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Mr A Mellor  
Headteacher  
Blackpool St Nicholas CofE Primary School  
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Dear Mr Mellor

### **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 20 and 21 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 and observation of six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

#### **Achievement in D&T**

Achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- Pupils make satisfactory progress overall and by the time they reach Year 6 their attainment is broadly average. All groups of pupils are fully included and make similar progress to their peers.
- Reception pupils make good progress in developing skills and are able to choose materials and select tools with confidence. Across Key Stages 1 and 2 attainment varies. Assessments show that attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is below average. As pupils progress through Key Stage 2 their attainment improves to become average.
- Pupils' attitudes are positive and they talk enthusiastically about D&T activities. They state that they would welcome more opportunities to make products, particularly using food as a material.

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

The quality of teaching in D&T is satisfactory.

- Although the teaching observed was good and satisfactory in equal proportions the wider impact of teaching on learning and progress overtime is satisfactory because the quality of teaching varies. Senior leaders evaluate teaching in D&T as satisfactory with good features. The lessons sampled confirmed the senior leaders' views of where teaching is most effective.
- While pupils are encouraged to make choices about materials and how they will be used, at times choice is limited. Although the planned activities are appropriate for most pupils, opportunities are missed to tailor work to the needs of all ability levels, particularly the most able.
- Teachers are confident and their subject knowledge is generally secure. Questioning is used well to check on pupils' understanding and prior knowledge. However, occasionally opportunities are missed to develop pupils' technological knowledge through detailed discussions. Some opportunities are missed to set teachers' expectations of work. For example, in a Year1 lesson pupils were not always expected to cut out accurately.

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

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

- Provision in Reception is good and varied resources help children to develop D&T skills. For example, they have access to a good range of resources and tools to make models.
- The curriculum is sound, based on national guidance, and offers pupils experiences of a range of materials. The long-term plan ensures that an appropriated range of materials and techniques is studied. The subject leader, working with staff, is in the process of developing more detailed guidance to support the planning of each of the units of work.

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

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

- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in D&T. However, development of D&T over the last two years has been limited due to staffing changes and there has been little planned monitoring of the subject.
- Developing the role of foundation subject leaders is a whole-school improvement area and the new subject leader is keen to develop her role accordingly. While she has made a start in her role her skills at judging and influencing outcomes and provision are underdeveloped.
- The monitoring of pupils' levels of attainment, on an annual basis using National Curriculum levels, has been in place for the last two years.

However, the process of assigning levels has not been moderated nor has the information from across the school been used to help in identifying where improvement is needed. Annual pupil reports mention D&T but this does not securely report on pupils' progress in the subject.

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

- improving lesson planning so that tasks are more closely tailored to the needs of all abilities, particularly the most able
- improving the skills of the subject leader in judging attainment and progress, including the monitoring of lessons, to influence provision in D&T.

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

**Amraz Ali**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**