

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs S Blower
Headteacher
Christ Church (Church of England) Junior School
Woodcote Road
Tettenhall Wood
Wolverhampton
WV6 8LG

Dear Mrs Blower

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 14 November 2011 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 three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of mathematics is good.

Achievement in mathematics

Achievement in mathematics is good.

- Attainment in the school is above average in all years. The proportion of pupils achieving higher levels in national Key Stage 2 tests in mathematics is well above average. In Year 6, many pupils are engaged in work beyond that normally seen in primary schools, such as manipulating algebraic expressions. Pupils make good progress during their time at the school. All groups of pupils generally make similar progress although, in 2011, some pupils of White-British background made less progress than other pupils.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics. Pupils in a Year 3 class were reluctant to go out to play because they were absorbed in their activity to place a group of fractions in order. Pupils have good numeracy skills and a good understanding of mathematics. When three Year 6 pupils were asked to compare the sizes of the fractions $\frac{2}{3}$ and $\frac{5}{8}$, they very quickly thought

of two different methods and carried out the appropriate calculations accurately. They did this despite not covering this topic recently in class.

- Pupils work together well. When they have difficulty, they help each other in a mature way and discuss their work.

Quality of teaching in mathematics

The quality of teaching in mathematics is good.

- Teachers are enthusiastic about the subject and their explanations are very clear. They plan lessons well into sections that include opportunities for pupils to work independently. They have successfully implemented the recommendations of the whole-school inspection in May 2010 to limit the length of lesson introductions and enable pupils to make a prompt start to their work.
- Teachers make particular use of kinaesthetic learning. In exploring symmetry, pupils are encouraged to fold shapes and use mirrors. In exploring the sizes of fractions, pupils move pieces of paper with fractions represented as diagrams, some of which are equivalent, to form an order of size. At other times, they hold a sheet of paper with the fraction represented and have to move themselves into a line. This very much helps them to think and to discuss with other pupils. Teachers also make good use of information and communication technology to enable pupils to explore mathematics for themselves, for example in symmetry.
- Teachers ask questions to help pupils improve their understanding. However, their strategies at these times do not always ensure that every pupil fully participates in thinking of answers. Also, to maintain the pace of the lesson, teachers sometimes cut short the development of class discussion that could result from their questions. As a result, the benefit of using pupils' errors or misconceptions to enhance understanding is sometimes lost.

Quality of the curriculum in mathematics

The quality of the curriculum in mathematics is good.

- The curriculum is well designed and is based on the Primary National Strategy guidance. Good use is made of opportunities to explore and apply mathematics and use information and communication technology. At least one lesson each week has a particular focus on using and applying mathematics. This is used successfully to develop skills in investigating and in solving problems. Sometimes, links are not made with the other mathematical topics being learnt in that week so that pupils do not explore and apply across all areas of mathematics in a balanced way.
- Good links are made between mathematics and other subjects. This is done particularly well in cross-curricular weeks. For example, in a recent mathematics week, pupils used mathematics in all their subjects as well as taking part in special mathematics trails and in solving daily puzzles. In a recent international week, pupils applied numeracy skills to explore

currencies, distances and recipes. Other opportunities where they apply their numeracy skills include an enterprise event and a murder mystery game.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics

The effectiveness of leadership and management in mathematics is good.

- Leaders and managers have been successful in raising the attainment of pupils of higher ability. They monitor the quality and coverage of teachers' planning carefully. They provide high-quality guidance on teaching mathematics, including a good calculation policy. This has enabled consistent practice across all teachers.
- The progress that each pupil makes is monitored carefully and additional support is provided when a pupil falls behind expectations.
- Leaders and managers know the strengths and development needs of teachers well, and are currently arranging professional development through links with other schools. They are exploring closely the reasons for some variations in pupils' progress. The capacity for further improvement is good.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing the quality of teachers' questioning to ensure that:
 - all pupils fully participate in responding to questions
 - pupils have opportunities to discuss mathematics in response to some of these questions
 - errors and misconceptions are used to develop pupils' understanding.

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

Robert Barbour
Her Majesty's Inspector