

8 June 2007

Mrs V Maher  
Headteacher  
Bedford Drive Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Maher

Ofsted survey inspection programme – design and technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff during my visit on 6 June 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 provision for design and technology (D&T) is outstanding.

### Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are very good.

- Pupils develop D&T capability to high levels across almost the full spectrum of this complex subject.
- Given the below average attainment of pupils on entry to the school, this represents excellent progress and achievement.
- Pupils get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage where they have a rich variety of practical and investigative experiences. These are mainly related to "Knowledge and understanding of the world". They carry out tasks with precision,

concentration and imagination and this provides a solid foundation for subsequent learning in D&T.

- In Key Stage 1, pupils make excellent progress as they work through a wide range of “design and make” projects. These are well grounded in the units of work developed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) which teachers have carefully adapted to help pupils see the links between various subjects.
- Pupils develop very good designing, making and evaluating skills and they know clearly how well their products carry out their intended functions. They work competently with compliant materials, construction kits, fabrics and food.
- Pupils continue with this excellent progress through Key Stage 2. The school’s assessments indicate that a high proportion of pupils achieve the expected levels of attainment and a significant number achieve beyond this.
- They progress well across a wide range of D&T competences and extend their capability in mechanisms, control and structures. They evaluate thoughtfully and against the criteria set for the success of their products.
- Designing is carefully structured with the set projects and pupils are very well prepared and stimulated by the methods teachers use to help them to think creatively. Their designs are imaginative, and during the visit, I observed pupils successfully solving technical problems as they proceeded through their practical work.
- However, attainment overall is not yet outstanding because pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to develop capability using resistant materials and to design with the aid of computers.

### Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is excellent.

- Staff are highly professional and enthusiastic, and they work collaboratively to great effect.
- They have had excellent support from you and the D&T co-ordinator to develop their wide range of expertise and to draw upon good practice gleaned from sources beyond the school.
- Planning is very thorough, giving all pupils excellent opportunities to learn within a wide range of D&T activities.
- Teaching is lively, varied and brisk. Some of its many excellent features were: use of sources outside the school for pupil investigation; lively teaching of design theory and technical vocabulary; high levels of pupil involvement in practical work and designing as they solved problems in their practical activity; and well managed and highly co-operative group activities for pupils.
- The management of classrooms and resources is first class and this supports the high quality of practical learning within D&T.
- Assessments of pupils’ progress are accurate and regular.

## Quality of curriculum

The quality of the D&T curriculum is excellent.

- Curriculum planning is meticulous in the long, medium and short terms. Planning successfully incorporates a broad coverage of the subject programme of study, making intelligent use of QCA units of work.
- Adequate time is allocated to D&T and various patterns of organisation are used, including short projects worked on weekly for a time and extended activities covering a full day or more of the curriculum. Time is exceptionally well used.

## Quality of leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is excellent.

- You and your senior staff manage the curriculum with care and precision, giving the teaching of D&T an excellent environment in which to thrive.
- The subject co-ordinator has an outstanding grasp of D&T and how it might best be led, organised and evaluated within the school.
- Self evaluation is frank, evidence-based and accurate. It forms very firm basis for further development.
- Many adults were observed helping in classes during the visit. Their work was effectively co-ordinated and among their various contributions they helped to secure very good health and safety of the pupils through careful supervision.

## Inclusion

The contribution which D&T makes to inclusion is excellent.

- Levels of enjoyment are very high within the subject throughout the school.
- Pupils with learning difficulties are carefully provided for and this helps them make very good progress.
- Some pupils who are deemed less able in the core subjects are very enthusiastic about D&T and two of these are identified as being "gifted and talented" in this subject.
- There is no discernible difference between the attainment of girls and boys.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- strengthening the coverage of computer-aided designing, especially in Key Stage 2
- increasing the use of resistant materials such as plastics and wood in Key Stage 2.

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