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Ms S Whittome
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Whittome

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 8 November 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 and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is good.

Achievement in D&T

Pupils' achievement in D&T is good.

- Children start to develop their skills in D&T-related activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage from a very low level. Activities are well organised to ensure that they make good progress in using simple tools, such as scissors to cut paper and staples to fix it to create a simple book. The children are proud of the objects that they make and are keen to share them with others; for example simple puppets made from card and paper fasteners. Activities such as these provide a solid foundation for future work in D&T.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in a wide range of D&T skills as they move through the school, to attain standards that are at least in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. This is because

pupils learn to make quality products through an extensive range of exciting and relevant activities such as making an animal puppet in Year 2 and cartoon animations in Year 4. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the key processes of research, planning, designing and making. End-of-unit evaluations are detailed and support achievement in literacy skills.

- Pupils are excited about their work in D&T. They are keen to participate in the activities organised for them and understand the relevance of D&T to their own lives. They can use simple tools safely and develop healthy attitudes towards eating through projects such as making pizzas in Year 5. They respond especially well to opportunities to work in pairs and small groups, and demonstrate a mature approach to investigation and problem solving. For example, in Year 6 pupils tested the potential of hydraulic power to move a small ball against that of a simple pneumatic pump.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching is good.

- The quality of learning in lessons is consistently good or better. In two lessons learning was judged outstanding. Teaching in these lessons was brisk, resources were very well organised and teachers used interactive whiteboards expertly to demonstrate main teaching points and illustrate key vocabulary. All pupils, including those more able, respond very well to this high-quality teaching with an enthusiasm to complete the set tasks and investigations.
- Teachers and support staff 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 for whom English is an additional language.
- Assessment is satisfactory. Marking supports pupil development and appropriate procedures exist to monitor the achievements of pupils in D&T at regular intervals. However, insufficient use is made of this information to inform pupils how well they are doing in D&T and what they need to do to become even better.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- A clear structure for the progressive development of D&T skills is firmly embedded within a flexible curriculum framework that excites and engages pupils. Good opportunities are taken by teachers to integrate D&T with other subjects, such as art and science, to provide greater relevance to pupils' learning. A wide range of external visits, visitors to the school and links with other organisations associated with D&T activity, provides further levels of enrichment.
- Pupils make satisfactory use of information and communication technology to support the teaching of D&T. However, opportunities for older pupils to

use computers to control the models that they make are limited; this is a missed opportunity to fully challenge those who are the most able.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are good.

- A well-organised portfolio of evidence related to pupils' achievements in D&T provides an accurate picture of the subject's strengths and weaknesses. The subject coordinator demonstrates a clear vision for the development of D&T and this is fully reflected in clear action plans for improvement. Staff training is targeted carefully to facilitate areas for improvement in provision. Recent training has very successfully raised levels of expertise and confidence among the staff teaching D&T.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- making more effective use of information and communication technology, and particularly computer control, to raise pupils' outcomes further
- making better use of assessment to inform pupils clearly how well they are doing in D&T and what they need to do to improve.

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