

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 L Glass
Headteacher
Alderman Bolton Community Primary School
Longdin Street
Latchford
Warrington
WA4 1PW

Dear Mrs Glass

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 February 2011 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 intervention groups.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is satisfactory.

Achievement in mathematics

Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory.

- According to the school's records, children enter Nursery with knowledge and skills that are well below those expected for their age. Although they make satisfactory progress overall and their knowledge of numbers improves well, their calculation skills and understanding of shape, space and measures are still well below average by the end of Reception.
- Pupils' learning and progress are good in Key Stage 1. Attainment improved and was broadly average in 2010. Year 2 pupils' current work indicates that attainment is now securely average.
- Pupils' learning and progress in Key Stage 2 are satisfactory overall, but inconsistent between classes. Good progress in 2008 and 2009 enabled attainment to rise to slightly above average levels. However, slower progress in 2010 resulted in below average attainment, though not

significantly so. Current Year 6 pupils are working at broadly average levels.

- Over recent years, lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, have made better progress than more able pupils because school leaders made their learning needs a priority and provided effective additional support.
- Pupils' understanding of mathematics keeps pace with their developing knowledge and skills. However, pupils find difficulty in reading and interpreting questions and then using and applying their knowledge and skills to solve mathematical problems.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics, behave well in lessons, take care with presentation and are able to work independently.

Quality of teaching in mathematics

The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory.

- Teachers explain mathematical ideas clearly, often using interactive whiteboards effectively to enhance pupils' understanding, for example how to measure accurately.
- The activities provided in lessons are adequately matched to the learning needs of average and lower attaining pupils but the level of challenge provided for more able pupils is not consistently high.
- The good support provided by teaching assistants improves the confidence and understanding of pupils who find learning difficult and helps them to reach their targets.
- By explaining learning objectives clearly and asking probing questions, teachers help pupils to understand what they are expected to learn. However, teachers do not check pupils' understanding sufficiently thoroughly during lessons to enable misconceptions to be identified and remedied promptly.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is constructive in identifying errors and guiding improvement. However, only limited use is made of individual curricular targets to help pupils to contribute towards their own learning.

Quality of the curriculum in mathematics

The quality of the curriculum in mathematics is satisfactory.

- A clearly written calculation policy helps teachers to ensure that pupils are able to build on their earlier learning of number operations.
- Opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills and knowledge have been increased in aspects of number but are still insufficiently woven into the curriculum in other areas such as shape, space, measures and data handling.
- Increasingly effective intervention is helping to close gaps in pupils' learning and attainment.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics

Leadership and management in mathematics are satisfactory.

- Self-evaluation is honest and realistic. Leaders are aware of the need to increase the challenge for more able pupils and improve pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics. Action is being taken to strengthen these, and other, areas.
- Monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress have been intensified and accountability increased. This is helping leaders to eliminate any traces of underachievement.
- Lessons are observed and pupils' work is examined, but not in sufficient depth to make a significant impact on teaching and learning.
- Setting and reaching challenging targets and monitoring pupils' progress towards them, have been influential in raising attainment and progress in the past, even though some pupils did not achieve their targets in 2010.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing the monitoring of lessons and pupils' work to eliminate inconsistencies in teaching and learning and improve the rate of progress in Key Stage 2
- strengthening the 'using and applying' aspects of the curriculum to improve pupils' skills of investigation and problem-solving
- ensuring that pupils' understanding is checked regularly, particularly when they are working independently, to ensure that any misconceptions are identified and remedied promptly.

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