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Mrs N Bailey  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Bailey

Ofsted 2008-09 subject survey inspection programme: mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit with my colleague Chris Moodie, Additional Inspector, on 12 March 2009 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 six 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.

- Children generally enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills below those typical for their age. Overall standards are in line with national expectations by the end of the Reception Year. Boys' skills are better developed than girls' because, when given free choice, boys more often opt for mathematical activities and they sustain their interest in them.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are also broadly average with boys attaining more strongly than girls.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, standards have been consistently above average, with the exception of a blip in 2007 when standards attained in national tests fell to

below average. Overall, pupils make good progress from their starting points, including those who have learning difficulties.

- Pupils enjoy mathematics and particularly enjoy applying mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum.

### Quality of teaching and learning of mathematics

The quality of teaching and learning of mathematics is good.

- Good planning ensures teaching meets the needs of pupils well. Lessons often include suitable practical activities and opportunities to investigate problems. In the early years setting, a variety of activities that are 'numeracy rich' allow children to explore number in an engaging way.
- In some lessons, there is good use of interactive whiteboards by teachers and pupils.
- Teachers use questions well and ensure pupils give complete answers that include relevant explanations. Teaching assistants are used well to enhance pupils' learning in lessons.
- In some classes, teachers' gaps in subject knowledge mean that pupils do not always use the best methods for calculations.

### Quality of the mathematics curriculum

The quality of the mathematics curriculum is good.

- There is a rich learning environment within the early years setting, where planning across all strands of learning includes relevant mathematical activities.
- Good use is made of activities from the revised Primary Framework in schemes of work. Work on 'Assessing Pupils' Progress' is being developed successfully within the school to extend the variety of activities in lessons.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) supports the development of pupils' numeracy skills but its use is underdeveloped in other areas of mathematics.
- Effective support and challenge is provided for pupils who have learning difficulties and those who are particularly good at mathematics. Pupils have good opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum.

### Leadership and management of mathematics

The leadership and management of mathematics are outstanding.

- You have an excellent overview of the strengths and weaknesses within the subject and have made significant improvements to the provision and standards in mathematics. The lesson observations you undertake ensure you are able to judge the overall quality accurately.
- Your probing analysis of the school's performance data identified that pupils made greater progress in Years 5 and 6 than in the earlier years in Key Stage 2. You have taken appropriate steps to ensure that pupils make better progress in these years by strengthening the teaching.
- You work closely with the subject leader to bring about continual improvements when areas of concern have been identified.

- Governors have been regularly updated on how mathematics is developing within the school so they are able to make decisions from a well informed viewpoint.

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

- You, along with the subject leader, have worked well to improve the quality of lessons. You have monitored work carefully and supported staff to improve their teaching, particularly in the early Key Stage 2 classes.
- Support from the local authority's numeracy consultant has been very good in updating schemes of work and improving the quality of teaching in particular year groups.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- raising the standards attained by girls in Key Stage 1 by ensuring higher expectations of girls' engagement in mathematical activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1
- extending the use of ICT by pupils to enhance their learning in mathematics and through good quality activities with interactive whiteboards.

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

Michael Smith  
Her Majesty's Inspector