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Mrs H V Jarrold
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Dear Mrs Jarrold

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 5 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 learners, 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 in mathematics is outstanding and standards are well above average.

- Children's mathematical development on entry is slightly above that of children age 3 to 4 years. They make very good progress in the Foundation Stage, especially in calculation and shape, because they are encouraged to talk and reason things out for themselves using simple mathematical language.
- Pupils achieve very well in Key Stage 1 and their progress accelerates in Key Stage 2. Standards are well above average in both key stages. The proportion of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age in national tests in Years 2 and 6 is consistently well above the national average.

- Pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the most able, achieve similarly well. The level of challenge is high. It is determined by ambitious expectations of the more able pupils and modified for other groups so that all experience a sense of success.
- A significant factor in pupils' achievement is that, from the start, they are taught to reason and apply mathematics in a wide range of contexts. There are clear signs that older pupils are learning to think in the abstract.

Quality of teaching and learning of mathematics

The quality of teaching and learning of mathematics is outstanding.

- Teachers have high expectations of themselves and the pupils. Pupils are challenged very well in every lesson, which results in the progressive development of independent learning skills year on year throughout the school.
- Pupils are taught to think logically and to present their work systematically. They develop strategies and skills that they then apply successfully in mathematics and in the wider curriculum. The success that pupils achieve boosts their self-confidence and contributes to the lively and enjoyable lessons.
- Assessment procedures are rigorous. Information from them is used exceedingly well so all groups of learners receive a fair share of the support available from the well-experienced teaching assistants.
- Teachers expect pupils to explain their work, orally and in writing, in accurate technical language. Pupils meet this expectation, as was evident in discussions and from scrutiny of their work.
- Homework is productive. Regular, written comments engage pupils, teachers and parents in dialogue that identifies uncertainties in learning and triggers remedial action where necessary.

Quality of the mathematics curriculum

The quality of the mathematics curriculum is outstanding.

- Teachers provide a wealth of opportunities for pupils to reason and to apply mathematics. These are thoughtfully woven into lesson plans in all classes, including Reception. Consequently, problem solving and investigative work are integral to every strand of work in the subject.
- A wide variety of high quality resources, including information and communication technology, stimulates pupils and encourages imaginative thinking in oral work and practical activities.
- The curriculum is flexible. It caters well for the range of abilities in each class and takes good account of the extra support that pupils sometimes need at the points of transition from one key stage to another.
- The school is innovative in seeking out ways of supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and of challenging those who are gifted in mathematics.

Leadership and management of mathematics

The leadership and management of mathematics are outstanding.

- Strong leadership and high expectations, which are shared with pupils, are at the root of the success in mathematics.
- Teachers understand well the part they play in contributing to the continuity of pupils' progress as they move through the school. Informal and formal collaboration between staff is highly effective in stimulating the sharing of good practice and in evaluating the direct effect of professional development on pupils' learning.

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

- Self-critical evaluation, involving all staff, pinpoints aspects for further development in the subject. It triggers action by challenging teachers to think deeply about pupils' responses to the methods that are used, for example, in calculations.
- Optimum use is made of available expertise from within the school and beyond. Training is ongoing and focuses sharply on issues emanating from teachers' experience in the classroom. Teachers willingly try, test and evaluate new initiatives before rolling them out across the school.

Inclusion

Inclusion in mathematics is excellent.

- Children's potential is exploited fully from the moment they join the school. Teachers' subject knowledge and expertise in finding alternative approaches quickly when pupils do not understand are significant factors in pupils' high achievement
- Successful learning is underpinned by teamwork that includes staff, parents and governors. Excellent workshops demonstrate to parents the progression of skills and techniques used in school so they are in a good position to support their children's learning.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed

There are no significant areas for improvement. The challenge is to sustain the outstanding achievement and pupils' enjoyment of the subject.

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

June Tracey
Additional Inspector