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Mrs B English
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs English

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 16 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 three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is good.

Achievement in D&T

Achievement in D&T is good.

- Attainment across the school is generally above age-related expectations and pupils make good progress overall. Attainment by Year 6 is above average but pupils' recorded work does not always demonstrate the higher levels clearly.
- In the Reception class, pupils are able to make decisions about the models they would like to make, the materials they would like to use and the joining methods that they would like to use. For example, one pupil was confidently able to explain how to join a head to the body of a penguin so that it would move. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils confidently make decisions about their designs and their model-making skills are good. They are able to draw labelled diagrams of the models that they are planning to make and they are able to identify the materials that they will

use. However, they do not always go on to plan the sequence in which they are going to work.

- Pupils develop an understanding of safe working practices, particularly when using tools. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2, they can plan designs and work with increasing accuracy and precision using a variety of materials and equipment.
- Pupils' attitudes to D&T are very positive. They state that they like making models and using food. Their behaviour in lessons is good and sometimes outstanding with many examples of pupils helping one another and cooperating together.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching of D&T is good.

- Class teachers have good subject knowledge about the nature of products and how to use tools accurately. Topics are presented in interesting and exciting ways, for example, Year 2 pupils took great delight when investigating balloon-powered vehicles and cars with simple motors, before they went on to design and make their own boats.
- Teachers are clear about the process of designing, make and evaluating products. However, they do not always provide opportunities for pupils' planning to go beyond labelled diagrams.
- Teachers' explanations are clear and the use of additional adults is good. For example, volunteers and teaching assistants were observed helping children to develop their skills when using saws.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and based on national guidance. It is also effectively modified to make meaningful links between subjects, for example, torches were investigated and pupils learnt about electrical components as part of a topic called 'Let There Be Light'.
- The opportunities for Reception pupils to develop D&T skills are good. Children have good opportunities to work indoors and outside, with access to a range of construction kits, both small and large. Resources are provided so that pupils can select materials and tools during free choice activities. For example, four pupils were observed at the making table and they confidently selected boxes, sheet materials, glue and sticky tape to make model tanks, aliens and houses.
- The curriculum is very effectively enriched using visits and visitors. For example, on a visit to a local place of interest, pupils used the woods to build shelters. Good use is made of external expertise, for example, pupils visited Cambridge University to build bridges to cross a stream. There are currently no D&T-related extra-curricular activities.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are good.

- School and subject leaders and class teachers share a very clear understanding of D&T that reflects the unique nature of the subject. Staff understand that central to D&T is the need to make products that meet human needs. D&T is seen as a central part of the school's creative curriculum. Pupils' views of their learning in D&T are sought at the end of each topic.
- The subject leader has good records of her monitoring of the curriculum provision, including the topics taught and materials and techniques used. She has reviewed planning and has established a large portfolio of work that pupils have produced, mostly in the form of photographs. Although this work is levelled and usefully acts as guide to moderating assessment from across the school, the arrangements for tracking the attainment and progress of individuals and groups of pupils in D&T are underdeveloped.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- providing pupils with more opportunities to demonstrate their above average attainment in D&T, for example by expecting them to plan sequences of work in addition to labelled technical drawings
- improving the arrangements for tracking the attainment and progress of pupils, particularly at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

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

Amraz Ali
Her Majesty's Inspector