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Mrs A Streather
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Streather

Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 13 June 2012 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 governors, staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; observation of three lessons and brief visits to other lessons.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is good.

Achievement in mathematics

Achievement in mathematics is good.

- Children join the school with mathematical knowledge and skills that are below expectations for their age. At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, most children reach levels in line with national averages except in shape, space and measures where, in the last two years, they are below the national average. This is mainly because children have fewer opportunities to learn and practise skills in this area of learning. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, their attainment in mathematics is broadly average and steadily increasing. The attainment of Year 6 pupils currently in the school shows that they are on average two terms ahead of the expected level. This improvement is a result of better teaching that involves pupils more actively in learning in lessons.
- All groups of pupils make good progress from their starting points. More able pupils do particularly well so that the percentage who reach Level 5 is

above the national average. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, particularly those in the school's specialist provision for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders, make good and often outstanding progress because of the targeted support and intervention they receive.

- Problem solving is an integral part of the mathematics curriculum throughout the school. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that pupils are able to record their findings independently. Their drawings, jottings and use of number lines are particularly helpful in supporting their knowledge and understanding of calculation, including of fractions. This is especially so in Years 5 and 6 as pupils efficiently compare and order fractions and learn about their relationship to decimals and percentages.
- Pupils show highly positive attitudes to learning in lessons. Their progress accelerates when they are actively involved. The brisk pace of lessons means that pupils are quickly immersed in practical learning activities.

Quality of teaching in mathematics

The quality of teaching in mathematics is good.

- Teachers' secure subject knowledge, consistently high expectations, and good relationships contribute well to pupils' good progress. Adults ask pupils searching questions that aid their understanding and challenge their thinking, particularly for the more able pupils. In three Year 6 lessons, for example, teachers' carefully structured tasks enabled pupils to explore the relationship between the circumference and diameter of a circle. They spotted patterns and formed generalisations. Teachers regularly ask pupils to share their ideas, justify and explain their reasoning which they are able to do accurately and confidently.
- Scrutiny of pupils' books indicates that activities are adapted for different groups of pupils, based on the assessment of prior learning. Marking of pupils' work is positive with good examples of teachers' modelling of calculation strategies which has helped pupils to address errors and misconceptions. However, the provision of precise information about how pupils might improve their work or develop their ideas further is inconsistent across year groups.

Quality of the curriculum in mathematics

The quality of the curriculum in mathematics is good.

- The Primary National Strategy Framework provides the basis for teachers' planning and supplemented appropriately with published schemes and materials. A whole-school calculation policy ensures that strategies are consistent and build on prior learning. The curriculum is well planned and ensures continuity and progression in key skills and concepts throughout the school. Work scrutiny shows work on fractions is varied and covered in sufficient depth so that older pupils' ability to manipulate and interchange fractions with their decimal and percentage equivalence contributes well to

their learning in other curriculum subjects, particularly in scientific experiments where measures are applied in relevant contexts.

- Early indications are that the recent curriculum development known as 'Assertive mentoring', which monitors basic skills, is proving particularly successful in accelerating pupils' progress. It involves weekly 'quiz' style assessments that identify specific gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. Subsequently, teachers' use this information to plan future lessons and target particular pupils for intervention activity.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics

The effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics is good.

- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in mathematics provision and are sharply focused on raising attainment and improving outcomes for pupils. They have established a cohesive team in which the skills of governors and key staff have been used to good effect. The school's partnership with the University of Worcester is beginning to pay dividends, particularly in terms of staff's increased subject knowledge. Plans to engage in joint research projects are in place with a view to improving outcomes in the Foundation Stage in the shape, space and measures area of learning.
- Data for monitoring pupils' progress are used well to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of key actions and to identify where intervention programmes are needed. Regular pupil-progress meetings ensure that pupils are making good progress over time and allow for a professional dialogue between leaders and staff that identifies training needs. Shared planning, assessment and lesson study have led to improved teaching and as a result, pupils are making better progress.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising attainment further across the school by ensuring:
  - an increased emphasis on activities in shape, space and measures for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
  - teachers' marking of pupils' work consistently provides precise information about how their knowledge, skills and understanding could be further developed.

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

As explained previously, a copy of 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

Sarah Warboys
Additional Inspector