Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Mrs T Baig
Acting Headteacher
Dairy Meadow Primary School
Swift Road
Southall
Middlesex
UB2 4RP

Dear Mrs Baig

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 21 May 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 parts of lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement in mathematics is good and standards are above average.

- Pupils make good progress overall to reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. After a satisfactory start in Nursery, pupils make good progress in Reception where they are now reaching above average standards. Following previously slower progress during Key Stage 1, Year 2 pupils have made good progress this year and are on track to reach broadly average standards. In Key Stage 2, progress is good overall. It varies across year groups and is greatest during Year 6.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics and work hard. They are keen to do well. The school's focus on speaking and listening helps them to use mathematical language

accurately and describe their methods, but their explanation of reasons and application of mathematics to solve problems is not as strong.

Quality of teaching and learning of mathematics

The quality of teaching and learning of mathematics is good.

- Good teaching, support and intervention enable pupils to make good progress.
- Teachers involve pupils well through work on mini-whiteboards and discussions with partners. They explain work clearly and give good individual help. The best teaching includes practical activities and interactive whiteboard illustrations that help the pupils think about what they are learning.
- In the less successful lessons, work is not well matched to individual needs so some higher attainers are not stretched and progression from earlier work is not ensured. Teachers do not check sufficiently frequently how all pupils are getting on, or listen carefully enough to what they are making of the lesson. Some teaching by temporary staff has also contributed to uneven progress.
- Pupils in Year 2 use self-assessment well to judge what they have learnt in the lesson and teachers follow up carefully when pupils say they have difficulties. Across the school there is not a consistent use of assessment against learning objectives for the lesson or longer-term individual targets.
- In most year groups, teachers keep good records of attainment which they use to ensure that pupils working below national expectations are helped to do better. However, records do not easily show individual targets for each year or the progress of individuals or groups towards them.

Quality of the mathematics curriculum

The quality of the mathematics curriculum is good.

- The school has actively developed its provision within the ethos of the new Framework and meets all curriculum requirements. Training and evaluation of various planning approaches have prepared staff well to deliver the new schemes of work. Good links have been established between work in Reception and Year 1.
- There is a strong focus on speaking and listening that is well matched to the language needs of the pupils, the vast majority of whom speak a first language other than English. Intervention programmes are well targeted in each year group to support those who are falling behind national expectations. Parents are given some good information on how to help their children and the school plans to develop this further.
- Pupils have opportunities to use information and communication technology across the mathematics curriculum. Many experience good activities that help them build their understanding. Nevertheless, the schemes of work do not ensure entitlement for all pupils to activities which help them understand concepts or a progression in building skills of using and applying mathematics.

Leadership and management of mathematics

The leadership and management of mathematics are good.

- The acting senior leaders have worked well together to make an accurate evaluation of the quality of provision and areas for development. The action plan

identifies appropriate steps towards improvement and the collaborative way leaders have worked with staff has already delivered some improvement at each key stage.
- The subject leader has a clear understanding of teaching quality when evaluating lessons. However, the recording system does not place enough emphasis on pupils' progress or on teachers identifying their continued improvement each term in precisely specified areas of teaching.

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

- Internal training and evaluation of planning for the new Framework has effectively brought staff together with a renewed focus on what constitutes good teaching and learning, but it is too soon for thorough evaluation of its impact.
- Senior leaders have found working alongside colleagues effective in raising teaching quality and increasing dialogue about how to continue to improve. Nevertheless, some teaching, although improved, remains satisfactory.
- The subject leader has found training provided by local authorities helpful in broadening understanding of teaching and learning quality in mathematics and developing a coherent vision for improvement.

Inclusion

Inclusion in mathematics is good.

- Individual needs are well met so that those with language needs or who are falling behind are given effective targeted support and make good progress.
- In some lessons, not all pupils are challenged well enough to enable them to make good progress.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- raising teaching quality to challenge all pupils and improve their problem solving, through more frequent and focused evaluation of lessons
- structuring central systems for assessment, tracking and target setting throughout the school, so that progress of individuals and groups can be checked frequently
- involving all pupils more in assessing their own progress in lessons and against their targets.

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

Gill Close
Her Majesty's Inspector