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Mrs S Hunter
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hunter

Ofsted 2014–15 subject survey inspection programme: mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 12 March 2015 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, pupils and governors; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is outstanding.

Leadership and management of mathematics are outstanding.

- With the excellent mathematics leader, you have established an inspiring mathematical community. Parents, staff and pupils share in the promotion and enthusiasm of the subject. High-quality lessons, taught exceptionally well, foster pupils' deep reasoning skills and ensure their excellent progress.
- Leaders at all levels, including governors, are very knowledgeable, well informed and up-to-date about the mathematical requirements of the new national curriculum. Leaders' excellent understanding has enabled teachers to develop a similarly deep understanding. This is evident in the cleverly designed activities, expertly planned by teachers, in lessons day-to-day.
- The mathematics leader is highly capable and very well respected by her colleagues, pupils and parents. Her excellent support, training, and high-quality advice have brought about improvements to teaching and the curriculum. On very rare occasions, subject-specific monitoring can focus too much on provision rather than its impact on pupils' outcomes.

- The school is at the cutting edge of national developments in mathematics. Innovative assessment practice, recognised by the Department for Education, is being shared nationally. Despite national recognition being achieved, the school is not complacent and further refinements are planned.
- Detailed subject plans identify precise actions to bring about further improvements. The findings from evidence-based research, exploring the performance of lower-attaining pupils in 2014, have been used to identify the smallest signs of underachievement early. The culture of 'keep up not catch up' is raising pupils' achievement even further.

The curriculum in mathematics is outstanding.

- Imaginative, stimulating activities allow pupils to explore deeply a wide range of mathematical concepts. Pupils are immersed daily in mathematical reasoning. Carefully constructed lessons, rich in investigations and problem solving, enable pupils to explore their mathematical thinking in depth.
- The curriculum is designed so pupils can spend time deepening their understanding of key concepts. Teachers use problems expertly as the vehicle to discuss different methods to find mathematical solutions. Year 4 pupils have time (over a full week of lessons) to explore and master concepts such as factors. This approach builds pupils' confidence and skills in solving problems in other situations exceptionally well.
- Pupils enjoy the links made in the curriculum to other topics. Year 3 pupils sought all possible solutions when finding the different values of superheroes as part of their 'wacky week'. Pupils work systematically when additional challenge is provided through the removal of some values. The mathematics leader is aware that such rich experiences could be further developed as the new curriculum matures.

Teaching in mathematics is outstanding.

- Teaching across the school enables pupils to achieve outstandingly and become very confident, enthusiastic mathematicians. Teachers' expert questioning develops pupils' mathematical thinking and reasoning skills comprehensively. Challenging work for the most able pupils, organised through varying the presentation of questions or tackling more complex problems, continually checks and deepens their underlying conceptual understanding.
- Teachers routinely use pupils' responses to identify misconceptions and probe understanding. A consistent feature of lessons observed was highly effective strategies to encourage discussion. 'What do you notice?', 'True or false?', 'Prove it', 'which is the odd one out?' ... and 'Why?' are used exceptionally well to develop pupils' mathematical understanding.
- Daily opportunities for pupils to act on teachers' marking are helping them deepen their learning and take their next steps. Simple 'next-step' marking such as 'try this' are mixed with specific prompts. In Year 5, pupils are

challenged to prove their understanding of fractions, for example, by answering, 'Can you make a whole from thirds, ninths and sixths?'

Achievement in mathematics is outstanding.

- Results in national tests at Key Stage 2 have been consistently well above average for the past five years. In 2014, a large majority of the Year 6 cohort achieved the highest levels. Pupils are challenged by some very demanding tasks, for example finding angles in overlapping regular and irregular polygons.
- Pupils are overwhelmingly enthusiastic about mathematics. Throughout the school they respond animatedly to the motivating teaching they receive. Pupils gain an excellent grasp of the concepts they are learning through the daily use of mathematical apparatus, models and images. They use mathematical language carefully to explain, reason and justify their answers and conjectures.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs receive high-quality support through additional small-group work that is matched precisely to their needs and helps them overcome any gaps in their understanding. Teaching assistants deliver individual programmes of support skilfully and ensure pupils do as much as they can for themselves.
- Pupils have daily opportunities to reason about mathematical problems and apply their thinking in a systematic way. Year 5 pupils showed determined initiative and independence when tackling a Year 6 Level 5 test question. Pupils stuck confidently to their strategies, 'maths-mates' and underlying knowledge to challenge the inspector when he challenged them with doubt and confusion.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- continuing with your plans to further develop mathematics in other curriculum areas
- ensuring that all monitoring activities focus explicitly on the impact of leadership and management, teaching and the curriculum on pupils' outcomes.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop mathematics in the school. As explained previously, 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

Richard Light
Her Majesty's Inspector