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Mrs S Joyce
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Joyce

Ofsted 2012–13 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 11 June 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.

- From their starting points, pupils make good progress in their D&T skills over time and their attainment is in line with expectations by the end of Year 6.
- Nursery and Reception pupils are able to make decisions about the models they would like to make as well as the materials and the joining methods that they would like to use.
- Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils confidently make decisions about their designs. They are able to draw labelled diagrams of the models that they are planning to make and can identify the materials that they will use. Their knowledge and planning skills develop consistently. For example, Year 6 pupils competently organise the sequence of tasks to

make their products. Pupils develop in their understanding of a broad range of technical language, for example Year 1 pupils talk about chopping and slicing fruit and Year 6 pupils talk confidently about arch, beam and suspension bridges.

- Pupils know the importance of safe working practices when using tools or preparing food by the time they reach Year 6. For example, they understood the need for accurate marking and measuring when constructing bridges and knew that structures were made more stable using triangles and bracing strips.
- Pupils' attitudes to D&T are extremely positive. They enjoy all aspects of their work and feel well prepared to continue the subject when they transfer to secondary school. Their behaviour in lessons is good and sometimes outstanding with many examples of pupils helping one another and cooperating well together.

Quality of teaching in D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is good.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge, for example, about structures such as buildings and bridges. This promotes confident teaching and enables them to develop original design briefs. For example, Year 5 pupils were challenged to build a prototype of a new iconic building to attract tourists to London. Teachers are clear about the process of designing, making and evaluating products. Pupils are encouraged to find out about real products and they use this to support them in designing their own models.
- Teachers' explanations are clear and instructions are explicit. Questioning is used effectively to check pupils' understanding and to challenge their ideas. However, occasionally adults do not give pupils enough time to respond before they answer their own questions. A particular strength of the teaching is the use of key vocabulary throughout lessons so that pupils are reminded of the correct technical language.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and informed by national guidance. Schemes of work make meaningful links between subjects. However, a relative weakness is the lack of planned opportunities for pupils to work with information and communication technology (ICT) to control mechanisms and to use computer-aided designs.
- Opportunities are well planned for Nursery and Reception pupils to work with a good range of construction kits. Adult-directed activities support pupils in developing early construction skills, such as cutting, folding and joining materials.
- The curriculum is effectively enriched by visits, school-based workshops and after-school clubs. For example, pupils participate in cookery clubs

and older pupils have visited a nearby D&T centre to make clocks and moving toys. As part of a family learning project, parents and carers were invited to attend an event to build pneumatic models with their children.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

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

- The subject leader has enthusiastically tackled her new role. She has a good overview of the school's work. This is the result of regular monitoring practice to check the quality of pupils' work, the effectiveness of teachers' planning and pupils' views about what they are learning. However, her skills in evaluating the quality of teaching more broadly are currently underdeveloped.
- Training has been effective in improving the skills and confidence of teachers so that they are able to teach all of the planned units of work. For example, training on pneumatics ensured that teachers confidently taught this and pupils' interesting moving models of monsters demonstrated their understanding of the concept.
- Systems for assessing standards in D&T are good and developing. Teachers assess each pupil's progress during the unit or project against the planned learning outcomes. Examples of pupils' work are collected and levelled. This helps staff to know the standards that pupils are reaching. However, their detailed assessments are not moderated across the school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the use of information and communication technology in D&T.
- developing the role of the subject leader in evaluating the quality of teaching across the school and in moderating the assessments of pupils' work.

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

Amraz Ali
Her Majesty's Inspector