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Mr C Armstrong
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Armstrong

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 17 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 students' work and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is good.

Achievement in D&T

Pupils' achievement in D&T is good.

- Pupils' D&T skills when they start at the school are below those normally found. They make good progress and attainment is in line and often above that found nationally. Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn creative and practical skills through activities such as making models of vehicles and straw houses. D&T capability is developed well for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as they move through the school.
- Good achievement can be seen in a range of appropriate and challenging practical activities, for example, making models of shelters in Years 5 and 6. The school knows achievement can be further raised by using tools and equipment at an earlier age. Pupils take pride in producing well-designed and made products: a school survey shows that they have positive

attitudes to the subject because they consider it to be one of their favourite subjects. Information and communication technology is used well to research and analyse information when designing.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching of D&T is good.

- Plans and schemes of work develop effectively pupils' D&T capability across the year groups. A good range of resources is provided when pupils are designing and making, and effective teaching helps them to work precisely and accurately. Good support and guidance challenge pupils to think creatively and develop their own design ideas. The teaching meets pupils' needs and interests and the school plans to broaden subject knowledge by including more use of computers to extend systems and control work. Assessment procedures securely measure pupils' performance against national benchmarks and individual levels are reported every year. Outcomes from the Early Years Foundation Stage are used to establish a baseline in order to monitor progress.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- The D&T curriculum is well managed to provide a good range of design and make activities. Creativity and enjoyment of learning are at the heart of the curriculum. The use of tools and equipment below Year 5/6 is less firmly embedded and the school is exploring ways of safely introducing them to lower year groups. Project work is often linked with other subjects such as art using stimulating and relevant contexts, for example the work of the designer William Morris. Projects where pupils work alongside adult experts are a good feature, for example designing and making full-size shelters in woodland and load-bearing structures with the help of neighbourhood engineers.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are good.

- The purpose of D&T and vision for the subject are understood and shared. Monitoring and self-evaluation are rigorous and a strong team ethos values the subject. Leadership and management make a good contribution to developing pupils' capacity to design and make using a variety of materials. The school is taking the right action to ensure that D&T is maintained and developed.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- extending subject knowledge in systems and control
- using tools and equipment at an earlier age to further raise achievement.

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

Paul Hancock
Her Majesty's Inspector