

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 J Detnon  
Headteacher  
Newport Primary School  
Frambury Lane  
Newport  
Saffron Walden  
CB11 3PU

Dear Mrs Detnon

### **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 March 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.

- A good range of activities in the Reception class gives children the opportunity to develop a number of D&T-related skills. For instance, they designed a packet of 'Magic Seeds' and used scissors and glue to make a castle out of boxes for a class play. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 continue to make at least satisfactory progress across the school in a range of D&T-related activities to reach nationally expected outcomes at the end of Year 6. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory.
- All pupils are enthusiastic about D&T because activities are interesting and they have opportunities to make things that they are proud of. Pupils in Year 2 can talk enthusiastically about making a healthy pizza and older pupils in Year 4 know how to use tools such as hacksaws, hand drills and

glue guns to construct a model of a Roman ballista as part of their history topic. The subject provides some good opportunities for the development of personal and social skills. For example, pupils in Year 5 work well in small groups to investigate elements of their model bridge. Pupils in Year 6 find D&T enjoyable because it is 'fun to do' and activities, such as making an Aztec mask, are linked with other subjects to make learning more interesting.

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

The quality of teaching in D&T is satisfactory.

- Teachers demonstrate appropriate levels of subject knowledge and an ability to plan activities that motivate and engage pupils in their learning. They make adequate use of resources to support their teaching and plan some good opportunities for pupils to work in small groups to investigate and solve problems in D&T. Slow pace and insufficient focus on pupils' learning are factors present in the weaker teaching observed.
- Procedures for assessment in D&T are satisfactory. Teachers make detailed ongoing assessments of pupils' achievements in D&T. Staff provide good levels of support for pupils in lessons and provide appropriate levels of information about how well they are doing in D&T. In the best lessons, teachers use sessions at the end of the lesson to review pupils' learning effectively and provide guidance about how to improve.

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

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

- Good opportunities are planned for children in the Reception class to develop a range of D&T-related skills within the context of a well-planned Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. A broad range of D&T experiences is planned within cross-curricular topics to excite and meet the needs of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. Planning provides appropriate opportunities for the development of skills in D&T. Sometimes these skills are taught within other subjects such as art and science. This leads to some fragmentation of the D&T curriculum and in the progressive development of knowledge, skills and understanding. Furthermore, opportunities are missed to support pupils' achievement in writing because older pupils are not encouraged to write at length when evaluating their work in D&T.
- Provision for further curriculum enrichment in D&T is a growing strength. Activities outside of lessons such as the 'Cookery Club' give pupils the opportunity to develop food technology skills further. The development of a vegetable garden promotes the concept of healthy eating well. Links with a local business partnership and secondary schools support the development of D&T further.

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

Leadership and management in D&T are satisfactory.

- The subject leader demonstrates a passion for D&T and its place within an integrated curriculum. Monitoring and self-evaluation are satisfactory overall but not sufficiently systematic to ensure that standards are raised and clearly focused on improving outcomes.

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

- providing good opportunities for all pupils in Key Stage 2 to develop their writing skills when evaluating the products they have made
- ensuring that the range of planned activities provides clear progression of knowledge, skills and understanding
- ensuring that self-evaluation is used systematically to:
  - monitor the quality of provision effectively
  - 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**