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Mrs B Freeman
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Freeman

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 5 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 four lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Standards and achievement in D&T are outstanding.

- Pupils in the Reception and Year 1 class confidently discuss and explain their ideas. They demonstrate creative problem solving in their play; taking their cues from stories to design and make models of shelters for a dinosaur or, use the outside play facilities to make tent like shelters from sheet materials and chairs.
- Year 3 and 4 pupils are developing very good food preparation skills and their knowledge and understanding of diet and nutrition is good.
- Most pupils' practical skills, knowledge and understanding of designing, and making is significantly above the expectations for their age by the end of Year 6. This is because pupils make very good use of opportunities outside school to develop their learning. This enables many pupils to refine and develop practical skills, to extend their knowledge and understanding

of food ingredients and how to use them and to understand how mechanisms work.

Quality of teaching and learning

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

- Teachers are enthusiastic and have secure knowledge and understanding of the units they teach. They plan lessons confidently and know how to modify units of work, for example by using stories as starting points with younger pupils and making links to earlier science work with older pupils. This enlivens learning and provides additional opportunities for pupils to develop and refine literacy and numeracy skills. Speaking and listening and turn taking are a consistently good feature in lessons.
- Teachers are highly skilled in the craft of questioning; prompting pupils to think through the kinds of problems they might encounter and bring the class together to share strategies they might use to solve them. This aspect of lesson management helps all pupils; they make very good use of the creative pooling of ideas by critically evaluating, extending or improving them.
- The subject is well resourced. Pupils have wide ranging experiences using different types of good quality materials. They use tools confidently in lessons, and products are well made. Pupils observe health and safety practice and receive good instruction from teachers and support staff.
- Ongoing assessment and advice from teachers is effective during lessons in helping most pupils to make rapid progress and encourage independent learning however assessment is not consistently formalised across the school. Teachers are skilled in modifying learning, and in providing support and challenge to meet pupils' individual needs.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy and are absorbed in D&T activities, particularly problem solving and developing creative solutions. They apply this approach to other situations they encounter throughout the school.
- Boys and girls achieve highly however interesting and clear differences emerge in their approaches to problem solving with girls often more focussed on meeting the needs of the user and boys tending to focus on the functional and technical aspects of the problem. A tighter approach might usefully be employed by teachers to enable pupils to solve problems using a wider range of approaches.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the D&T curriculum is outstanding.

- The curriculum meets the requirements of the programmes of study. Teachers' confidence and experience of teaching the Qualification and Curriculum Authority scheme of work has provided a secure platform from which to modify and develop their own.
- Adults other than teachers and support staff are deployed well to make use of their specialist knowledge of mechanisms, structures and cooking.

- Participation in competitions is firmly integrated within the curriculum. This provides challenging opportunities to further develop pupils understanding of structures and mechanisms.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management of D&T are outstanding.

- You and the school's governors value the subjects' contribution to pupils' learning. This is actively demonstrated in the allocation of a lead governor for D&T, ensuring pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum and in securing a specialist subject leader and providing her with access to further D&T training.
- The subject leader provides very good leadership. She has good subject knowledge and, in a relatively short period of time, has applied ideas in her own teaching to improve young pupils learning and to make secure purchasing decisions. However, a robust system to regularly monitor pupils' progress and achievement in D&T has yet to be embedded and assessment is at an early stage of development. The schools evaluation has accurately identified areas for further development.

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

Pupils progress exceptionally well during their time at the school particularly in developing their understanding of functionality and problem solving skills.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- embedding and extending consistently across the school the good work beginning in Reception and Year 1 to monitor pupils' progress and achievement
- implement assessment in D&T more firmly across the school.

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

Gina White
Her Majesty's Inspector