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Mrs S Phillips  
Headteacher  
Loddon Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Phillips

### **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 February 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 and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of lessons.

### **The overall effectiveness of mathematics is good.**

#### **Leadership and management of mathematics are good.**

- Leaders are highly ambitious and have very high expectations. They have worked successfully to improve mathematics teaching and the quality of pupils' learning following the school's inspection in November 2012.
- Staff training is of good quality. The frequent workshops run by the subject leader have improved teachers' subject skills and knowledge. Staff's enthusiasm for teaching mathematics is high.
- Lesson observations are used to measure improvements in mathematics teaching. Each round has a specific focus and ensures that leaders have a very clear and accurate view of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. The focus on mathematics when measuring the performance of teachers has made an important contribution to pupils' improved achievement.
- The subject leader has prepared staff well for the new national curriculum, including strategies for including problem solving in all lessons. The

chance to teach some of the 'new' curriculum content in the summer term 2014 raised the expectations of staff and pupils.

- Teachers are shown how to make use of high quality materials from professional bodies to challenge more able pupils to apply their skills.
- The assistant headteacher works well with the subject leader to ensure the Early Years provision complements the focus in the rest of the school on developing mathematical fluency.

### **The curriculum in mathematics is good.**

- The curriculum is planned thoroughly to make sure it meets pupils' needs. The transition towards full implementation of the updated national curriculum has been well organised. The 'talk for mathematics' project that you have embarked upon has the potential to help less able pupils reason mathematically.
- You have woven effectively the most demanding material into the mathematics lessons for all pupils in upper Key Stage 2. This allows pupils equality of access to higher-level thinking.
- The emphasis on problem solving, fluency and reasoning is exemplified well in some lessons and during discussions between pupils. For example, when Reception class children were sharing various items between friends, those children who were grappling with the idea of equal amounts had the opportunity to talk it through with their partners and demonstrate their thinking because practical resources had been provided. In a Year 6 lesson, the challenge to find the tenth term in a sequence demonstrated pupils' high degree of fluency in working with number.
- Lesson objectives are planned to help pupils make connections between mathematical ideas but this is not always well developed in lessons. Some work set for pupils misses opportunities to develop their reasoning skills.
- Robust assessment arrangements are in place, including regular checks to validate the data that is reported on. Partnership working with local schools on assessment helps to maintain the good transition from Year 6 into Year 7.

### **Teaching in mathematics is good.**

- Pupils are highly motivated because the lessons are interesting and challenge them to think. Walking into a Year 5 lesson, it was striking how much deep concentration and purposeful talk was going on as pupils set about solving complex number problems. Pupils demonstrated a secure understanding of the four operations and strong mental arithmetic skills that helped them choose the most efficient methods.
- Pupils report how much they enjoy mathematics lessons. One reason that they value the teaching is because it helps them to get the basics right. They said that, initially, the challenge to solve problems was hard but find the practical ways of working helpful.

- Teachers are skilful at encouraging collaboration. They step in to support the discussions that help pupils to understand the mathematics fully.
- Teachers ensure that pupils of different abilities have the opportunity to master skills and understanding in lessons, through pitching approaches, challenges, resources and support appropriately. Well-trained staff teach additional guided mathematics sessions in key areas, such as place value, for those pupils who need longer to secure their understanding.
- Teachers' written feedback in pupils' books is not always helpful. Marking does not draw pupils' attention to why they are making an error or pose a question that would help pupils understand the mathematics more deeply.

### **Achievement in mathematics is good.**

- Pupils' attainment is well above the national average and has risen in each of the last three years. Fifty per cent of the Year 6 pupils attained Level 5, with 22% attaining the highest standard, Level 6. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards are above average. Progress is good for all groups of pupils.
- The gap between boys' and girls' starting points, which is evident when children start in Year 1, closes rapidly. Boys' progress accelerates in Key Stage 2. Few disadvantaged pupils attend the school, so it is difficult to make comparisons year on year. In 2014, the gaps between the achievement of pupils whose circumstances make them disadvantaged and their peers was negligible.
- The majority of pupils are highly confident and fluent in mathematics. They have a quick recall of number facts and calculate mentally with accuracy. Less-able pupils use efficient methods to solve calculations but lack certainty when connecting ideas such as fractions and division.

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- ensuring teachers build in more opportunities, including problem-solving and investigative activities, to help pupils apply what they have learnt and connect mathematical concepts
- making sure that teachers' feedback to pupils about their work focuses on what will help pupils secure and deepen their mathematical understanding.

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

**Jonathan Palk**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**