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Mrs A Myatt  
Acting Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Myatt

Ofsted 2006-07 survey inspection programme – mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 14 March 2007 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 staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of six parts of lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good.

- Many children start school with limited skills in calculation and in shape, space and measures. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and most reach the standards expected by the end of their first year in school.
- Pupils achieve well throughout the rest of the school and reach above average standards in Years 2 and 6. A few of the more able pupils in Year 6 do not do as well as they should.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly proficient at using and applying their mathematical skills and knowledge to solve problems in real-life situations. They are also good at explaining how they have tackled a problem.

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and participate in lessons with enthusiasm.

## Quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good.

- Most lessons get off to a very good start with quick-fire mental mathematics sessions that consolidate and extend previous learning.
- Teachers place strong emphasis on using correct mathematical language.
- In the best lessons, teachers set a cracking pace and motivate pupils through games and challenges. They match questions to the pupils' differing levels of understanding and ask pupils to explain their methods.
- Occasionally, there is too much 'teacher talk' and not enough opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas with a partner or explain how they arrived at an answer.
- The quality of teachers' marking is variable. Some gives no indication of what pupils need to do next in order to improve their learning.
- Regular assessments give class teachers a clear idea of how pupils are progressing, but the tracking of individual pupils' progress towards their targets is at an early stage of development.

## Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is good.

- The curriculum is well-planned to meet the needs of all groups of pupils and is modified well to take account of the particular needs of mixed-age classes.
- There is a good emphasis on applying mathematical knowledge and skills to solve problems.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to use mathematical skills and knowledge in other subjects, such as science and design and technology.
- Occasionally, over-reliance on commercial workbooks limits pupils' opportunities for independent thinking and investigation.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good.

- You are providing good support for the recently appointed subject leader, for example by carrying out joint observations of lessons. The former subject leader is offering valuable support by sharing his knowledge and expertise with his successor. You are also making good use of external specialists to demonstrate best practice.
- The new subject leader has made a good start on analysing test data and identifying priorities for improvement.
- Plans for the future development of the subject are not set out clearly enough with measurable targets to judge the success of the actions undertaken.

Subject issue: pupils' enjoyment and understanding of mathematics

Pupils thoroughly enjoy mathematics lessons and show good understanding of the different ways in which problems can be tackled. Younger pupils enjoy learning through play. Pupils know their targets but are not always clear about what they need to do to achieve them.

Inclusion

Effective support for pupils with learning difficulties helps them to make good progress. A few pupils capable of higher-than-average achievement are not always given sufficiently challenging work.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- raising the proportion of pupils who reach the higher standard of Level 5 in Year 6
- improving the systems for tracking individual pupils' progress throughout each year to ensure all are making sufficient progress towards their targets
- further developing the role of the subject leader in recognising and disseminating best practice and producing a clear plan of action to drive improvements.

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

Carole Skinner  
Additional Inspector