

16 May 2007

Mrs S Hudson
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hudson

Ofsted survey inspection programme – design and technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 15 May 2007 to look at the 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.

Design and Technology

The overall effectiveness of design and technology was judged to be satisfactory with some very good features.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall and are very good in the Foundation Stage and at the end of Key Stage 1.

- From a starting point below expectations, pupils in the Foundation Stage and infant section make very good and steady progress. This leads to above average standards for seven year old pupils.
- The infant pupils develop good craft skills, perseverance and concentration as they carry out a wide range of design and make projects. They develop their ideas well as they work through their projects.

- Progress in Key Stage 2 is patchy. It is good in two of the classes but has been weak in the other classes in recent months due to staffing difficulties and a lack of coverage of the subject. Standards are good in some of the projects, for example the money container seen being designed in Year 4 where pupils achieved well as they solved a variety of technical problems whilst modelling their ideas. In Year 6, the lighthouse project gives pupils good opportunities to apply and develop their knowledge of electrical circuitry learned in science.
- However, little D&T has been taught in Years 3 and 5 recently. This and the rather restricted coverage of resistant materials and systems and control throughout Key Stage 2 reduces standards and achievement to satisfactory overall.
- The use of technical vocabulary is not sufficiently well developed.
- Pupils with SEN generally make good progress in the curriculum they are taught.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some good and some excellent aspects.

- The teaching seen in the two lessons observed ranged from good to excellent.
- The assembly to celebrate pupils' work on the Victorians and their creation of Victorian toys was highly effective in celebrating a worthwhile and interesting project.
- Teachers overall have good or excellent general teaching skills. In D&T, these shine through where they have sufficiently advanced subject expertise. This is good within the younger classes but variable in the older classes. There has been a clear lack of in-service training to cover the more technically demanding aspects of systems and control and resistant materials.
- Planning is excellent for the younger classes and sound overall, but it is patchy in Key Stage 2.
- Resources for D&T are well used, but for the older pupils they are modest in scale and there is insufficient resourcing for the more 'high tec' elements of the subject, especially systems and control, computer aided designing (CAD) and resistant materials.
- Teaching space is adequate and very well organised.
- Pupils are overwhelmingly enthusiastic about D&T.
- Assessment is under developed among older classes.

The quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory overall with some very good features.

- The new 'skills based' curriculum is well developed for the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 classes. The content of D&T is well covered through the varied range of design and make projects carried out. Links between subjects are giving real and lively contexts for pupils to design and make functioning products.
- In Key Stage 2, there are gaps in coverage especially in systems and control and resistant materials.

Quality of Leadership and management

Leadership and management of D&T are good.

- The school is a well managed and orderly community in which D&T has a secure place and status within the curriculum.
- The experienced D&T co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject and of how to ensure that it is properly covered in the various year groups of the school.
- Curriculum planning is thorough and this ensures a balanced and satisfactorily deep coverage.
- The school's self evaluation is frank and accurate. Useful annual reports on the subject are produced and discussed with you, leading to specific improvement where necessary.
- Resourcing is adequate and well organised, but the school does not yet make use of the more sophisticated materials and techniques found in schools where provision for D&T is good.

Inclusion

Inclusion within D&T is good. Pupils of all ages and abilities and both genders are enabled to make sound progress by the inclusive planning and teaching.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed included:

- strengthen the teaching of D&T in Years 3 and 5
- improve the balance in the teaching of the subject, especially in Years 3-6, through in-service staff training to ensure proper coverage of resistant materials, electrics, systems and control and CAD
- as finances permit, enhance resources for the teaching of resistant materials, electrics, systems and control and CAD
- as the skills-based curriculum develops, ensure that the National Curriculum Programme of Study for D&T is rigorously covered.

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

Peter Toft
Her Majesty's Inspector