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Mr R McDevitt  
Headteacher  
Woodside Primary School  
Gittin Street  
Oswestry  
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Dear Mr McDevitt

Ofsted subject survey: good practice in mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 22 June 2009 to look at work 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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with you, the deputy headteacher, the subject leader, two acting year leaders, the governor for numeracy, and groups of pupils in Years 2, 5 and 6. I scrutinised relevant documentation and samples of pupils' work, and observed three lessons.

Features of good practice observed

- The focus brought by 2009 being the 'Year of Mathematics' has underpinned development and improvement in mathematics across the school. The school's involvement in the Williams review pathfinder phase of the training of specialist mathematics teachers has married well with the school's own planned developments in mathematics.
- The school's arrangements for teachers' continuing professional development are excellent. A range of high calibre training materials is used very effectively during professional development days and in staff meetings to improve staff's expertise in mathematics. The training undertaken on developing subject knowledge is playing an important part in this.
- Lessons observed jointly were accurately evaluated by the school's leaders who made pertinent comments of a mathematical nature as well as identifying general characteristics of the teaching. Similar features are evident in the school's records of lesson observations. Strengths are identified and clear pointers for improvement are set and followed up, informally in the main with

any emerging whole-school issues targeted through relevant training. The school might consider introducing journals for individual staff to log their development.

- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are reflective about their practice and committed to improvement. Planning is thorough, conducted collaboratively in year teams. Teachers' questioning is skilful; correct mathematical language is emphasised.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils, which they in turn strive to meet. Behaviour is very good: pupils enjoy mathematics lessons. They listen well to staff and to each other, and are prepared to explain their thinking. They show mature levels of independence and responsibility for their work. In the observed lessons, pupils worked well in pairs and groups on investigative tasks. Older pupils were able to make predictions, some of which showed considerable insight into the problem they were tackling.

Areas for development:

- continue developing teachers' and teaching assistants' subject knowledge
- seek opportunities for pupils to explore and use mathematics throughout the curriculum
- refine teachers' planning of investigative tasks to ensure all pupils are suitably challenged and make use of samples of their work to support the school's work on 'Assessing Pupils' Progress'.

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

Jane Jones  
Her Majesty's Inspector