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31 May 2012

Mr A Marriott
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Marriott

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 24 May 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 seven lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

Achievement in D&T

Achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress in the development of their formative D&T skills, such as their knowledge and understanding of the world and their fine motor skills. They enter Year 1 with skill development that is typical for their age. From Years 1 to 6 nearly all pupils make satisfactory progress. Attainment in Year 6 is at the expected level for the majority of pupils. More able pupils do not achieve as highly as they could because their work is insufficiently challenging.
- Pupils generally behave well and tackle their work with enthusiasm and diligence. Their social skills are well developed. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through activities such as the creative homework projects where pupils are

encouraged to work with their families. Self-esteem is nurtured and pupils, parents and carers are extremely proud of the final products.

Quality of teaching in D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is satisfactory.

- Quality assurance undertaken by the school shows that teaching has improved over the last year. Teachers value highly the contribution of D&T to pupils' development and are conscientiously improving the quality of their teaching. While the majority of lessons are satisfactory, in some classes good and outstanding teaching was also observed. This is particularly the case in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in activities that involve food technology. In these lessons teachers demonstrate a high degree of knowledge. Their expectations are high and activities are tailored effectively to meet the needs of all groups of pupils.
- Lesson planning is informed by assessment procedures that enable teachers to better structure their teaching to meet the learning needs of different groups of pupils. Consequently, the quality of learning is never less than satisfactory.
- In some lessons where teaching is satisfactory, teaching is prescriptive, links between designing and making are less effective than they could be, and adults over-direct pupils rather than facilitating their learning. Consequently, opportunities for pupils to use their own design ideas and to develop creativity and independence were limited to the appearance rather than the function of their products.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- Significant changes to the curriculum underpin the improvements taking place to teaching, learning and personal development. Enriching topics are purposeful and enthuse and motivate all pupils to do their best. Links with information and communication technology (ICT) and science are effective. Opportunities to write in D&T also make a significant contribution to developing pupils' literacy skills.
- An excellent food preparation room, and teachers' expertise in using this, is a strength of the provision. School leaders have very accurately identified the need to promote healthy lifestyles in the local community. Teaching was outstanding when pupils confidently prepared a three course meal linked to their residential trip to France. Their understanding of health and safety procedures was extremely well developed as they worked proficiently preparing and cooking the meal.
- The use of computers for control technology and of computer-aided design is well developed. School leaders have rightly identified the need to develop pupils' use of mechanisms in their work.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

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

- Staff are working effectively to improve D&T. This is as a result of determined leadership. Following accurate monitoring and evaluation of the school's work, you and the coordinator have successfully driven improvements to the curriculum and assessment. Together you underpin improvements taking place in teaching and learning. Effective support and advice are enabling staff to implement these changes successfully. Regular reviews of the curriculum and monitoring of teaching ensure that they are becoming better tailored to meet the needs of the pupils. Consequently, priorities for improvement identified by the coordinator are accurate and appropriate.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving achievement to good by:
 - providing more able pupils with a greater challenge
 - further raising expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - giving pupils more opportunities to use their own ideas
- improving teaching to good by:
 - establishing stronger links between the designing and making aspects of the work
 - ensuring adults question and facilitate learning rather than over-directing it
 - enabling teachers to develop the mechanical aspects of D&T.

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

Tim Bristow
Her Majesty's Inspector