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Mrs G Dorn
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Dorn

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Design and Technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 26 September to look at work in Design and Technology (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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- Pupils are achieving well from a low starting point and standards are satisfactory. I agree with your evaluation that recent changes are beginning to have an impact and achievement is improving.
- Pupils are learning to design more effectively using a variety of materials. In the lessons observed, they were analysing food products well and considering the design implications of air raid shelters. Pupils were acquiring a good knowledge of tools and techniques in the foundation stage and the most able were using plastic tools to cut polystyrene blocks accurately.

- Pupils' personal development and well-being in the subject are good. They take pride in making things and enjoy being creative. Attitudes are positive and they enjoy practical work. The older pupils listen well and know what is expected of them in lessons.

Quality of teaching and learning of D&T

Teaching and learning is good.

- Good teaching and learning was seen and this confirmed your view that quality has improved. National guidance materials are being used more effectively to plan topic work and pupils are learning to apply critical approaches when designing and making.
- This is largely the result of in-service training being effectively devolved to all staff. Subject knowledge, particularly concerned with systems, control and the use of tools and techniques remains an area for development.
- Assessment procedures are in place but not fully secure when assessing performance against national benchmarks. Pupils' work is marked but it does not always ensure progress in all aspects of D&T is being made. Assessment information is not analysed and used rigorously enough.

Quality of curriculum

The D&T curriculum is Satisfactory.

- Programmes and activities are meeting the interests of learners well. D&T is appropriately planned to fit QCA units into topic work. This is well managed to ensure the curriculum is covered and appropriately resourced.
- Assessment information is not as well used to inform the planning of what is taught and to ensure that activities meet the needs of pupils of all abilities.

Leadership and management of D&T

Leadership and management is good.

The school's capacity to ensure a broad curriculum in which D&T can thrive is good.

- Planning and schemes of work are improving. D&T strengths and areas to develop are well known and the right action is being taken.
- Access to professional development and support for D&T has been identified as a high priority, principally to improve assessment practice and subject knowledge.

Inclusion

Inclusion is good. There is a strong commitment to involve all pupils in every aspect of the subject. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported in D&T.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- analysing and using assessment information to improve pupils' performance
- improving teachers' subject knowledge and skills, particularly their technical vocabulary and the application of systems and control.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop D&T in the school.

A copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Paul Hancock
Her Majesty's Inspector