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Ms J Roberts
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Roberts

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: design and technology (D&T)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 20 October 2010 to look at work in D&T.

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, parents and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is good.

Achievement in D&T

Pupils' achievement in D&T is good.

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with limited D&T-related skills. Well-planned activities enable them to make good progress in using simple tools such as scissors to carefully cut paper and card. They can use these materials creatively to make products they are proud of, such as cardboard masks and finger puppets. Such activities provide a good foundation for future work in D&T.
- Progress is good across the school in a wide range of D&T-related skills because of a vibrant curriculum that enthuses pupils. As a result, most attain the expected levels by the end of Year 6. A wide range of relevant activities provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their D&T skills in making products of quality. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of

the key processes of research, planning, designing and making. End-of-unit evaluations are detailed and demonstrate the importance of these key processes.

- Pupils enjoy D&T and are very proud of the products that they make. They learn how to use simple tools safely and are developing a good awareness of how to keep healthy; such as making bread in Year 5. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards D&T. They find learning fun and see the relevance of D&T to future experiences and adult life. Many demonstrate good personal and social skills when working in small groups when undertaking investigations and practical activity.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching of D&T is good.

- Lessons are well organised to ensure resources are readily available. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, manage behaviour effectively and maintain positive relationships with pupils. Planning is detailed but, occasionally, tasks do not always fully match the needs of the more able pupils. Furthermore, although questions are used appropriately to check pupils' understanding they are not always targeted to challenge and extend pupils' thinking appropriate to ability levels.
- Teachers provide good support and guidance for pupils in lessons. This is especially so for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose first language is not English, as a result of the effective use of support staff.
- Assessment procedures are thorough and provide an accurate record of pupils' progress. Marking is regular and teachers' comments provide pupils with clear guidance on what they need to do to improve further.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

The quality of the curriculum in D&T is good.

- An exciting and varied curriculum provides good opportunities for the progressive development of D&T skills across the school. Comprehensive planning integrates D&T effectively with other aspects of the curriculum through well-designed thematic based topics. The clear identification of D&T skills for each year group ensures learning is progressive. A strong focus on food technology is effectively supporting the pupils' attitudes towards healthy eating.
- Appropriate use is made of information and communication technology. Older pupils develop good skills in the control and manipulation of motorised models. Participation in the 'Robotics Club', regular D&T-related visits and the 'Shine' activities held on Saturday mornings, enriches pupils' learning effectively. The active involvement of parents through workshops and working with their children at home on D&T-related tasks emphasises the subject's relevance to the everyday life of pupils and their families well.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are good.

- Influential leadership is supporting the school's drive to provide practical learning experiences that are relevant to the needs of pupils. Subject leadership demonstrates a clear vision for the place of D&T within the overall curriculum. It is shared effectively with all staff and evident within the wide range of experiences planned for the pupils. Monitoring is thorough. Progress data are analysed in detail and used well to inform accurate self-evaluation that supports improvement effectively.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that more able pupils are provided with sufficient levels of challenge in all lessons
- developing teachers' use of questions to effectively challenge pupils' thinking further.

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

As I 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. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Philip Mann
Her Majesty's Inspector