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02 April 2007

Ms E Jeffery
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Jeffery

Ofsted survey inspection programme – design and technology

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 13 March to look at work in design and technology.

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 lessons.

The overall effectiveness of design and technology was judged to be good with outstanding features.

Achievement and Standards

Pupils' achievement and standards in design and technology are good with outstanding features.

- The standard of pupils' work is considerably above average in both Key Stages 1 and 2. The general attainment of pupils when they enter Key Stage 2 is well above average and from this starting point their progress and achievement is good by the end of Year 6. They

demonstrate a depth of knowledge and understanding of design and technology and use tools, equipment, materials and components skilfully to make good quality products.

- Pupils' capabilities in working with resistant materials, food, textiles, systems and control are of an equally high standard. An outstanding aspect of the pupils' capability is their understanding of designing and their planning for making. They show very high level skills in investigation, research and evaluation. Their generation of a range of design ideas is not as strong though consistently good in both key stages. Pupils in some year groups also demonstrate an outstanding level of capability in the use of computer aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM).
- Pupils clearly enjoy design and technology very much; they speak positively about its benefits and can articulate well what they have learnt. In design and technology lessons, their personal development and well-being are promoted effectively and their behaviour is excellent.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in design and technology is good with outstanding features.

- The quality of teaching and learning seen in lessons in both key stages was good with outstanding features.
- Lessons were planned thoroughly, teachers had clear learning objectives and they set high expectations for the standard of pupils' work. There was a good balance of teacher exposition and pupil tasks. Resources were chosen and employed wisely. Teachers' generic teaching skills were outstanding; explanations were clear and questioning was very effective. Pupils' practical work was monitored thoroughly and they were given good subject-specific guidance on how to improve. Pupils' progress and standards in lessons were never less than good and for some they were outstanding.
- In both key stages pupils' design and technology vocabulary could have been extended further by teachers and in Key Stage 2 pupils could have been challenged to develop more initial ideas.
- Assessment procedures are good and ensure that pupils' design and technology capability is evaluated in each unit of work against National Curriculum levels of attainment for the subject. Suitable records are kept on pupils' attainment. Pupils are given clear formative feedback in lessons and their work is annotated with helpful comments. This gives them a good understanding of the progress they are making in each unit of work.

- Summative feedback on pupils' attainment at the end of each unit, year and key stage is more limited as their attainment against the National Curriculum levels is not reported. Pupils were generally aware of what they needed to do to improve their capability in the subject though Year 6 pupils lacked a firm grasp of the standards they were attaining.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in design and technology is good with outstanding features.

- The design and technology curriculum is organised and planned effectively. Good medium term plans ensure that the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's (QCA) scheme of work for the subject is implemented successfully. This is complemented by suitable units of work devised by the school. The time allocated for studying design and technology is above average, being extended through a range of other subject related work.
- Pupils experience a wide range of activities that meet the requirements of the National Curriculum very well. Pupils undertake designing and making with a variety of materials, components and processes.
- The outstanding features of the curriculum are: the systematic coverage of some aspects of designing; the progressive use of more demanding materials, tools and equipment; the opportunities some pupils have to develop capability in the use of CAD/CAM and the wide range of subject related activities that enrich the curriculum.
- Pupils also benefit considerably from undertaking activities with local secondary schools which prepare them very well for their transition to secondary design and technology work.

Leadership and Management

The leadership and management of design and technology are good.

- The subject co-ordinator has a good understanding of the nature and purpose of design and technology education. She manages the provision for the subject well and has a clear vision for developing it further. The performance of the subject is monitored effectively through work sampling, photographic records of pupils' work and discussions with pupils.
- Design and technology benefits from your effective support. The school's broad and balanced curriculum enables the subject to thrive.

Good annual reports and action plans identify suitable areas for improving the subject further. The school's self-evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the subject is generally accurate.

Inclusion

- There are no differences in the achievement and standards of boys and girls. The school is inclusive in giving all pupils full access to the D&T curriculum. Those with learning difficulties are supported well and the curriculum enrichment activities and activities undertaken with local secondary schools provide valuable opportunities for stretching the most able pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- increasing pupils' generation of design ideas
- ensuring all pupils develop knowledge and understanding of CAD/CAM by the end of Year 6
- reporting more specifically to pupils their summative attainment in design and technology.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop design and technology in the school.

A copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Nick Green
Her Majesty's Inspector