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Mr M Duignan
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mr Duignan

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 December 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.

Design and Technology

Provision for D&T is good overall with some outstanding features.

Achievement and standards

Achievement is good overall and in some of the work standards are very high.

- Within the projects set pupils reach high standards in designing, making and testing functional products. Some of the work is of excellent quality.
- Pupils develop high levels of capability in major aspects of the subject. Achievement in food technology and the more "hi-tec" aspects of systems and control is satisfactory rather than good because of limited coverage in the curriculum.

- Pupils develop good levels of skills needed within specific projects. They reinforce and extend these as they carry out the major design and make tasks at the ends of these projects.
- Good levels of attainment were evident in the initial investigations and in the evaluation of products which were major elements of the projects undertaken.
- Some of the design work seen was innovative, reflecting the lengths the staff go to in order to stimulate pupils to think.
- Pupils enjoy D&T very much. Those spoken to could see the relevance the subject might have in their future working lives.

Quality of teaching and learning

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

- Teaching was at least good in all the lessons seen and there were outstanding features in some, especially in the great care taken to ensure that pupils learned rigorously and sequentially the skills needed to complete projects.
- Very good attention is paid to teaching pupils to learn and use correct technological vocabulary and this helps them to develop their literacy skills as well as their capacity to think clearly about designing and making functioning products.
- The lessons seen were planned very thoroughly and their execution was very effective in helping pupils to make progress.
- Resourcing for the projects carried out is satisfactory, but for the more “hi-tec” aspects of D&T it is limited.
- Pupils’ reponse to the teaching of D&T is very enthusiastic. They are determined in their projects and they concentrate very well during class discussions and presentations. They behave very well and safely during practical work.
- Teachers are developing new procedures for assessment but these need to be rationalised and simplified.

Quality of curriculum

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

- Adequate time is allocated within the curriculum, both for major D&T projects and for D&T-related work carried out in other subjects.
- Most aspects of D&T are well covered though there is scope for fuller coverage of food technology and systems and control, as well as for greater use of ICT in D&T.
- The sequencing of activities within the projects seen is excellent, with very high regard paid to learning and applying the skills necessary for major projects.

Quality of leadership and management of D&T

D&T is well led and managed.

- The school pays due attention to the effective coverage of D&T within a broad and balanced curriculum. D&T is adequately timetabled and resourced.
- The curriculum is well planned at all levels.
- Classroom management and staff deployment in D&T lessons are excellent.
- D&T is presented to pupils as a rigorous and modern technological subject to which they respond very positively.
- The school's self evaluation is accurate.
- The school has excellent capacity to improve D&T further.

Inclusion

- All pupils are enabled to make good progress. There is no discernable difference between the performance of girls and boys.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- broadening the coverage of D&T to include more work in food technology and systems and control, and in the use of ICT
- provide training for staff to enable them all to cover the more "hi-tec" aspects of D&T with confidence
- investigate the range of modern teaching materials now available for D&T whilst developing the curriculum
- rationalising procedures for assessing pupils' work and recording their progress through the school.

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

Peter Toft HMI
Ofsted Specialist Adviser for D&T