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30 June 2010

Mr K Crowther
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Crowther

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 15 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 parts of four others.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is good.

Achievement in mathematics

Achievement in mathematics is good.

- Many children are unable to understand English when they start school and their understanding of mathematics is extremely limited. They make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the end of Reception, their attainment in shape, measure and calculating is still well below average. However, their counting skills and knowledge of numbers reach the levels expected for their age.
- Pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1. Although attainment is still below average it is improving. Current Year 2 pupils are working at below average levels.
- Pupils make good progress overall through Key Stage 2, although progress is stronger in Years 5 and 6 than it is in Years 3 and 4. Attainment has

been low in recent years but is rising significantly. Current Year 6 pupils are working at just below average levels.

- Boys from Pakistani backgrounds have not performed as well as other groups in the past. Setting higher targets and monitoring progress towards them has made a difference. These pupils are now achieving as well as other groups.
- Pupils' learning and understanding in most areas of mathematics develop well. However, many pupils still finding difficulty in using and applying their knowledge and skills to solve mathematical problems.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are outstanding. They thoroughly enjoy the subject, work extremely well cooperatively and relish the challenge of mathematical investigations.

Quality of teaching of mathematics

The quality of teaching of mathematics is good.

- Lessons are interesting, challenging and matched well to pupils' different learning needs.
- Pupils' conceptual understanding is strongly promoted in lessons through practical activities, cooperative learning and rich opportunities to explain their ideas.
- The monitoring of learning in lessons is largely good and misconceptions are usually identified and remedied quickly.
- Where learning is outstanding, teachers use very effective strategies to assess the understanding of all pupils, rather than rely on a show of hands, which happens occasionally.
- Pupils benefit from good quality feedback. Consequently, they understand their targets and how to reach them. They know the level they have attained and are usually given helpful information on what they need to do to improve.

Quality of the mathematics curriculum

The quality of the mathematics curriculum is good.

- Effective transition arrangements from the Early Years Foundation Stage into Year 1 ensure that pupils' learning and understanding are smooth and continuous.
- The well-planned curriculum ensures that pupils have good opportunities to build on their previous learning.
- Additional opportunities are provided in specific lessons and across the curriculum, to improve pupils' skills of investigation and problem-solving.
- The information collected from assessing pupils' progress is used effectively to adapt the curriculum so that misunderstandings are clarified and gaps in learning and attainment are closed.

- Several effective intervention programmes have been introduced to enable pupils who have fallen behind, to catch up.

Effectiveness of leadership and management of mathematics

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

- Your vision, direction and energy, as headteacher, along with high quality subject leadership, provide strong momentum and underpin the school's good capacity for improvement.
- Rigorous evaluation of lessons, assessments, plans, pupils' work and their views ensures that leaders are able to identify and remedy weaknesses promptly.
- The impact of improving the curriculum to provide systematic opportunities for using and applying mathematics is the only area yet to be evaluated.
- The use of monitoring systems, setting challenging targets and reviewing pupils' progress are proving highly effective strategies in raising attainment.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising attainment by increasing progress in Years 3 and 4
- improving pupils' capacity to investigate and solve problems by monitoring the impact of the improved curriculum provision
- encouraging all teachers to use strategies, such as mini-whiteboards, to assess and extend pupils' conceptual understanding during lessons.

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