

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



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Mrs S Head  
Headteacher  
Valley Primary School  
Beckenham Lane  
Bromley  
Kent  
BR2 0DA

Dear Mrs Head

### **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 December 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 outstanding.

#### **Achievement in D&T**

Pupils' achievement in D&T is outstanding.

- Attainment is well above average at the end of Key Stage 2 because all pupils make consistently good progress from average levels at the start of Reception. These high standards of work are fully exemplified by handmade slippers made by pupils in Year 6 and robotic work undertaken by pupils during science and technology club sessions. Scrutiny of pupils' planning, photographs of their work and completed evaluations, confirm that all pupils are able to make products of high quality using a wide range of materials and D&T related activity.
- Pupils demonstrate great enthusiasm for D&T because they see the relevance of the subject to their own lives and future economic well-being. Pupils state that they find the work challenging and fun to do. This was amply demonstrated by pupils in Year 2 during a lesson to

explore the differences between fixed and free axles in preparation for the construction of a model fire engine. They used resources with precision to construct different prototypes, carefully fixing the different components together.

### **Quality of teaching of D&T**

The quality of teaching is outstanding.

- Excellent teaching and learning in all lessons ensure that pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are developed progressively across the school. Lesson planning is comprehensive, and clearly identifies the intended learning and the success criteria required to support effective assessment. Subject knowledge is good. All teachers use interactive whiteboards expertly to illustrate key teaching points with animated films and presentations. Explicit reference is made to subject-specific vocabulary and displays of key words support effectively the learning of those pupils who speak English as an additional language. Questions are used to check pupils' previous learning and challenge their thinking even further. Many pupils respond very well to them. However, teachers do not always target these questions at the specific needs of individuals. Consequently, some pupils miss an opportunity to make a suitable response because often other pupils are keener to do so.
- Learning in lessons is brisk but interspersed with good opportunities for pupils to consolidate new concepts. This is done through carefully planned practical activities in pairs and small groups. For instance, pairs of pupils in Year 4 gained a greater understanding about the uses of different lights through their active participation in a practical problem-solving activity. Such activities fully support the work of more able pupils who tackle these tasks with relish. Experienced and well-briefed support staff actively support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who need extra help.
- Impressive journals of work completed by each pupil facilitate the thorough assessment of pupils' achievements by teachers, and support literacy development. This work is marked in great detail and provides excellent guidance on what pupils need to do next to improve. Pupils respond very well to this by entering into written conversations with their teachers about the adjustments and improvements that they have made in their work.

### **Quality of the curriculum in D&T**

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

- D&T is given high status within a vibrant and stimulating curriculum. Well-chosen units of work underpin termly topics. These are enriched by a variety of theme days, links with other subjects and joint activities with local secondary schools to ensure excellent breadth and balance to the curriculum across all key stages. Extra-curricular clubs provide further levels of enrichment and engage other members of the local community within the D&T curriculum.

## **Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T**

Leadership and management in D&T are good.

- The subject is managed well and high-quality resources are used well to support teaching and learning. The subject leader demonstrates a clear vision about developing D&T further. Self-evaluation is satisfactory. A good start has been made in monitoring the quality of planning and outcomes of pupils. However, monitoring of teaching and learning within D&T lessons has not been undertaken yet. This limits the school's ability to identify areas for further improvement to achieve even higher levels of effectiveness.

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- develop monitoring techniques further to support self-evaluation and subject development.

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**