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Mr S Spry  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Spry

### **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 1 February 2012 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 and videos; analysis of pupils' work; observation of three lessons and meeting with an external consultant.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is outstanding.

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

Achievement in D&T is outstanding.

- Children's experience of modelling and their knowledge and understanding of the world are very limited on entry to the school. Through the Early Years Foundation Stage they develop high levels of independence, for example exploring how to help a Martian repair his space rocket using spanners and by making their own machines to help him. Their practical skills are rapidly increased as they learn how to construct, manipulate and join a good variety of materials together to reflect their ideas. This provides an excellent base on which they continue to sustain and develop designing and manufacturing capability.
- Pupils' ability to plan, make decisions, question and evaluate is embedded in all year groups. From Year 1, pupils develop and shape their own design

and success criteria. Following the brief set by the 'Crazy Chef' they develop suitable packaging for the 'Afri-bite' biscuits they have made to ensure that they maximise the potential sales. The 'Building Learning Power' system used throughout all school activities results in original and creative products used to solve real-life problems. By the end of Year 6, almost all pupils have reached Level 4 in D&T with a third reaching higher levels. The considerable number of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, as well as pupils and with special educational needs and/or disabilities, have approximately comparable attainment to their peers. This represents exceptional progress and is due to the excellent use of resources, expertise of staff and the way that the curriculum is adapted to meet individual needs.

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

The quality of teaching in D&T is outstanding.

- Teachers' passion for D&T and the commitment of all staff to ensure high-quality learning inspires pupils and encourages them to do their best. Lessons are planned based on the outcomes of previous assessments and are adapted and evaluated frequently and consistently. The use of external consultants and businesses ensures that up-to-date specialist knowledge is fully exploited.
- Imaginative use of video clips, such as messages from a Martian for help and observations of how people are influenced by packaging to make purchases, help to ensure that lessons are exciting and dynamic. Pupils readily use the internet for research and relevant software packages to support their designing.

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

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

- The school creates its curriculum collaboratively with pupils being able to choose 20% of the topic work. As a result, it is constantly evolving through topic themes that are kept fresh and responsive to current needs and developments. For example, pupils designed and made different areas of the school playground more exciting by creating the 'African Garden', the 'Outdoor Kitchen', the 'Dream Wood' and the 'Adventure Play Trail'.
- Extra-curricular links provide high-quality memorable experiences for pupils. Regular clubs and external visits such as to the Eden Project and Heatree Activity Centre inspire pupils' ideas. They develop them further through practical activities such as den-making or by using a range of research techniques that will support them exceptionally well in their future studies. Pupils' enterprise skills are highly developed through business links including the making and marketing of sandwiches, jams, and vegetables grown in the nearby school allotment.

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

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

- Leaders and managers have a clear vision for D&T, with advanced plans with another school to ensure that pupils are even better prepared for a technologically advanced society. They are also working towards ensuring that staff receive further training so that they can teach a 'cutting-edge' curriculum.
- Health and safety are given a high priority, while not hampering the experiences that pupils have. Excellent support and training provided by the D&T leader ensure that non-specialist staff are confident in undertaking D&T activities. As a consequence, assessment information is used very effectively by class teachers to inform their planning; raising the quality of teaching and learning. The school is aware that the tracking and monitoring of D&T is an area for further development so that pupils' progression in D&T is maximised.

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

- implementing the planned curriculum vision and training for staff
- ensuring that pupils' progression in all aspects of D&T is capitalized on.

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

**Steffi Penny**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**