

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs J Williams
Headteacher
Over Kellet Wilson's Endowed Church of England
Primary School
School Lane
Over Kellet
Carnforth
LA6 1BN

Dear Mrs Williams

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 30 March 2010 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 how well the curriculum secures progression in mathematical understanding for every pupil.

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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is good.

Achievement in mathematics

Achievement in mathematics is good.

- Children enter school with knowledge and skills that are typical for their age. They make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage and, by the end of Reception, attainment is above average.
- Historically, pupils have made satisfactory progress through Key Stage 1. Attainment is above average and rising by the end of Year 2, which indicates improving progress.
- Pupils make good progress through Key Stage 2. Attainment has been above average in recent years, as it is in Year 6 currently.

- Although progress is good, lower attaining pupils, including those with special needs and/or disabilities, and average attaining pupils make comparatively better progress than more able pupils.
- Pupils' conceptual understanding of calculation, shape, space and measure and data-handling develops well. However, they find it more difficult to use and apply their skills to solve mathematical problems.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Pupils are fully engaged in learning and very keen to succeed. They relish a challenge and work together productively.

Quality of teaching of mathematics

The quality of teaching of mathematics is good.

- Teachers' good subject knowledge is reflected in their explanations, demonstrations and questioning. These are used to good effect to improve pupils' understanding, for example of fractions and division.
- Effective use of computers and interactive whiteboards and the good pace of teaching ensure that pupils are interested and engaged in learning.
- Teaching assistants are effective in removing barriers to understanding, which enables pupils who find learning difficult to learn successfully.
- Occasionally, more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently, for example when teachers do not provide extension activities or use assessment at the start of the lesson effectively to identify what they already understand.
- Learning during group activities is monitored well because of the high ratio of adults to pupils. Misunderstandings are quickly identified and corrected.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work remedies misconceptions and rewards good achievement. However, pointers for improvement are not always included and only limited use is made of individual targets. Consequently, pupils are not always sure of what they need to do to improve.

Quality of the mathematics curriculum

The quality of the mathematics curriculum is good.

- Reception children benefit from an imaginative and stimulating range of purposeful activities, indoors and outside. Careful thought is given to ensuring their smooth transition into Year 1.
- The programmes of study are designed to develop pupils' conceptual understanding and promote enjoyment in learning.
- The curriculum is planned well to ensure a smooth progression of calculation skills and to enable pupils to build on their prior learning of shape, space and measure and data-handling.
- The school has rightly prioritised using and applying mathematics. Opportunities are provided for pupils to investigate and solve problems in mathematics lessons and across other subjects. However, the topics are

not sequenced sufficiently well to ensure that pupils develop increasing proficiency in this aspect of mathematics.

Effectiveness of leadership and management of mathematics

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of mathematics is good.

- Your contribution in checking and improving the quality of teaching and monitoring pupils' progress is a key factor in moving the school forward.
- The subject leader provides good support, particularly by teaching mathematics well and leading by example.
- Monitoring and evaluating teaching, learning and assessments enable leaders to identify areas for improvement. The school has a good track record in self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- Leaders' ambition is clear in the way they set challenging targets, check that pupils are on course to achieve them and intervene when there is likely to be a shortfall.

Subject issue: how well the curriculum secures progression in mathematical understanding for every pupil

- The curriculum ensures that most pupils are able to build securely on their prior understanding in most aspects of mathematics, as they move from one year-group to the next. Key factors in pupils' good progression are effective teaching and adjustments to the curriculum in the light of assessments of their learning.
- The school has already identified some inconsistencies in the progression of more able pupils and in pupils' using and applying mathematics, which are receiving attention.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- strengthening the curriculum to improve pupils' use and application of mathematics
- ensuring a consistently high level of challenge for more able pupils
- making greater use of individual targets and providing next steps in the marking of pupils' work.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop mathematics in the school.

As we explained previously, 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