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Mrs S Chappell  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Chappell

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 03 March 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 above average.

- According to the school's records, many children entering the school in 2006 and 2007 had mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding above those expected for their age. By the end of the reception year, many pupils exceed the learning goals expected for their age, which indicates satisfactory achievement in the Foundation Stage.
- Teacher assessments show a rise in standards in Key Stage 1 over recent years. The current work in Year 2 pupils' books and folders indicates that standards are broadly average. Achievement in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory.

- Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 2, particularly in Year 6 where progress is rapid. Standards in Year 6 in 2007 were just above average. Now they are clearly above average.
- Pupils' number and calculation skills, their understanding of shape and handling data are very secure but their skills in 'using and applying mathematics' and problem solving are not as well developed.
- Pupils have good attitudes to mathematics. They enjoy the subject, particularly when assessing their own learning. They work well independently and in groups.

### Quality of teaching and learning of mathematics

The quality of teaching and learning of mathematics is satisfactory.

- Teaching varies across the school. It is satisfactory overall, though stronger in Key Stage 2.
- Good teaching in upper Key Stage 2 is characterised by a good level of challenge and quick pace of learning. The use of assessment in lessons pinpoints pupils' understanding and promotes their conceptual understanding effectively.
- Teaching in upper Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. Although, in lessons, more demanding questions are asked when pupils answer correctly, the worksheets provided do not challenge the learning needs of the more able pupils sufficiently.
- Teachers engage pupils' interests well by using a good variety of methods and approaches such as puppets, mathematical games and computer programs.
- The marking of pupils' work is usually diagnostic and helpful. Pupils are helped to assess how well they are achieving and understand their targets for improvement.

### Quality of the mathematics curriculum

The quality of the mathematics curriculum is satisfactory.

- The school is introducing the renewed framework systematically. This is providing much needed opportunities for using and applying mathematics.
- Some valuable opportunities are provided for pupils to enhance their understanding of mathematics through other subjects, such as learning how Ancient Egyptians used mathematics in constructing pyramids.
- The curriculum is sensitively adapted to meet the needs of pupils who find learning difficult. The school is now turning its attention to the needs of the gifted and talented pupils.
- Although classrooms do not have interactive whiteboards, pupils use information and communications technology (ICT) to practise their skills and investigate mathematical ideas. This creates enjoyment in learning.

### Leadership and management of mathematics

The leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory.

- You and your subject leader are driving the subject forward by analysing assessments and tracking pupils' progress to identify and remedy weaker areas.
- Other aspects of self evaluation, such as checking the quality of work in pupils' books and folders, are not as effective. Senior staff are beginning to observe

lessons but insufficient emphasis is placed on the impact of the teaching on pupils' understanding.

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

- The school has begun training to implement the new framework for mathematics. The process is prompting the school to review its provision and the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement in the different areas of mathematics. For example, the use of the 'simmering pot,' an effective means of identifying and strengthening mathematical concepts that pupils find difficult, has improved as a result of staff training in this area.
- Some teachers have good expertise in the teaching of mathematics. They understand how pupils think, anticipate their misconceptions and use this knowledge to guide them forward. However, this expertise is not shared sufficiently to benefit all teachers and pupils.

Inclusion

Inclusion in mathematics is good.

- There is good provision for pupils with learning difficulties through well planned intervention programmes.
- You have introduced a system to track individual pupils' progress. This is helping to ensure that each pupil's needs are identified and met through lessons and additional support.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- increasing the challenge and use of day-to-day assessment in upper Key Stage 1 to promote pupils' conceptual understanding more effectively
- ensuring that the school's self-evaluation is firmly rooted in checking how well pupils are learning in lessons and examining the work in their books and folders
- sharing the good practice that already exists in the school to improve teachers' subject knowledge.

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