

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



21 June 2010

Mrs M Peck
Headteacher
Holme Slack Community Primary School
Manor House Lane
Preston
Lancashire
PR1 6HP

Dear Mrs Peck

Ofsted 2010-11 subject survey inspection programme: mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 8 June 2010 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 included interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of two lessons and two part lessons.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is satisfactory.

Achievement in mathematics

Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory.

- Children enter school with mathematical knowledge and skills below those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the end of the Reception year, attainment is below average overall. Children's recognition of number and shape is stronger than their calculation skills.
- Pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1. Attainment has been largely average over recent years, although current Year 2 pupils are working at below average levels.
- Pupils make satisfactory but uneven progress through Key Stage 2. Historically, attainment by the end of Year 6 has been below average, though not significantly. Current Year 6 pupils are working at levels closer to the national average than previous Year 6 groups.

- Many of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those with English as an additional language, and the small number of more able pupils make good progress through the school. Pupils of average and below average ability do not all make the progress expected.
- Pupils develop secure calculation skills and a firm grasp of shape, measure and handling data. However, pupils experience difficulties in using and applying their knowledge and skills to solve mathematical problems.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics, listen attentively and behave well in lessons. Older pupils show real enthusiasm for working together to solve mathematical problems and describe such learning as 'fun'.

Quality of teaching of mathematics

The quality of teaching of mathematics is satisfactory.

- Teaching in Key Stage 1 is good in all respects. Lessons are interesting and engaging and ensure that all pupils learn successfully.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 2. Some is good but there are inconsistencies in the way that teachers use assessment to provide activities that are challenging and well matched to pupils' different learning needs.
- On the whole, teachers use mathematical equipment, interactive whiteboards and questioning effectively to improve pupils' use of mathematical vocabulary and to develop their conceptual understanding.
- There are good examples of teachers monitoring group activities, checking pupils' understanding and clarifying any misconceptions.
- The marking of pupils' work is good in some classes but weaker in others. The setting of individual targets is at an early stage of development. Consequently, pupils are unsure of how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve.

Quality of the mathematics curriculum

The quality of the mathematics curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum places appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' conceptual understanding.
- Teachers follow clear guidance on how to develop pupils' calculation skills, and, as a result, they make secure progress in this area of mathematics.
- The school has not yet implemented the renewed Primary National Strategy mathematics framework, which makes it harder for teachers to plan activities to develop pupils' using and applying skills.
- The curriculum is adapted successfully to meet the needs of pupils who require learning and language support and the needs of older, more able pupils. However, the use of assessment to adjust the curriculum in the light of pupils' success or difficulty in learning is more effective in some year groups than others.

Effectiveness of leadership and management of mathematics

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

- Leaders have ensured the stability of teaching and learning during a difficult period of staff absences. However, this has limited the time available to check teachers' planning and evaluate the quality of teaching.
- Effective systems are in place to monitor pupils' progress, check their work and analyse assessments of their learning. This helps leaders to pinpoint weaknesses in understanding and identify potential underachievement.
- The school is implementing termly review meetings to ensure that all pupils make at least the progress expected and is acting on the findings to improve achievement. This has had a positive impact on the progress of the current Year 6 pupils.
- Information regarding teaching, planning and the outcomes of assessment are shared with teachers. However, the key priorities are not written into a mathematics action plan to focus the efforts of all members of staff on achieving the key goals.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the consistency of teaching, learning and progress in Key Stage 2, particularly of average and lower-attaining pupils
- making greater use of individual targets and marking to help all pupils to know what they need to do to improve
- identifying more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their knowledge and skills to solve real-life problems across the curriculum.

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

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website under the URN for your school. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Colin Smith
Additional Inspector