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Mr M Burrows
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Burrows

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 February 2011 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 two lessons and a review of D&T-related activities within other subjects.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

Achievement in D&T

Pupils' achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- Children start to develop their skills in D&T-related activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage from a low level. Activities are planned appropriately to ensure that progress is made in using simple tools such as scissors to cut materials such as paper and card. Pupils in Key Stage 1 steadily build on previous skills and gain an understanding of the importance of investigation and research when designing a simple puppet. Progressively more difficult units of work ensure that older pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the key processes of research, planning, designing and making by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards D&T and are very proud of the products that they make. They find learning fun and see the relevance

of D&T to future experiences and adult life. This is because they learn how to use simple tools, such as saws and glue guns, safely. Furthermore, they are developing a good awareness of how to keep healthy. Pupils demonstrate good personal and social skills when working in small groups to undertake investigations and practical activities.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching of D&T is satisfactory.

- Some good practice was observed and teachers demonstrated secure subject knowledge across the school. Lessons were planned carefully and managed to develop pupils' skills in D&T well. Questions were used appropriately to check levels of understanding. Resources were used well: teachers' use of visual aids to illustrate key teaching points supported pupils' learning.
- 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, those from the Traveller community and those who speak English as an additional language.
- Effective use is made of end-of-unit assessments to measure the progress of pupils and inform yearly reports to parents. Marking of pupils' work is satisfactory overall but best where teachers provide guidance in pupils D&T journals to help them improve their next piece of work. However, the use of journals is not standard practice across the school. Consequently, opportunities are missed to support good assessment and improve outcomes in literacy by encouraging pupils to write reflectively and at length in their evaluations.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- The curriculum is broad and balanced with some good features in the range of extra-curricular activities available and strengthening links with a local secondary school and college. Units of work from the national scheme of work help to provide an appropriate foundation for the progressive development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in D&T. The school is modifying these units effectively to develop a curriculum that is integrated and tailored to meet the needs of a diverse school community. This is a positive step forward.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are satisfactory.

- The subject coordinator demonstrates a clear vision for the development of D&T and this is reflected in an appropriate subject action plan for improvement. A well-organised portfolio of evidence related to pupils' achievements in D&T provides an accurate picture of the subject's strengths and weaknesses. A range of school-based monitoring activities

provides the subject coordinator with oversight of provision in D&T. Pupils' performance in D&T is monitored appropriately but information gained from all of these monitoring activities is yet to be used with precision and rigour to further raise pupils' outcomes.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing the range of opportunities for pupils to write at length in D&T
- ensuring that self-evaluation is used effectively to fully:
 - monitor the quality of provision
 - identify areas for further improvement to raise pupils' outcomes.

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