

08 June 2007

Mrs C Julian
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Julian

Ofsted survey inspection programme – design and technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff during my visit on 5 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

Provision of design and technology (D&T) is satisfactory overall, with some strong features and some weaknesses.

Standards and achievement

Standards are average compared with other schools and pupils' achievement compared with their prior attainment is satisfactory.

- Overall standards are average in D&T but pupils do not make the good progress in this subject which they do here in English and Mathematics.
- By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have acquired sound skills in cooking but are less competent in the product development aspects of food technology. In

textiles they develop good designing, making and testing skills and achieve high standards, especially in making.

- However, standards in resistant materials and in systems and control are below average. This reflects lack of coverage despite the examples of useful teaching carried out with outside agencies.
- Technical vocabulary is well developed as is the use of accurate measurement. Learning in both English and Mathematics is reinforced in this way by D&T activities.
- Pupils' progress is hindered by limitations in the curriculum.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Very good teaching was observed in both classes during the day. The highly professional teachers are well supported by very effective teaching assistants.
- The teachers have good general teaching skills and good insight into aspects of the subject. However, expertise is lacking in the more technological aspects of the subject. Further training is needed despite the few courses available locally.
- The staff have made good use of some teaching units published by external agencies and are beginning to customise these as they work to broaden the curriculum and link subjects together more effectively.
- Resources for teaching D&T are poor overall and this hinders pupils' learning.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- A considerable amount of activity goes on in which pupils can learn aspects of D&T but this is fragmented because of the lack of depth in curriculum planning for the subject.
- The major projects currently being taught are well planned in some detail. Previous projects have been evaluated accurately and the lessons learned have been used to improve current teaching.
- Much effort is expended in ensuring that pupils are taught how to design, make and test within well structured projects. However some of the teaching of designing, and the use of some technical terms such as 'specification' is over theoretical for many pupils in Key Stage 2.

Quality of leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.

- The school is well managed, calm and purposeful. This provides a very good background for the teaching of D&T.
- Classroom management is generally very good.
- In this small school with few staff there is no single co-ordinator for D&T and this is reflected in the fragmented and under-developed nature of the subject.

Inclusion

The contribution of D&T to the inclusion of pupils is good.

- In a well disciplined environment, all pupils are able to study effectively.
- Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well taught and supported in written discussion and practical tasks.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving the co-ordination of the curriculum so that staff and pupils can see more clearly the relationships between the parts and so that progressive learning can be better secured across the full range of D&T
- providing training for staff in those aspects of the subject currently underemphasised, including computer-aided designing, systems and control and resistant materials, together with appropriate resources to teach them effectively
- developing more practical and interesting ways of engaging pupils in designing
- considering how the teaching of D&T can be reinforced by further links with subjects such as science and art.

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