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Mrs L Finn
Headteacher
Beechwood Primary School
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Dear Mrs Finn

Ofsted Survey Inspection Programme - Design and Technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit to the school on 13 November 2006 to look at work in Design and Technology (D&T).

The visit provided much useful evidence for the next subject review and the wider evaluation of developments in D&T. The school will not be named in any publication without your permission and most evidence will be used at a general level, to identify trends and issues for development.

I undertook to provide a brief written version of the main points made in my feedback at the end of the visit, to support development in D&T at the school. This follows:-

Design and technology

The overall effectiveness of design and technology (D&T) is good.

Achievement and standards

Standards are high in most aspects of D&T, especially so in designing, textiles, compliant and resistant materials.

- Pupils' attainment is a little above the national norm at the end of Key Stage 2. Given that they enter the school in the reception class with attainment a little below average, this represents good progress.
- Standards have improved steadily in recent years as the curriculum, resourcing and subject teaching have improved.

- Pupils achieve well across most aspects of the subject. The drive to develop their thinking skills has much potential to improve the creativity of their designing and the rigour of their evaluation.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about D&T and their behaviour in lessons seen was excellent.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- D&T benefits from the good general competence shown by the teachers and teaching assistants and by their good levels of subject expertise.
- Work is assessed routinely and the school is developing good procedures to judge the pupils' levels of attainment within D&T in the National Curriculum.
- Teachers provide a wide range of D&T activities which meet the needs of pupils of different capabilities very well.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum for D&T is good.

- Planning is very effective at all levels and serves to ensure that topic work rigorously covers the National Curriculum programme of study for D&T.
- Skills are clearly identified to teach to each age group and are built into planning to promote progression.
- Pupils enjoy the curriculum for D&T and some older ones are beginning to see something of its vocational relevance.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of D&T are very good.

- The school provides strong support for D&T to flourish within a broad and balanced curriculum.
- The subject is very well co-ordinated and this co-ordination has been a key factor in its steady improvement in the last few years.
- Resources are in satisfactory supply to teach the curriculum and they are well used and managed.

Inclusion

The contribution of D&T to educational inclusion is excellent.

- Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds, and both genders, achieve well due to the carefully differentiated teaching.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing further the teaching of electrics in the focus area 'systems and control' to the depth at which the other focus areas of D&T are provided

- using the techniques you are incorporating across the curriculum for the teaching of thinking skills further to improve the creativity of pupils' designing and the rigour of their product evaluation
- developing further the use of ICT in designing.

Thank you once again for a most useful and productive visit to your 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.

Best wishes for the future development of D&T at Beechwood Primary School.

Yours sincerely

Peter Toft HMI
Ofsted Specialist Subject Adviser for D&T