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23 February 2012

Mr R Marsh  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Marsh

### **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 31 January 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; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

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

Achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage explore and investigate different materials, using basic tools and equipment to make models of their own designs. In lessons, older pupils willingly follow instructions and greatly enjoy exploring new equipment and ideas with each other and with adults. Pupils' enthusiasm for D&T is palpable and they can explain what they have done, what they are doing and what they hope to do next.
- On occasions, the reliance on older children making projects at home, or bringing in their own materials to work with, hinders their ability to demonstrate their level of understanding and potential modelling skills. Some of the products that pupils make are not of a high quality. This is one reason why younger pupils have better levels of attainment and rates of progress than the older ones.

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

The quality of teaching in D&T is satisfactory.

- Staff are developing and sharing their skills effectively. They ensure that lessons have a focus on new learning or on honing their skills and techniques. Teachers' planning and assessment are consistent and coherent. The use of learning objectives phrased as 'Can I?' successfully encouraged pupils to self-assess their own achievements. .
- Lessons are well organised and effectively promote good collaborative work with pupils working in groups or pairs. However, pupils' designs are often very similar. One reason for this is that they are restricted by the range of materials provided. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to direct their own learning in lessons or to practise using tools for themselves.

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

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

- Themed activities related to other aspects of the curriculum, such as history and science, help pupils to apply what they have learned in meaningful ways. For example, after visiting the circus they made puppets with hinges linked to the circus skills they had seen. The school responds well to pupils' requests to have more practical work and making tasks. Pupils are very clear that their views are taken into consideration and projects are built around their interests. Recent examples include designing their own Trojan horse related to work in history and when learning about Chinese New Year, making their own dragon mask and a large dragon made by the whole school.
- The connections with other areas of the curriculum are a strength in developing pupils' understanding of the world around them and allowing them to solve pertinent problems. However, projects are not always mapped sufficiently to ensure that they progressively cover all the strands of designing and making. Consequently, most of the projects have a greater emphasis on craft and artistic skills but not enough time is spent on systems and control work or in learning about more complicated materials.

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

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

- Leaders and managers ensure that D&T has a clear focus on developing creativity and sustainability. They respond effectively to pupils' interests, and readily exploit opportunities within the curriculum to make direct purposeful links with D&T across all subjects. For example, pupils really enjoyed the selling and marketing of products, such as exotic fruit

cocktails as part of 'Big Maths Day' so more opportunities are being developed.

- Pupils' progress is tracked effectively. Assessment and monitoring are clearly demonstrated by the school through collective portfolios of work, with annotated planning and national curriculum levelling at the end of the projects. Sometimes, the judgements of the higher levels attained are over-generous.

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

- ensuring that pupils have direct access to a greater range of materials and tools
- ensuring that curriculum planning builds on and promotes pupils' progress across the different strands of designing and making
- establishing more accurate measuring of pupils' attainment at the higher levels.

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**