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Mr R Chamberlain
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Chamberlain

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 24 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 three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

Achievement in D&T

Achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- Across the school, pupils' progress is satisfactory and by the end of Year 6 they reach standards which are in line with expectations for their age. All pupils are aware of the need to design and evaluate their work to improve their products. However, they make slower progress in Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4 because insufficient opportunities are provided for them to develop and practise their design skills.
- Progress in Years 5 and 6 is good because pupils have more opportunities to develop their skills and to design. Consequently, they are developing problem-solving, planning and independence skills well.

- Finished products are of good quality in some lessons, such as the tessellated floors for the dragon shelters in Years 3 and 4 and the fruit salads made by pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- Lessons make a good contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being. Behaviour is good; pupils demonstrate well-developed skills of cooperation and teamwork. They are enthusiastic about D&T and want to do more of it.

Quality of teaching in D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is satisfactory.

- Teachers are successful in ensuring that pupils see the relevance and purpose of D&T projects and engage enthusiastically with their work because themes are linked effectively with other subjects.
- In lessons where the whole class carry out similar activities some pupils, particularly the more able, are not given tasks which sufficiently challenge them or enable them to use their own ideas when designing. This limits their progress. Where teaching and learning are good in Years 5 and 6, pupils have well-planned experiences to ensure that they are familiar with the properties and characteristics of the materials they are to work with. Pupils use these opportunities well to design their products so that they will be able to make them successfully.
- Teachers ensure that design is part of the process when carrying out D&T projects. However, the purpose of design to improve the making of products is not sufficiently well understood by all teachers.
- Teachers employ assessment procedures adequately. However, teachers' planning does not build sufficiently upon earlier lessons or assessments to ensure that pupils make good or better progress over time.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- Coverage of the programmes of study is adequate. Cross-curricular links and topics set in real-life situations give pupils purpose and great enjoyment.
- Food and control technology are not included as regularly as other materials in D&T projects. This results in pupils having fewer opportunities to progressively develop their skills, knowledge and understanding.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

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

- Currently, training and the further development of teachers' knowledge of D&T are not a priority in the school and federation improvement plan. However, a sensible action plan is in place to audit the provision and

outcomes of D&T this year. This addresses pertinent questions, such as whether opportunities for D&T in topic work are fully exploited.

- D&T provision and outcomes are maintained as satisfactory as a result of your effective leadership with support from the assistant headteacher and the conscientious attitude of other teachers. Together you ensure that pupils gain from regular D&T projects covering nearly all aspects of the curriculum.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing the design aspects of D&T by:
 - ensuring that pupils fully understand that design is an integral part of the making process
 - enabling pupils to practise skills and explore materials more often in preparation for making
 - challenging pupils to solve problems independently rather than by directing activities
- providing more opportunities for pupils to use food and control technology in their D&T work.

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

Tim Bristow
Her Majesty's Inspector