

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 Bragg
Headteacher
Rose Hill Primary School
Elmfield Drive
Rose Hill
Marple
SK6 6DW

Dear Mrs Bragg

Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 18 May 2012 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; observation of four lessons, one undertaken jointly with the subject leader for mathematics; and brief visits to two further lessons and an 'early bird' mental mathematics session for Year 5 pupils.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is satisfactory.

Achievement in mathematics

Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory.

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with mathematical knowledge and skills that vary from broadly typical to below what is typical for their age. They make satisfactory progress through the school so that standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average. In 2011, the proportion of pupils reaching at least the expected Level 4 in mathematics was above the national average. However, the proportion of pupils who made more than the expected two levels of progress from Key Stage 1 was slightly lower than that seen nationally.
- As a result of recent improvements to provision, rates of progress are rising across the school. For example, children are now making good

progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, although a smaller than average proportion enters Year 1 with knowledge and skills that are above those typical for their age.

- Pupils of all ages enjoy their mathematics lessons and work very well together. For example, a small group of Reception children worked well together, taking turns to roll a die and help each other to cut out shapes and stick appropriate numbers of dots on to their pictures, without the need for direct input by an adult.

Quality of teaching in mathematics

The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory.

- The quality of teaching varies. The best ensures that tasks and activities are well matched to pupils' needs, although sometimes the range of different tasks in a lesson is too great for teachers to manage learning effectively. Teachers develop pupils' willingness to learn together well through paired or small-group work. The best teaching monitors pupils' responses to learning and adapts the lesson to address any errors and misconceptions that arise.
- Where teaching is less effective, too great a focus is placed on pupils' fluency in the use of skills and too little emphasis is placed on developing understanding. In addition, sometimes the range of situations to which pupils apply these skills is too narrow. As a result, pupils do not acquire sufficient depth to their learning or gain greater confidence in tackling unfamiliar problems. Opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematics, or to investigate mathematically, are inconsistent across the school.
- Marking and feedback are regular and pupils' books are tidy and well presented. However, written feedback to pupils varies in quality and in the extent to which teachers expect a response from pupils and follow up on it. In some cases, teachers spend too much time simply ticking or crossing pupils' work and do not focus enough on identifying any gaps in pupils' understanding.

Quality of the curriculum in mathematics

The quality of the curriculum in mathematics is satisfactory.

- The school uses the Primary National Strategy materials, supplemented by resources available from commercial schemes. However, a scrutiny of pupils' mathematics books shows inconsistencies in the development of pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics.
- Effective support is provided by the school, including through its website, for parents and carers to help support their child's learning in mathematics. Useful links with a secondary school lead to opportunities for some pupils to extend their learning in mathematics.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics

The effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics is good.

- Leaders and managers have worked effectively to ensure greater consistency across the school following the amalgamation of three schools in 2009. Throughout this period, actions taken have led to a trend of improvement in levels of attainment across the school, most evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage where children's progress is now good. Although a suitable range of professional development is provided for staff, the monitoring of teaching would benefit from a sharper focus on the quality of pupils' learning. Existing monitoring records indicate that more emphasis is placed on the features of teaching than on their impact on pupils' progress.
- Effective systems to monitor pupils' progress are helping to ensure greater accountability for achievement across the school. The subject leader has implemented a system for identifying gaps in pupils' learning so that weaknesses in their understanding can be pinpointed and tackled promptly. However, this has not been used to strengthen progression in the teaching of those strands of mathematics seen as weaker aspects across the school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring a more consistent balance between developing pupils' deeper understanding of mathematics and practice in the use of skills and techniques
- providing a greater range of opportunities for pupils to use and apply mathematics
- working as a whole staff to strengthen the understanding of progression in different aspects of mathematics throughout the school.

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

Lee Northern
Her Majesty's Inspector