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Mrs S Phillips
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Dear Mrs Phillips

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 29 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 five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

Achievement in D&T

Achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- Pupils in Key Stage 1 draw on their early experiences in the Reception class well. They achieve in line with, and for many pupils, slightly above national expectations for their age. For example, they can describe how circuits in their lighthouse models work and understand and use technical knowledge and language well when doing so.
- Pupils' making skills show progression throughout Key Stage 2 and they enjoy the challenge of measuring and making parts fit together. They recall some methods of joining materials but are less clear about whether permanent or temporary joints are used. Attainment and progress slow in this key stage and pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is just below national expectations. Pupils' planning and evaluation skills and

their ability to work to criteria are relatively underdeveloped due to the nature of the curriculum.

- Pupils enjoy making decisions about their work. They know basic health and safety rules when using equipment such as scissors and are beginning to recognise the concept of risk when using tools and equipment.

Quality of teaching in D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is satisfactory.

- Teachers' management of lessons, their knowledge of pupils and positive relationships are strengths of the teaching. Strengths in teaching included teachers' good use, in Years 1 and 4, of a collection of well-chosen products and materials. They helped to support pupils' recall of previous learning and their investigations into the properties of materials. Pupils worked well in groups to quickly meet deadlines and confidently present findings from their investigations to the rest of the class.
- Teachers made adequate use of their training in D&T to ensure that pupils were safe, purposefully engaged in lessons, and made modest gains in their learning. However, teachers' knowledge of progression was insufficiently developed to ensure that work was pitched to promote swifter progress and to challenge more able pupils.
- Teachers had general expectations of learning and shared criteria for what was required of pupils in all lessons. However, opportunities were missed to develop this by sharing criteria in relation to high-quality designs and what pupils would need to achieve for their products to be successful.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- Provision in the Reception class is good. A varied range of construction kits and tools helps children to acquire basic craft and good modelling skills.
- The scheme of work for D&T provides a broad range of experiences that links to whole-school topics. The best topics link effectively to science and to developing pupils' awareness of control systems. However, some topics do not lend themselves well to purposeful D&T and, in particular, to designing and making products to meet the needs of different users. This is because teachers are often unclear about the similarities and differences between D&T and art, craft and design. They pass this misconception on to Key Stage 2 pupils. Where this occurs, tasks are too narrow to enable pupils to securely develop their D&T capability.

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 weaker aspects of D&T. Recent monitoring and evaluation have rightly identified the issues of insufficient focus on meeting users' needs and the need to

assess and monitor pupils' progress. School systems of recording attainment have recently been implemented but are not embedded sufficiently to identify pupils' progress over time. The school is well placed to commission training and to tackle the issues emerging in developing and supporting teachers' knowledge of D&T.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that teachers are clear about the similarities and differences between D&T and art, craft and design to enable them to plan lessons that are focused on what pupils must learn to develop securely their D&T capability
- using criteria effectively in lessons to ensure that the needs of the user are considered in more depth at each stage of designing and making
- embed robust systems to ensure that pupils' progress is monitored effectively and leads to better progress by the end of Key Stage 2.

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

Gina White
Her Majesty's Inspector