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Mr C Robinson  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Robinson

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Design and Technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 11 September 2006 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. 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 two lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good.

- Standards on entry in D&T are in line with national standards. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils achieve well: 91.4% level 5 and above with 41.4% of pupils attaining level 6 and above. This is similar to the attainment in English, mathematics and science and is better than the national average. However boys do not achieve as well as girls.
- Pupils' personal development is good because the school gives them plenty of opportunities to take responsibility for themselves.

## Quality of teaching and learning of D&T

Teaching and learning are satisfactory.

- Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils are encouraged to design and make a range of products to a high standard.
- All pupils carry out an initial task at the beginning of each year and staff use this effectively to group pupils and ensure they are well supported in lessons. Work is regularly marked.
- The department moderates assessments effectively and thus all staff have a secure view of standards and progress. However, marking does not always show how pupils could further improve their work.

## Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is inadequate.

- Work is well planned to ensure that designing and making skills are appropriately developed throughout the key stage. However the subject rotation does not help pupils' progress in D&T and the time allocated to the subject is less than in other foundation areas.
- Recent alterations to the food course have meant that pupils are making more biscuits and cakes instead of developing their understanding of the interesting range of fresh foods they use. Thus an opportunity is missed to promote healthy lifestyles.
- The reduction in the teaching of textiles has reduced the opportunities for developing pupils' capability in computer-aided design and making (CAD/CAM). However the Year 9 unit of work effectively links with GCSE work and sets an appropriately high standard of expectation and presentation.

## Leadership and management of D&T

Leadership and management is good.

- The head of department knows her team very well; she is very supportive and has a detailed understanding of teaching which is shared effectively. Her understanding of the Key Stage 3 strategy has helped improve the quality of teaching and learning and thus pupils' understanding of designing and making.

## Inclusion

Learning support assistants are effective and ensure that lower attaining pupils make good progress. The school is aware that some boys do not make

as much progress as girls but the review of schemes of work appropriately plans new groupings to ensure that all pupils are properly challenged.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to ensure that all marking of pupils' work promotes improvement
- to ensure that food work enables pupils to develop a sound understanding of healthy eating through preparing and handling a range of fresh foods
- to ensure that opportunities are provided to further develop pupils' understanding and use of CAD/CAM.

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

Michelle Parker  
Her Majesty's Inspector