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Mr S Miles  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Miles

**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 5 July 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 six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

**Achievement in D&T**

Achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- Mostly pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons. Their attainment is in line with the average expected nationally by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Children's work in the Nursery provides a useful start to their investigation of materials and use of basic tools and equipment to make products. Pupils develop and extend these skills well in Key Stage 1 for example, by learning about the plasticity and malleability of clay and how it changes properties as it dries. Opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge of the properties of materials and their function are less securely built on in later years. Pupils' step-by-step planning is well developed in Years 3 and 4 but does not progress much further in range and depth by Year 6.

- Pupils are keen to make and enjoy the opportunities to personalise their learning by using their own ideas. They have a high level of decision-making but this is not always supported as securely as it could be to promote good progress.

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

The quality of teaching in D&T is satisfactory.

- Lessons are well organised to promote pupils' good collaborative work in pairs and groups. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good. They know what is expected of them and learning is mostly purposeful with a strong focus on designing, making and testing products. In several lessons, teachers' knowledge and planning of focused practical tasks usefully support pupils in tackling new tasks and design briefs. The use of concept boards and working walls were used well by some pupils to support them in their current work, for example to recall how to make connecting and temporary joints. Pupils' designs are mostly very similar with the occasional unusual or innovative idea demonstrated. Good attention is given to pupils' care and safety, for example Year 5 pupils are well taught and supervised when cutting wood.
- Opportunities were missed in some lessons to enable pupils to make faster progress for example; by demonstrating what good annotation looks like, by structuring the investigation of musical instruments to help pupils capture more relevant information, and in using pupils' existing knowledge about the function of everyday plastic products to help them to better understand a specific property of plastics.

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

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

- The school is working to tackle the gaps in the curriculum to enable older pupils to develop their knowledge and skills in using computer control programmes. Teachers' development of resources helps to support the teaching of the individual units and projects in the scheme of work. However, the content of the curriculum is not mapped sufficiently to ensure that these units and projects build on each other to promote, rather than cap, pupils' progress in the different strands of designing and making.
- D&T work usefully supports the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils make useful and relevant products to support their work in science and their awareness of sustainability: for example, by making containers for the grass heads that they are growing, and to solve the problem of carrying them home.

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

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

- The subject leader has a good overview of the strengths and areas for development. The school's formal processes are proving useful in supporting her monitoring and evaluation of D&T. Assessment is well considered but in its current early stage of implementation it does not provide a secure and thorough overview of the progress and attainment of pupils and year groups.

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

- ensuring that curriculum planning securely builds and promotes pupils' progress in the different strands of designing and in making
- securely embedding assessment and monitoring to better inform leaders' decision-making and support for staff to promote pupils' good progress.

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**