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Mrs R Abrahams
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Abrahams

Ofsted 2012–13 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 23 April 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 five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

Achievement in D&T

Achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- Children develop good basic craft skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage and these help to support their designing and making. For example, those in the Nursery can use scissors carefully to cut paper and other light materials to create a large caterpillar from plastic bottles. They are able to join these different materials with masking tape and glue with minimal adult help.
- Progress across other year groups is satisfactory overall and standards in D&T for Year 6 pupils are broadly in line with national expectations. However, a legacy of previous underachievement still exists among the older pupils in Key Stage 2. This is exemplified by limited use of tools such as saws and other tools to cut and shape different resistant materials. Discussions with older pupils also confirm that they have limited

opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of computer-aided design and control technology. However, these weaknesses are being addressed through imaginative cross-curricular work such as the construction of a life-size sarcophagus and mummy in a history topic and the construction of Easter hats from a variety of mouldable materials as part of an art project.

- Pupils are very enthusiastic about designing and making products. They demonstrate pride in their work, treasuring the products that they have made, such as their model of an Olympic stadium. All pupils display an ability to work cooperatively with others in small groups and this contributes well to their personal and social development. They behave appropriately in lessons and respond especially well to tasks that require them to collaborate to solve problems. For example, Year 4 pupils work to model a ballista.

Quality of teaching in D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is satisfactory.

- Teachers demonstrate satisfactory levels of subject knowledge. Opportunities are well planned for pupils to research ideas and experiment with techniques before designing a specific product, such as a Jack in the Box in Year 3. Teachers' good use of mouldable materials and textile work promotes learning. However, their knowledge of the correct use of simple tools and different joining techniques is more limited. Teachers appropriately organise resources in lessons to support learning. However, opportunities are sometimes missed in lessons to use technology such as digital visualisers to illustrate key teaching points to fully engage pupils in the learning process. Furthermore, opportunities are missed to identify how well pupils understand so that learning moves on at a swift pace.
- Assessment of pupils' achievements is inconsistent but satisfactory overall. Good use is made of booklets by pupils, particularly in Year 6 to record their work. However, the absence of whole school data in D&T means that subject leadership is unable to monitor the progress of pupils in over time.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- Subject leadership is currently addressing the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding to provide them with greater opportunities to use a wider range of materials, components and tools. The different aspects of D&T programmes of study are planned across the school within a carefully constructed cross-curriculum framework that identifies clear progression of skills. Regular opportunities for D&T are planned within this integrated topic approach to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of pupils. Opportunities to use food are satisfactory and are enhanced by the growing of vegetables in the school garden.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

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

- The subject leader demonstrates a clear vision for the development of D&T. This is exemplified by a sharp focus on improving provision for D&T within the recently restructured whole-school curriculum. The subject makes a good contribution to the promotion of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The action plan identifies appropriate priorities for development such as improving the quality and quantity of resources. However, monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject is rudimentary. This, combined with very little data related to the achievement of pupils, means that subject leadership is not yet able to use self-evaluation well to support further improvement in D&T.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that planning provides sufficient opportunities for pupils to work with a greater range of components, tools, equipment and resistant materials
- implementing assessment procedures to support the monitoring of pupils' progress
- using monitoring and self-evaluation effectively to improve pupils' outcomes and aspects of provision.

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 will be sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Philip Mann
Her Majesty's Inspector