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Mr A McGregor
Headteacher
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Dear Mr McGregor

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 1 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 two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

Achievement in D&T

Achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- Pupils' make satisfactory progress overall and by the time they reach Year 6 their attainment is broadly average. No significant differences exist in the achievement of different groups of pupils.
- Pupils approach the work with great enthusiasm and enjoy the opportunities to be creative and make their own products. They demonstrate very positive behaviour and attitudes to their work and this contributes to enjoyment and progress.
- Pupils develop abilities to design and make with a limited range of materials and tools. They explore and model a variety of solutions and learning develops their wider understanding of sustainability and environmental issues.

Quality of teaching in D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is satisfactory.

- Teachers know their pupils well and very positive relationships are evident. Pupils feel safe and develop confidence when exploring new tools, materials and ideas. At times, opportunities are missed to develop technological knowledge for example, of structures. Teachers' effective modelling of techniques encourages pupils to develop ideas and creative solutions.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment is accurate but is not used to monitor progress over time systematically. When teachers discuss individual issues with pupils they are able to direct the learning extremely effectively and accelerate progress. This encourages pupils to think more deeply about their work and to understand the next steps for learning. This progress was, at times, restricted during whole-class explanations where the challenge for individuals was not as focused.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- The curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to explore ideas and to develop their understanding of designing. The school has developed a well-considered range of contexts. They provide relevance for the pupils' work and this helps to support their development of ideas. Some pupils make innovative and visually interesting creative products.
- The work fits well into the school's termly themes and helps to enhance learning across the curriculum. The use of resources is generally well planned and contributes to supporting learning. However, the range of materials and processes available sometimes limits pupils' knowledge of construction techniques and this constrains their ability to apply them in their products. However, this does not inhibit the development of pupils' design thinking or the enjoyment and enthusiasm with which they approach lessons.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

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

- You ensure that D&T is well established within the school's wider creative curriculum. Subject leadership has established a clear understanding and rationale for the subject. Health and safety procedures are secure and are supported well by experienced teaching assistants in the classroom.
- The school is aware that the tracking and monitoring of D&T are an area for further development to ensure that priorities for improvement and strengths in practice are more easily identified and pupils make swifter progress.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising attainment and progress further by:
 - analysing pupils' progress in more detail to ensure that strengths and areas for improvement are understood with even greater precision
 - matching the challenge for individual pupils more closely to their ability.

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 Scott
Her Majesty's Inspector