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Mrs C Clayton  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Clayton

Ofsted 2006-07 survey inspection programme – mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 1 November 2006 to look at work in mathematics. As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on pupils' enjoyment and understanding of 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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with senior staff, teachers and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of parts of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of the subject, mathematics, was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Achievement is outstanding in mathematics.

- Standards are well above average throughout the school. The Foundation Stage profiles show that standards are above average on entry. Standards are well above average by age seven and are very high by the time pupils leave school.
- In addition to the progress noted above, pupils develop very good attitudes to mathematics. Their understanding of mathematics is enhanced by the school's philosophy that learning in mathematics must be linked to pupils' experience.
- Pupils are confident, enjoy mathematics and have good mathematical and numeracy skills for their age. They often work in groups and independently, taking a degree of responsibility for their own learning and this contributes well to their personal development. They use and apply mathematics very well.

## Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning of mathematics is outstanding.

- Teachers make very good use of information and communication technology (ICT), games and other resources. Questioning is very good, ensuring that pupils give explanations and contribute ideas.
- Mathematics is taught in a spirit of enquiry through rich experiences that support the development of concepts. Excellent use is made of practical resources, cross-curricular links and special events.
- Pupils' progress is monitored well to ensure that problems are tackled early.
- Very good use is made of assessment to guide learning and to ensure that work is matched to individual needs.
- Teachers recognise that pupils may be at different levels for different topics. They create time and space for themselves to observe pupils as they do mathematics. They identify and tackle individual pupils' misconceptions.
- Excellent use is made of teaching assistants, for example to support individual pupils, to teach small groups, to supervise the ICT room, and to observe and record pupils' responses and levels of engagement during whole-class teaching.
- Some Year 6 pupils rarely get their work marked as incorrect, suggesting that more challenging work could be offered.

## Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the mathematics curriculum is outstanding.

- The school's philosophy of experiential learning is integral to its outstanding mathematics curriculum. Extra-curricular activities and curriculum enrichment are used exceptionally well to promote mathematics and problem solving. Numeracy is developed well across the curriculum.
- The schemes of work are very clear. Mathematics is presented as interesting, understandable and fun. Planning at all levels is detailed, often collaborative, and responsive to assessment information. It ensures that all pupils learn to use and apply mathematics and all use ICT within mathematics.
- The calculator scheme is very clear and comprehensive.
- Planning and assessment in the Foundation Stage is detailed and very effective. The reception classroom is well planned to promote learning through play.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management of mathematics are outstanding.

- The quality of leadership from the mathematics coordinator is exceptional, showing great clarity of thought about how to create the conditions for learning mathematics. This ensures that the school teaches mathematics in a way that is consistent with its philosophy of learning.

- The teachers work well as a team because the mathematics coordinator ensures that there are regular opportunities to share good practice and to enhance teachers' own understanding. This leads to a shared vision for mathematics and a continual focus on improvement.
- Effective monitoring of teaching and learning and careful analysis of data underpins rigorous evaluation by senior staff and provides a firm basis for the school development plan. The analysis of test papers ensures that improvement plans are well focused on specific mathematical topics.
- The selection and management of resources for learning are very good. Teaching assistants are well briefed and efficiently deployed in a range of roles.

Subject issue: pupils' enjoyment and understanding of mathematics

Mathematics is enjoyed by nearly all pupils, because the school sees its role as laying the foundations for later study and because mathematics is taught in active and engaging ways. Excellent use is made of a variety of practical resources and games to develop conceptual understanding. The approach is consistent across the school because the coordinator ensures that teachers have plenty of opportunities to discuss how they teach mathematics and to share good ideas. He is an exceptional role model, teaching with great enthusiasm and skill and sharing his good understanding of the difficulties pupils face with particular mathematical topics.

Inclusion

The school's small size allows it to monitor all pupils closely and to ensure all are given a fair chance to achieve well. The small minority who have learning difficulties receive good support and achieve as well as their peers.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- enhancing communication with secondary schools to gather information to help evaluate how well the school prepares pupils for the next stage of learning
- including some more challenging questions on each topic to assess the depth of pupils' understanding.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop mathematics in the school.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Abbott  
Her Majesty's Inspector