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Mrs P Winsor
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Winsor

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 14 September 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; observation of three lessons in Year 6; and an overview of teaching and learning in Year 3.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

Achievement in D&T

Achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- Pupils demonstrate nationally expected levels of competence in a variety of D&T related skills when they enter the school in Year 3. They make at least satisfactory progress across the school in the different subject components to reach the expected outcomes for their age by the end of Year 6. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also satisfactory. However, the progress of higher-attaining pupils is more variable because of insufficient levels of challenge planned for them in some lessons.
- Pupils demonstrate an enthusiasm for designing and making products within the context of whole-school themed termly topics that stimulate their imagination. For instance, pupils in Year 4 are proud to talk about

their fabric panels sown into a large quilt completed as part of their Year 3 topic. The subject provides some good opportunities for the development of personal and social skills. For example, Year 6 pupils cooperated well with their partners to test a variety of bread samples as part of the current topic focused on European foods.

Quality of teaching in D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is satisfactory.

- Teachers display appropriate levels of subject knowledge when teaching D&T related activities as part of the termly whole-school topic programme. Resources are managed well in lessons to facilitate partner and small group working. Classroom assistants provide good levels of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, teachers do not plan sufficient levels of challenge in lessons for more able pupils. In Year 6, opportunities were missed to engage these pupils in grading each bread sample against specific criteria to develop both their research and numeracy skills.
- The procedures for assessment in D&T are satisfactory. Class progress records are used appropriately by teachers to record the achievement of each pupil against the expected skills identified for each unit of work. This information is recorded on a whole-school assessment database which supports both teachers and the subject leader in tracking pupils' progress. The quality of teachers' marking is satisfactory. Written comments provide good levels of praise and useful guidance to pupils on how they can improve their skills in D&T further.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- A broad range of D&T experiences is planned within cross-curricular topics to both excite and meet the needs of pupils in Key Stage 2. Pupils speak with considerable enthusiasm about how this makes their learning fun. Planning provides appropriate opportunities for the development of skills in D&T. This is because long-term topic plans include activities that are carefully structured to teach the knowledge and skills in the National Curriculum programmes of study for D&T. However, this is not always fully reflected in the latest termly plans; for example, as seen in Year 3. This can lead to variations in the clarity of purpose and the focus for the lesson between each class.
- Provision is enhanced through a well-established partnership with a local secondary school specialising in technology. For instance, pupils benefit from some good opportunities for computer-aided design and specific training of individual staff to further subject knowledge.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

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

- The subject leader and school leaders demonstrate a clear vision for the part D&T plays within a fully integrated curriculum for all foundation subjects. The newly appointed subject leader has made a positive start in auditing provision in D&T to support self-evaluation and subject improvement. Pupils' progress data are collated methodically to provide a clear overview related to achievement within each year group. The regular monitoring of teaching and learning has yet to be undertaken sufficiently to identify inconsistencies and to increase pupil achievement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing the level of challenge in lessons for the more able pupils
- ensuring that the purpose of learning in D&T related activities and/or lessons within the termly topic are always made fully explicit within planning
- monitoring the quality of teaching and learning with greater rigour to identify areas for further improvement.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop D&T in the school.

As 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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Philip Mann
Her Majesty's Inspector