

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs S Watts
Acting Headteacher
Preston Grange Primary School
Chiltern Road
Preston Grange
North Shields
Tyne and Wear
NE29 9QL

Dear Mrs Watts

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Design and Technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 13 June 2007 to look at work in Design and Technology (D&T).

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 D&T was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Standards are above average and pupil achievement in D&T is good.

- Pupils start in Year 1 with average standards and make good progress during their time at the school. Standards are above average by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils know how to use tools and equipment effectively to make good quality models and prototypes such as fairgrounds, Tudor houses, and slippers. Design skills, for example researching and evaluating, are well developed and pupils quickly learn how to plan for making.

- Computers are successfully used from an early age to help when designing. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their work in D&T and thoroughly enjoy the subject. They rightly say 'it is a lot harder than you think to design and make something that looks good and works well'.

Quality of teaching and learning of D&T

The quality of teaching and learning in D&T is good.

- Work seen in lessons together with displays and records of work in classrooms confirm teaching and learning are consistently good across the school. Designing is well taught and developed in all year groups.
- Pupils are provided with good individual subject support and guidance which helps them learn more quickly to master technical language and feel confident when making products. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) units of work have strengthened learning and made levels of challenge more progressive. The school recognises challenging the most capable pupils is an area to improve to raise achievement in the subject further. Resources are well chosen to make maximum use of available tools and practical equipment.
- Assessment procedures evaluate D&T capability at the end of each project. Teachers are rightly moderating judgements to make assessment practice more accurate. Summary feedback on individual performance at the end of each key stage and year is an area for development the school is working on.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in D&T is good.

- The QCA schemes for D&T have been successfully adapted to meet the needs and interests of pupils. The systematic coverage of designing and the more progressive use of practical equipment help pupils to make good progress and achieve well.
- The school is taking the right action to explore differentiated activities in D&T which meet the needs of the gifted and talented.

Leadership and management of D&T

Leadership and management of D&T are good.

- Your strong leadership is providing clear direction and driving improvement. The school has an excellent understanding of the nature and purpose of D&T. Monitoring and rigorous self-evaluation are providing an accurate picture of how well the subject is doing.

Inclusion

Support in D&T for pupils with learning difficulties is good and different groups of pupils are involved in every aspect of the subject. Pupils learn practical skills safely at an early age.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- incorporating more challenging work for the most capable pupils
- moderating judgements to make assessment practice more accurate.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop D&T in the school.

A copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Paul Hancock
Her Majesty's Inspector