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Mr P Van Walwyk  
Headteacher  
Wolverdene School  
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Dear Mr Van Walwyk

**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 18 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 one lesson.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

**Achievement in D&T**

Achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils reach standards in line with expectations for their age: they can follow a simplified design process and are beginning to develop early evaluation skills. Pupils' attainment in Year 6 is broadly in line with national expectations for their age. Most pupils follow instructions and increasingly use experiences from outside school to underpin their learning, and in particular, their construction skills and awareness of products.
- Teacher's assessment of pupils' recent work, where it takes place, is broadly accurate. However, such records do not show pupils' starting points and not enough information is being captured to show their progress over time.

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

The quality of teaching in D&T is satisfactory.

- In the lesson observed, teaching was focused on clear learning objectives and well-structured tasks to find out what pupils already knew about controllable vehicles. Good relationships and the teacher's deep knowledge of each pupil in the class were used effectively to select active learning methods and to personalise questions that enabled deep learning to take place. Pupils applied their earlier knowledge exceptionally well to a new context for their work, and were actively absorbed in solving challenges and in discussing what they were learning. Carefully planned discussion points were well managed by the teacher and support staff and enabled them to adapt tasks to ensure that the key points were learnt.
- The school recognises that teaching and its impact on pupils' progress is not always like this. The reliance on a linear model of designing and making is firmly demonstrated in pupils' work and where it is not accompanied with regular testing and evaluation it does not fully promote pupils' fast progress and good achievement. As a result, some older pupils say they are frustrated when their work is unfinished and they cannot present finished products to the users, often family members that they have designed for. Teachers readily acknowledge a lack of confidence and knowledge about how to modify their teaching to better meet pupils' learning needs.

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

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

- The curriculum is well resourced and the use of nationally developed schemes of work helps to provide breadth and balance to pupils' learning. This supports teaching and learning but teachers' planning is not adapted sufficiently to meet pupils' individual needs and interests.
- The care team's emphasis on pupils' learning to grow, prepare and cook food, and their provision of toys and products that encourage pupils' curiosity and teamwork contribute very well to provision. In particular, this makes a good contribution to learning for pupils whose circumstances make them most vulnerable.

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

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

- The new subject leader has a vision for D&T, high expectations and an enthusiasm to tackle the challenges. He knows what the best practice in D&T looks like. However, the best practice that exists in the school is not being used enough to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- The subject leader is well supported by senior leaders. For example, his training is planned to take place shortly, and a budget has been established to fund D&T training for staff and to develop resources.

Current monitoring and evaluation in D&T across the school are underdeveloped and do not provide sufficient overview to ensure that lesson plans are adapted to meet pupils' needs and interests and promote their progress effectively.

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

- ensuring that systems are in place across the school to assess pupils' attainment and progress
- ensuring that monitoring and evaluation are developed fully and teachers' planning is adapted appropriately to meet pupils' needs and interests
- sharing the good practice that exists in the school strategically to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

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

**Gina White**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**