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Mr J Allin  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Allin

Ofsted subject survey: good practice in mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 5 and 6 June 2008 to look at work in mathematics. The visit focused on the quality of teaching, how well the school ensures students understand and enjoy mathematics and how the school has improved the quality of mathematics teaching.

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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of seven lessons.

Features of good practice observed

- Excellent relationships between staff and students ensure students enjoy mathematics and make very good progress.
- Staff readily give of themselves and share their enthusiasm of mathematics with students at all levels of ability.
- Lessons are very well planned and engaging; they are not over-reliant upon textbooks and provide abundant opportunities for students to work in groups and independently.
- Teachers provided a good variety of activities. Across the department, staff are very good at sharing materials and teaching approaches.
- Teachers make good use of information communication technology (ICT) within lessons to enhance learning.

- Very good use of targets ensures students are challenged by their work and have high expectations of themselves. In 2007 almost a quarter of students gained an A\* or A grade in the GCSE examinations and students at all levels made considerably better progress than similar students in other schools.
- Good intervention by teachers enables students to keep up with their peers during lessons. Support is for students of all levels and not just targeted at those likely to miss a grade C at GCSE or a Level 5 in Key Stage 3 tests.
- Very strong leadership supports staff well by making sure they have access to a rich variety of interesting resources.
- Staff use their good subject knowledge well to ensure teaching methods and activities enhance students' understanding.

#### Areas for development

- When re-writing of schemes of work make sure students' earlier learning is taken fully into account.
- Increase opportunities for students to use ICT in lessons to enhance their learning.

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