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Mr D Clarke
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Clarke

Ofsted survey inspection programme - Design and Technology (D&T)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit, on 3 June 2008 to look at work in Design & 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 two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Attainment and achievement in D&T are satisfactory.

- Pupils enter the school nursery with standards just below the national average. By the end of Year 2 standards are in line with age expectations and remain so by the end of Year 6.
- The range of D&T activities contribute effectively to developing pupils' designing skills; for example, where Year 2 pupils design and make gardens and Year 6 pupils design and make survival shelters.
- Pupils work well in teams, developing their skills of negotiation when selecting from a range of materials and exploring their characteristics. Speaking and listening skills are supported well when pupils evaluate each other's work.
- The pupils enjoy their D&T experiences and become engrossed in the practical activities. They are enthusiastic about whole and half day D&T activities.

Quality of teaching and learning

Overall the quality of teaching and learning in D&T is satisfactory.

- Teaching overall is satisfactory and teachers are skilled in providing learning to match pupils' needs. Teachers' preparation is detailed and integrated activities are well managed. Good questioning skills enable pupils to explore and develop their thinking skills. Classroom relationships are excellent.
- Assessment is underdeveloped. National Curriculum levels in D&T are not recorded at the end of Key Stages 1 or 2. Formative, ongoing assessment is effective during lessons and helps pupils to make satisfactory progress and develop the skills to become independent learners.
- The school is well resourced, particularly in terms of information communications technology (ICT), however this resource is not used enough by pupils, for example, they could use computers to help plan out their garden designs in Year 2.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the D&T curriculum is satisfactory.

- The school is phasing in the International Primary Curriculum model of working. D&T is integrated effectively and continues to meet National Curriculum requirements.
- Although the curriculum is broad and balanced in each Key Stage, there are missed opportunities for pupils to learn more about the use of systems and control in Years 5 and 6.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management of D&T are satisfactory.

- Leadership and co-ordination of D&T is a joint responsibility shared between two key stage leaders. This arrangement works well and scrutiny of pupils' work shows that, over time, they make the expected progress for their age.
- Subject leaders have insufficient specialist subject training. Consequently the guidance they can provide about basic electrical circuits and using construction skills in wood is limited. This reduces their effectiveness in securing higher standards.

Subject Issue: progression from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2

Progression in Years 1 to 4 is secure. Pupils make satisfactory progress when investigating and evaluating familiar products, in their focused practical tasks and in their designing and making assignments. In Years 5 and 6 there are insufficient focused practical activities and the quality and complexity of finished products is diminished.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring pupils have opportunities to learn about systems and control
- improving the quality of making in Key Stage 2
- providing training for key teachers to develop their subject knowledge.

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

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your Local Authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Michael Stanton
Additional Inspector