

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



2 November 2010

Mrs C Walker
Headteacher
Old Bank Junior Infant and Nursery School
Taylor Hall Lane
Mirfield
West Yorkshire
WF14 0HW

Dear Mrs Walker

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 20 October 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 four part-lessons.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is good.

Achievement in mathematics

Achievement in mathematics is good.

- According to the school's records, children enter Nursery with knowledge and skills that are particularly low for their age. By the end of Reception, attainment improves significantly in aspects of number but children's calculation skills and their understanding of shape, space and measures are still well below average. This, nevertheless, indicates satisfactory progress overall through the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Attainment, over recent years, has remained well below average by the end of Key Stage 1. Progress has been satisfactory, despite the high numbers of younger pupils moving into the school with learning and language difficulties. Particularly effective teaching in Year 2 is helping pupils to learn at a good rate and make accelerated progress, which is reflected in the higher standards of their current work.

- Pupils have traditionally made good progress through Key Stage 2. Attainment rose significantly in 2007 and has remained broadly average since then. Work of pupils, currently in Year 6, shows that a similar standard is being maintained.
- Average and lower attaining pupils, including those with learning and language needs, learn successfully and make consistently good progress. However, not all of the more able pupils reach the higher levels expected, given their prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Pupils' understanding of mathematics develops securely alongside their increasing knowledge and skills. However, they still find it difficult to use and apply their knowledge and skills to investigate and solve mathematical problems.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics. They listen attentively and work with good concentration. Many pupils acquire the skills of independent learning and develop confidence in explaining their reasoning to others.

Quality of teaching of mathematics

The quality of teaching of mathematics is good.

- Teachers' skilful use of interactive whiteboards, practical apparatus, questioning and discussion are key ingredients that engage pupils in learning and develop their understanding of mathematics successfully.
- The high adult to pupil ratio in lessons ensures that misconceptions are quickly spotted and remedied. Effective use of mini-whiteboards enables teachers to assess pupils' understanding and adapt the lesson accordingly.
- Teachers use assessment well to identify areas that pupils find most difficult and to plan activities to improve pupils' understanding, for example of fractions and division.
- Lessons are closely tailored to pupils' learning styles. For example, whole-class teaching is minimised and intensive group teaching maximised, since pupils learn best when actively involved with opportunities to discuss.
- The activities provided are matched particularly well to the needs of pupils of average and below average attainment. However, more able pupils are sometimes asked to complete easier examples, unnecessarily, before moving on to more demanding work, and this holds their learning back.
- Although pupils understand their individual curricular targets and the marking of their work pinpoints and remedies misconceptions, very limited use is made of self-assessment to involve pupils in their own learning.

Quality of the mathematics curriculum

The quality of the mathematics curriculum is good.

- The school makes very effective use of national, commercial and interactive resources to plan schemes of work and programmes of study that enable pupils to build securely on their prior knowledge, skills and understanding.

- The school has designed its own materials and approaches to improve pupils' mental mathematics, mathematical vocabulary and calculation skills. These are of particular benefit to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those with English as an additional language, and the many pupils transferring in from other schools.
- Although pupils receive adequate opportunities to use and apply their knowledge and skills, leaders are rightly planning to develop pupils' investigation and problem-solving skills more systematically in all year groups.
- The link between assessment and curriculum planning is well established. Through regular diagnostic assessments, teachers are able to adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' very diverse learning needs. This involves planning intervention activities that are proving particularly successful in helping to close gaps in understanding.

Effectiveness of leadership and management of mathematics

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

- Your drive and ambition are strongly reflected in the good quality of monitoring and evaluation of the school's work and the way findings are converted into clear priorities for improvement.
- Analysing assessments and tracking pupils' progress rigorously enable leaders to set challenging targets, identify underachievement and take decisive action to move pupils' learning forward.
- Observing lessons, with a specific focus on how well teachers develop pupils' conceptual understanding, plays an important part in improving the quality and consistency of teaching.
- Specialist mathematics training is proving increasingly effective in sharing expertise and improving teachers' subject knowledge.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising the challenge and increasing the progress of more able pupils
- involving pupils more purposefully in assessing their own learning.

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 published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Colin Smith
Additional Inspector