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Mr S Powley
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Powley

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 15 June 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 two lessons and the 'Planet Farm'.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is outstanding.

Achievement in D&T

Achievement in D&T is outstanding.

- Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are highly positive. From around average starting points, children make exceptional progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good overall and evaluation skills are exceptionally well developed. Cooking and activities, such as the use of the school's 'Planet Farm', extend learning far beyond the classroom and help to successfully prepare the pupils for the next stage in their lives. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, along with pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable, make excellent progress.

Quality of teaching in D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is outstanding.

- Staff ensure that pupils' initial knowledge and understanding and prior learning are carefully taken into consideration before each unit of work begins. Class teachers' monitoring of pupils' progress is highly effective. This is because they use this information collaboratively so that all pupils are exceptionally well supported and challenged. Continuous assessment enables pupils to know how well they are doing and allows adults to effectively support the pupils to improve their work.
- Each pupil has a completed design and evaluation folder for the units of work that they have undertaken. Careful adaptation of these folders ensures that pupils have written and design work that is sensitively adapted to their needs. These and the artefacts that pupils produce are carefully marked, assessed and moderated effectively.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- Integrated learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is exceptionally sharply focused to enhance all aspects of learning and child development. The use of complex technological vocabulary is well explained and helps children to have an early understanding of words such as 'malleable'.
- In Year 2, designerly thinking is exceptionally well developed through pupils making bespoke coats for their clients; their teddies. Although some projects are relatively less successful in developing these thinking skills, the school has already taken action to improve them.
- D&T is very well organised and, because it is blocked into longer periods of time, pupils become immersed in their learning. Exceptionally well-crafted cross-curricular work has a big impact on consolidating pupils' learning and raising their achievement. For example, carefully targeted questions and innovative use of tools and mixing bowls enabled Key Stage 1 pupils to physically explore edges and develop their understanding of mathematical concepts of area when weighing ingredients to make biscuits.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

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

- Leaders and managers are not complacent in this outstanding school. Plans are already in hand to ensure that pupils have a cutting-edge primary experience in D&T through the use of technologically advanced materials and manufacturing processes.
- The high calibre of teaching and support staff, enthusiasm and drive from the D&T coordinator and senior staff, along with the excellent continuous training and development, demonstrates the school's outstanding capacity for continued improvement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- extending pupils' designerly thinking skills by providing more opportunities for them to learn how to solve challenging and interesting 'real-life' problems
- expanding the use of enhanced technologies taking place in the school, through pupils' direct use and experience of using technologically advanced materials and manufacturing processes.

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

Steffi Penny
Her Majesty's Inspector