have good attitudes to learning and work well independently and in groups.

### Quality of teaching and learning of mathematics

The quality of teaching and learning of mathematics is satisfactory.

- Teachers are largely successful in developing pupils' mathematical vocabulary.
- The aims of the lesson are made very clear and pupils are helped to assess their own learning, using checklists of the steps they need to take.
- Teachers make effective use of ICT and mathematical apparatus to help pupils to visualise mathematical ideas.
- Teachers use a good variety of approaches, such as mathematical games and paired discussions, to make learning interesting and engaging.
- Accurate assessments made of pupils' learning over a period of time are instrumental in providing good quality additional support. However, teachers' use of assessment within lessons is insufficiently developed. Pupils' misconceptions are not always identified and remedied. This leads to misunderstanding and errors in their written work.

### Quality of the mathematics curriculum

The quality of the mathematics curriculum is satisfactory.

- The revised national strategy is being implemented effectively. The curriculum is being reviewed and evaluated as each unit is taught.
- ICT is often used well to support and extend learning in mathematics.
- Some effective links are being developed with other subjects to ensure that pupils use their mathematical skills in a range of contexts, for example in interpreting data collected in science investigations.
- The school has identified 'using and applying mathematics' as a weaker area. Activities are being introduced to strengthen these shortcomings.

### Leadership and management of mathematics

The leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory.

- You are raising the expectations of staff and pupils. A tracking system designed to measure individual pupils' progress is beginning to draw attention to where teaching needs to be stronger and pupils require additional support.
- The subject leader has devised a clear plan of action to improve provision and raise achievement. Her thorough analysis of assessment results in every year group is helping to focus attention on key areas where pupils' knowledge and skills are weak.

- Processes for checking and improving the quality of teaching and learning are not focussed sufficiently on identifying the extent to which teaching increases pupils' conceptual understanding.

Subject issue: the effectiveness of the school's approaches to improving the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics

- National and local initiatives are drawing attention to important aspects of teaching and learning, such as pupils' self-assessment, the use of ICT and development of pupils' mathematical vocabulary. Training sessions have led to improvement in these areas.
- The school is beginning to consider where strengths and weaknesses lie in the teaching of mathematics. As yet, sharing expertise is at an early stage.

### Inclusion

Inclusion in mathematics is good.

- Pupils' different learning needs are well catered for in lessons.
- Pupils who experience learning difficulties benefit from good levels of additional support.
- Tracking progress is effective in monitoring the performance of different groups of pupils, such boys and girls.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- using assessment within lessons more purposefully to ensure that all pupils understand and their misconceptions are remedied
- increasing the rigour in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning to raise pupils' achievement, particularly in using and applying mathematics
- identifying where teachers' subject knowledge and skills are greatest and use this information to share and promote good practice.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop mathematics in the school.

As explained in our previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Colin Smith  
Additional Inspector