

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs J Davenport
Headteacher
Hilldene Primary School
Grange Road
Romford
Essex
RM3 7DU

Dear Mrs Davenport

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 23 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 one lesson and short observations of teaching and learning in other classes.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

Achievement in D&T

Achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- A good range of activities in Nursery and Reception classes allows children to develop their use of simple tools. For instance, children in Reception can use small wooden hammers with care to nail shapes to a pegboard. They can use construction kit bricks to build a model bridge according to their own design to enable the Gingerbread Man to cross a river.
- Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress overall in a range of D&T related activities to attain outcomes broadly in line with that expected of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. A review of pupils' work in Year 6 and discussion with them indicates that their ability to use a range of tools and different materials in D&T is quite limited. However, these pupils can use research well to support their designs, for example when building a bridge

as part of their 'River' project. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory as a result of personalised support and a focus on subject-specific vocabulary.

- Pupils' attitudes towards D&T are very positive. Pupils say that they find the learning fun because it gives them good opportunities to work in small groups to find solutions to problems. They take care when making things and are proud of their achievements, such as making a decoration for the Christmas tree in Year 1 or completing an animal mask in Year 4 in readiness for a performance to younger pupils.

Quality of teaching in D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is satisfactory.

- Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge overall. Lessons are planned carefully and managed appropriately to develop pupils' skills in D&T. Some outstanding practice was observed in a Year 4 class. In this lesson, the teacher's effective use of resources such as a short video on the interactive whiteboard stimulated the imagination of the pupils in readiness for them to develop individual and original designs for an animal mask. As a result, these pupils quickly set about choosing the most appropriate textiles to embellish their face mask to achieve some with impressive results by the end of the lesson. Such high-quality teaching is not evident in all classes.
- The assessment of pupils' progress is satisfactory overall. Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage classes make ongoing observations and use cameras to record significant learning in D&T-related activities. Teachers in Key Stages 1 and 2 mark pupils' work related to D&T in their topic books. Some of this marking is extremely detailed. It not only supports pupils' literacy development but provides effective guidance to pupils on what they need to do next to improve. This practice is not consistent across all year groups and especially for the older pupils.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- Teachers make appropriate use of a commercial curriculum planning package to ensure that there is appropriate progression of key knowledge, understanding and skills. Effective links are established between D&T and other subjects to provide units of work that provide pupils with learning opportunities that stimulate their curiosity and ability to solve problems in small groups, such as building a bridge from recycled materials.
- Pupils have appropriate opportunities to develop their skills in food technology by designing and making products such as a fruit cocktail. However, older pupils have insufficient opportunities to use different tools and materials to make products such as powered vehicles. Furthermore, opportunities to develop their skills in computer-aided design and control

technology are limited. The school has recognised that this aspect of the curriculum needs to be improved.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

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

- The curriculum team with responsibility for the 'Creative Arts', provides appropriate oversight and leadership for D&T alongside the subjects of art, music and drama. Teamwork is developing well and, through accurate review, plans are now in place to improve provision and improve pupils' outcomes. To date, the monitoring of teaching and learning has been limited to the scrutiny of pupils' work. Lessons in D&T are yet to be observed to identify strengths and weaknesses within teaching, to share best practice and to develop the expertise of those teachers whose subject knowledge in D&T is less secure.
- The monitoring of pupils' progress in D&T is now in place based on a sampling process. These data are yet to be used effectively to identify further gaps in provision and set challenging targets to improve outcomes for pupils in D&T.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing the range of opportunities for pupils to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding in D&T
- ensuring that all teaching is as good as the best in all lessons
- making better use of assessment to consistently inform pupils about what they need to do next to improve in D&T
- monitoring provision in D&T with greater rigour to ensure that all aspects of the D&T curriculum are covered in sufficient depth.

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