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Mrs J Ault
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Ault

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 30 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 three part-lessons.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is satisfactory.

Achievement in mathematics

Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory.

- Pupils enter school with average attainment. Over recent years, attainment has been below average at the end of Key Stage 2 because of the legacy of underachievement from weaker provision in the past. Improvement strategies have paid dividends. Pupils' learning and progress are now at least satisfactory from Years 3 to 5 and good in Year 6. Assessments and pupils' work in Year 6 show that they are now reaching the levels expected for their age.
- Although boys' attainment has been average in the past, the attainment of girls has been below average. Much has been done to increase girls' active involvement in lessons, and their learning and progress are improving. As a result, the attainment of boys and girls is now broadly similar across the school.

- Pupils develop secure calculation skills and their conceptual understanding develops satisfactorily. However, pupils still experience difficulties in using and applying their skills to solve mathematical problems.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, develop positive attitudes and enjoy learning mathematics. They persevere and recognise that making mistakes is a necessary and useful part of learning.

Quality of teaching of mathematics

The quality of teaching of mathematics is satisfactory.

- Teachers ensure that pupils understand what they are expected to learn and are given sufficient time to practise and improve their skills. They make effective use of interactive whiteboards to explain difficult mathematical ideas such as recognising patterns and relationships between numbers.
- Assessment is used effectively to provide activities that are closely matched to pupils' different learning needs. However, it is not always used as well as it could be to probe and extend pupils' conceptual understanding during the lesson.
- Good support from teaching assistants ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn successfully and make good progress.
- Although pupils' work is marked constructively, they are not provided with individual targets to help them to know what they need to do to move from one level to the next.

Quality of the mathematics curriculum

The quality of the mathematics curriculum is satisfactory.

- Good curriculum guidance on the teaching of calculation skills ensures secure progression in this aspect of mathematics. Conversely, using and applying mathematics is not developed sufficiently across the school, partly because little guidance is provided to support teachers.
- Improved links between assessment and planning are helping to ensure better progression, for example, in areas of the curriculum such as shape and handling data.
- Good intervention programmes are helping to close gaps in pupils' understanding and ensure that all pupils make at least the progress expected.
- Only limited use is made of computers in learning mathematics.

Effectiveness of leadership and management of mathematics

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

- Your determination to raise achievement is very evident in the way you have involved teachers in interpreting and using assessment data to improve pupils' progress.
- Good evaluation of planning and teaching, and incorporating pupils' views, are at the heart of the improving provision in mathematics.
- Setting challenging targets and monitoring pupils' progress towards them have proved to be very effective strategies in raising attainment.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving pupils' using and applying skills to enable them to investigate and solve mathematical problems efficiently and confidently
- ensuring that teachers make full use of assessment within lessons to probe and extend pupils' conceptual understanding
- making greater use of individual targets to help pupils to understand the steps required to reach the next level.

I hope that 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