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Mr P Ovens
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Ovens

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: design and technology (D&T)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 28 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, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is good.

Achievement in D&T

Achievement in D&T is good.

- Pupils' D&T skills when they start at the school are similar overall to those normally found. The skills of a number of boys are lower than other groups. Pupils make good progress and attainment is often above that expected for their age. D&T capability is developed effectively for all groups of pupils as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to other groups of pupils. All pupils are encouraged to make products with accuracy and precision through a range of practical activities which includes designing and making rockets in Year 5 and models of lighthouses in Year 2.
- The development of creative skills is a feature of the work and good links with creative writing were seen during the visit. Good achievement is

evident in a range of challenging practical activities. The school knows there is capacity to raise achievement further by making the development of D&T skills more consistent across the year groups and monitoring pupils' progress in more depth. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and take pride in producing well designed and made products. Information and communication technology is used very effectively to research and analyse information when designing, for example to find out about aerodynamics when designing rockets.

Quality of teaching in D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is good.

- Teachers' subject knowledge is good and pupils learn with interest and enthusiasm. Teaching commands the respect of pupils who value the opportunities they have to engage in practical work in a safe environment. Staff work well to develop pupils' understanding. Challenging tasks are well tailored to individual needs and intervention by teachers and support staff is sensitive. Well-timed questions challenge pupils to think creatively and develop original ideas in their design work.
- Assessment procedures evaluate pupils' capability in D&T effectively. A key school priority to judge individual performance against national benchmarks is designed to bring more security to moderation.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- Activities are well matched to pupils' needs and interests and pupils thoroughly enjoy practical work using a good range of materials and components. The curriculum is kept under regular review. Plans to extend pupils' knowledge of systems and control even further, through more consistent use, and to expand their understanding of a wider range of mechanisms are well founded. Pupils learn about technical terms associated with designing and making products, and links with other subjects such as art and science are strong. The development of design thinking through creative activities is a strong feature of the curriculum.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

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

- Leaders and managers at all levels value D&T and share a common vision for the subject. School evaluation of D&T is effective and the purpose of the subject is understood. Senior leaders are ensuring that the subject continues to improve and move in the right direction and have identified the right areas to further improve achievement. Subject leadership and classroom management ensure that learning is structured well to develop D&T capability. Staff work closely together with a strong team ethos.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- evaluating pupils' progress in more depth and checking individual progress more frequently
- making the development of D&T skills more consistent across the year groups.

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

Paul Hancock
Her Majesty's Inspector