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Mrs S Atkinson
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Atkinson

Ofsted 2011–12 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 23 May 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 across the school is generally in line with age-related expectations, and pupils make satisfactory progress overall. However, progress is variable with some evidence of stronger progress in upper Key Stage 2. All groups of pupils are fully included and they make similar progress as their peers and reach broadly average levels of attainment by the time they leave the school.
- Children in the Reception class make particularly good progress in developing basic skills. They can use a range of materials and are learning to make decisions about which methods to use to join them. Children work independently, in pairs and in groups, sharing materials and ideas.

- By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to plan the order of their work, use their own designs, and work with a variety of materials and equipment. They are developing a good understanding of safe working practices, particularly when using tools, such as scissors and drills.
- Pupils' attitudes to D&T are extremely positive and they are very keen to make models. Key Stage 2 pupils are enthusiastic about their D&T experiences and are able to identify the value of D&T in developing their skills. For example, some older pupils confidently talk about the challenges of working within a team and the need to compromise.

Quality of teaching in D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is satisfactory.

- Consistently good aspects of teaching include positive relationships and pupils' motivation to produce their own, very individual pieces of work. Teachers' knowledge of the process of designing and making is secure. However, on some occasions, pupils spend more time decorating and colouring in rather than learning about the technical aspects of the subject, such as mechanisms and knowing how to make parts of their models move.
- Teachers use questioning effectively to check on pupils' understanding and prior knowledge. They offer good guidance to help pupils improve their models and pieces of work. Teaching assistants are generally used well to support this work. Teachers' expectations of pupils are made explicit and interesting activities are planned. However, on occasion, opportunities are sometimes missed to allow pupils to extend and practise their skills.
- Pupils' understanding of computer-aided design is developing and used well, for example to design bedrooms. However, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance D&T more widely is underdeveloped.

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.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Teachers are using national guidance well to ensure that it provides an appropriate range of skills and materials. Consequently, pupils make the expected progress. Good links are developing between subjects. D&T is used effectively to support pupils' development of speaking and listening skills as well as wider literacy skills. Work with other schools and external bodies and, especially, the local high school and recent enterprise day have been effective in developing pupils' interest and enthusiasm for D&T as well as their skills.
- The use of real products is effective in promoting pupils' investigations and supporting them in designing their own. Pupils said that they would

welcome more opportunity to find out more about real products, including, where appropriate, disassembling a product to find out how it works.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

The effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T is satisfactory.

- The leadership of D&T is satisfactory. The well-established system of collective shared leadership for subjects has brought improvements to the range of tools and resources and to the way in which the subject is planned across the school. Senior staff have a clear view of the place of D&T within the school and a largely accurate view of the strengths and areas where improvement is needed. However, there has not been any detailed monitoring of D&T in terms of the quality of provision and outcomes.
- Monitoring of pupils' levels of attainment and of the progress that they are making is good overall. Pupils' annual reports refer to their success and indicate levels of attainment against nationally expected standards. However, they do not always identify where individuals can improve their D&T work.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing more opportunities for using ICT
- planning more opportunities for pupils to learn about the technical aspects of making and including the use of real products where appropriate to help them understand how they work.

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