

23 May 2007

Mr S Smurthwaite
Headteacher
St George's Primary School
St George's Road
Wallasey
Wirral
CH45 3NF

Dear Mr Smurthwaite

Ofsted survey inspection programme – design and technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co operation, and that of your staff during my visit on 22 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

Provision for design and technology (D&T) is satisfactory overall, with some good features.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall.

- The coverage of D&T activities is good in the foundation stage and pupils progress and achieve well along a broad spectrum of activities.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils reach average, and sometimes above average, standards. They cover the expected range of activities, largely centred on materials such as paper and card with some resistant materials. They design by drawing and are adept at developing ideas as they model them. Some of the design work in Year 2 showed good use of technical vocabulary.

- In Years 3 and 4, pupils continue to make the progress expected. They clearly improve in the precision of their craftwork but they could be set work based on a more extensive use of resistant materials.
- In Years 5 and 6, pupils carry out a range of projects to average and sometimes above average standards. Some of the pupils' evaluation work seen in Year 6 was rigorous. As with younger pupils, they benefit from interesting work set which links with the world outside school. Some of the older pupils produce design sketching of quality and imagination.
- Overall, however, standards are average. This masks some above average work in parts of the school. It reflects a limited coverage in the curriculum in some stages and a lack of emphasis on resistant materials and systems and control in Key Stage 2.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good with some very good features.

- In the lessons observed, teachers displayed very good general pedagogical skills and highly professional approaches to teaching and classroom management.
- Subject expertise is sound overall with some good aspects. The gaps in the curriculum noted above, however, reflect a lack of expertise in the more technologically challenging parts of D&T, indicating a need for additional in-service training.
- Differentiation is good as are planning and resource management.
- The marking of ongoing work is helpful to pupils, especially the oral and written comments which stimulate them to develop their ideas further.
- Pupils enjoy D&T very much, especially the scope it gives them to develop their ideas, solve problems and correct mistakes and some older ones are beginning to see the value it might have for them in adult life.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the D&T curriculum is satisfactory.

- Coverage in the foundation stage is good and pupils receive a rich diet of stimulating design and make tasks which develop capability and an understanding of the made world.
- Coverage after this is satisfactory. Much of the work is based on the suggestions produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The school has adapted these well to link to other work in the curriculum and has made effective use of other schemes to support its planning.
- The projects covered are well planned, taught and sequenced.
- The curriculum, however, is limited by lack of coverage of some aspects of the subject. Although timetabled time is enhanced by cross-curricular work and other activities, coverage is too restricted to be judged good or better, though the potential for improvement in D&T in this highly effective school is great.

Quality of leadership and management

The leadership and management of D&T are good.

- This very large school is run highly effectively and this creates a benign environment in which the curriculum can be well planned and taught.
- The complex leadership of the subjects, divided as it is among four co-ordinators of the creative dimension of the curriculum, works well. This is well supported by the high level of collaboration between staff in the school.
- The monitoring of the coverage of the D&T curriculum, and its teaching, is underdeveloped however, though co-ordinators have a good grasp of how well the curriculum is provided in their respective phases.

Points for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- as the D&T curriculum is developed, planning needs to ensure that the programme of study is properly covered in each year group
- when reviewing the curriculum for D&T, consider seeking external guidance and in-service training on the nature of good and excellent practice, and how to achieve it within this foundation subject. This is also needed to develop skills in the more technological aspects of the subject, notably in resistant materials and systems and control
- when developing cross-curricular links between subjects, consider how D&T might develop to apply what pupils learn in mathematics and science.

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