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Dear Mrs McCalum

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 15 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 satisfactory.

Achievement in D&T

Achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- Attainment is generally in line with age-related expectations, and all groups of pupils make satisfactory progress overall. However, progress is variable with some evidence of stronger progress in upper Key Stage 2.
- Pupils in the Reception class make good progress in developing basic skills and they are able to choose which materials and which methods to use to join materials. Children are able to work independently to create products that interest them.
- Pupils across the school develop skills in designing, making and evaluating so that by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2 they are able to plan their own designs and work with a variety of materials and

equipment. They develop a good understanding of safe working practices, particularly when using tools.

- Pupils' attitudes to D&T are very positive. They are very keen to make models using construction kits, boxes and other materials. In Key Stage 2, pupils talk enthusiastically about their D&T experiences which range from making biscuits to shelters and slippers. Consequently, Year 6 pupils are confident at selecting materials, tools and techniques. For example, pupils were able to choose wood or wire to make the framework structure for a model shelter and went on to choose a wide range of materials and techniques to complete their models. In doing this, they were able to work confidently and independently. However, at times, choice is limited and pupils are over-directed by adults.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching of D&T is satisfactory.

- Teachers' planning routinely identifies key learning intentions and explanations are clear. Relationships are positive and older pupils value the fact that their teachers trust them to work safely and independently. Pupils are taught safe ways of working and are usually encouraged to make choices and design decisions.
- Occasionally, pupils spend too much time listening to their teacher. This is because explanations are sometimes too long or the whole class has to listen as several tasks are explained which are not relevant to all pupils. Opportunities are missed for developing and extending skills and knowledge, for example, some pupils inaccurate in measuring, marking and cutting were not identified as needing improvement.
- Annual reports are basically sound but do not consistently identify pupils' progress, strengths and areas for improvement.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and a varied range of resources helps children to develop useful skills and experiences to support D&T. For example, they have access to both small and large construction kits and can choose when to make models using boxes and other materials.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and covers an appropriate range of skills and materials. Consequently, pupils make the progress that they should. The development of a curriculum where work is planned around a theme is beginning to identify where subjects can be linked.
- The use of food ingredients in designing and making activities is a particular strength of the provision. Recently improved resources provide a good area for practising food preparation skills. A well-attended baking club provides younger pupils with opportunities to follow recipes and a

cooking club for older pupils has been particularly effective in encouraging them to plan meals.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are satisfactory.

- The leadership of D&T is satisfactory and improving. The subject leader has undertaken a recent audit of the provision and has begun to monitor the attainment of pupils at the end of each unit of work. However, this is too recent to demonstrate any improvements in either provision or outcomes.
- The subject leader has a clear view of which areas within D&T need greatest improvement and has a sound plan and ideas for bringing these about. However, some of the details of what, how and by when improvements are to be made are unclear.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that the subject leader uses a wide range of mechanisms for judging and influencing the quality of provision and the outcomes for pupils
- improving the arrangement for assessing, monitoring and reporting on the attainment and progress of pupils.

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