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6 December 2011

Mrs E Godfrey  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Godfrey

### **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 22 November 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 four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

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

Achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- A good range of imaginative activities in the Reception class provides opportunities for children to develop their use of simple tools. For example, they use scissors accurately to cut out animal shapes and spatulas to apply glue carefully to a range of materials to make their 'Polar Regions' pop-up card.
- Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in a range of D&T-related skills to reach generally expected outcomes by the end of Key Stage 2. A legacy of underachievement is being successfully addressed. A trend of improving outcomes is now evident across the school in D&T because of improvements in the curriculum and effective leadership.

- All pupils display very positive attitudes towards learning. This is because teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to solve problems in pairs and small groups, such as investigating the structure of bridges as part of a history-themed topic on the Romans. Pupils are responding very well to these firmly established cross-curricular links because they find learning fun and the activities capture their imagination.

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

The quality of teaching in D&T is satisfactory.

- Some good practice was observed during the visit. Lessons are well organised and teachers make clear links between the purpose of learning and the skills to be covered in the lesson. Teachers display secure subject knowledge and most use questions appropriately to check pupils' previous learning and to challenge their thinking further. Relationships between the staff and pupils are positive. Behaviour is managed well and ensures that small group work contributes successfully to the pupils' learning in D&T. In the less effective lessons, teachers tend to talk too much and the pace of learning is slow.
- Overall, teaching meets the needs of most pupils. However, in some lessons there is an over-reliance on giving more able pupils extra work rather than setting them harder tasks to do. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good levels of support and guidance in developing their skills.
- The use of assessment to aid planning is satisfactory and improving. Detailed monitoring systems are now in place to support both formative assessment and the analysis of data. Pupils' achievement is carefully recorded against a comprehensive list of skills across each year group. Teachers are now beginning to use this data to identify gaps in learning.

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

The quality of the curriculum in D&T is satisfactory

- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is firmly rooted in the development of pupils' skills based on their interests within a holistic, vibrant cross-curricular structure. These are clearly reflected in pupils' enthusiasm for learning in D&T. Further links between other subjects are developing well across the school. Appropriate opportunities are being planned for the development of literacy and numeracy skills in D&T. These new developments in curriculum planning are yet to be fully reflected in pupils' attainment. This is particularly so in providing sufficient opportunities to develop pupils' ability to use information and communication technology (ICT) within D&T.
- D&T is taught within a context of real-life experiences that fully engage and enthuse the pupils. Themed units of work, such as 'Polar Regions' for pupils in Year 2 and the Second World War for those in Year 6, provide opportunities for pupils to design and make model igloos and gas masks respectively. An appropriate range of extra-curricular experiences, such as

a cooking club and pupils' participation in the 'Food for Life' project, provides extra levels of enrichment.

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

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

- You and the subject leader have successfully instilled a sense of shared vision for D&T within the context of a skills-based curriculum. Expectations related to planning and team-working are high. The subject leader is enthusiastic about the success of recent curriculum developments. This is mirrored through discussions with other teachers who speak very highly about the positive impact that the curriculum is now having on pupils' learning. They confirm that school leadership has been instrumental in driving forwards a curriculum model that inspires staff and pupils alike.
- Self-evaluation is accurate based on a detailed audit of the subject against pre-set criteria. A satisfactory start has been made in monitoring teaching and learning by analysing pupils' work carefully and observing some teaching. A subject evidence portfolio includes individual pieces of work assessed carefully against D&T-related skill development sheets. Although the school is establishing links with local businesses and secondary schools to further improve opportunities for D&T and staff training, these are at the early stages of development.

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

- ensuring that lessons fully meet the needs of the more able pupils
- increasing the opportunities for pupils to use ICT within D&T
- strengthening the links with other agencies to support the development of D&T provision.

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**