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Mrs M Hewitson
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hewitson

Ofsted 2007-08 subject survey inspection programme: mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 03 June 2008 to look at work in mathematics.

As outlined in our initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on the effectiveness of the school's approaches to improving the quality of teaching and learning 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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included interviews with staff, governors, and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of three lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement in mathematics is outstanding and standards are well above average.

- Children enter the school with skills and abilities broadly in line with those expected for their age. They then make very good progress throughout their time in school to attain well above average results in national Key Stage 2 tests at age 11 years. Almost two thirds of pupils gained Level 5 in 2007.
- Pupils in need of additional help are supported well so they make very good progress including pupils who have autistic tendencies.
- The school analyses end-of-key-stage and optional test results closely to identify any areas that are in need of additional emphasis within schemes of work. For instance, problem solving had been identified as an area for further work; now pupils are challenged by a variety of investigations when they arrive in their

classrooms at the beginning of the morning. Pupils say they enjoy these and feel it makes a good start to the day.

- Progress in lessons observed was predominantly excellent. Pupils really enjoyed their work; they buzzed with excitement. They say they like mathematics because lessons are fun. Their behaviour is exemplary.
- One outstanding lesson, in which pupils were following a mathematical trail in the church, helped develop their spiritual understanding. Good links with work on eco-awareness and with charities contribute well to pupils' social awareness.
- The school maps out opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematics in other subjects across the curriculum. This means all pupils have an excellent understanding of how their mathematics relates to other subjects. This, coupled with good independent learning skills prepares pupils very well for the next phase of their education.

Quality of teaching and learning of mathematics

The quality of teaching and learning of mathematics is excellent.

- Lessons are very well planned. Teachers make the most of a variety of strategies to engage pupils in an initial activity. They use questioning skilfully to identify pupils who appear unsure or who have misconceptions and are then able to rectify these. Teaching assistants also support pupils very effectively during this phase of the lesson.
- Tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities. In some lessons, pupils are able to choose the investigation they wish to follow. This gives them far greater responsibility for their own learning and is well received by pupils.
- Learning objectives are shared effectively with pupils, and these often include skills for problem solving or reasoning. Pupils are given criteria to help them judge their progress and these are reviewed during and at the end of lessons. However, pupils are not able to suggest suitable criteria.
- Teachers use the electronic whiteboards very effectively and often provide opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their work, including using presentation software to show their findings.
- Assessment is good. Teachers give pupils well judged advice in their books on how to improve. Pupils work well together in groups but do not have sufficient opportunities to assess each other's work or to look critically at their own work.

Quality of the mathematics curriculum

The quality of the mathematics curriculum is outstanding.

- The school makes very good use of the revised Primary Strategy Framework to develop schemes of work. They adapt planning to make sure lessons meet their pupils' needs and include a wide variety of investigations and practical work to supplement examples. Suitable information communication technology opportunities are identified; pupils say they enjoy these activities. Reception children receive a good mixture of directed and child-instigated activities.
- Good support is given to staff on how to teach topics and there are many useful references for using and applying mathematics in a variety of different subjects.
- The school's ethos is underpinned by a shared belief that very good teaching across all years is the best preparation for end of key stage tests. This ensures

pupils make very good progress, although additional support is given to Year 6 pupils immediately before their national tests.

Leadership and management of mathematics

The leadership and management of mathematics are outstanding.

- You and your senior team, including the subject leader, are clearly focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning. This has resulted in lessons that engage and stimulate pupils.
- The subject leader accurately evaluated the effectiveness of mathematics based upon a comprehensive review of the work in the subject across the school, including observations of lessons and monitoring of planning and work. Governors are kept well informed about developments within mathematics and are able to support the school effectively.

Subject issue: the effectiveness of the school's approaches to improving the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics

- The strong leadership by yourself and the subject leader has brought about improvements to teaching and learning. A collegiate approach has meant staff feel supported and share an understanding of what constitutes a good lesson.
- The subject leader attended suitable training by the local authority and then disseminated it effectively to staff within the school. Staff have also attended appropriate courses. In addition, you have made good use of external trainers for whole-school sessions. This helps reduce disruption to classes and ensures all staff benefit from receiving the same messages.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- increase opportunities for pupils to be more involved with their own assessment, including suggesting success criteria linked to learning objectives and using peer and self assessment.

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

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector