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Mrs S Alexander
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Alexander

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Design and Technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on Tuesday 16 September 2008 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 learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of D&T work in lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good with outstanding features.

- Pupils start in the reception class with average skills in D&T. Capability to create and innovate is quickly developed and practical skills are more advanced than usually found. Work in Key Stages 1 and 2 places a strong emphasis on creative thinking and standards are above average by the time pupils reach Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) achieve equally well.
- The strong emphasis on learning through real contexts to encourage higher achievement, for example analysing building design following a visit to Beamish museum in Year 2 is an outstanding feature. The

school is aware more use of rigid materials and handtools such as saws and drills will underpin work using real contexts even more. Pupils enjoy D&T work, openly challenge thinking, and talk with enthusiasm about their experiences.

Quality of teaching and learning of D&T

Quality of teaching and learning is good with outstanding features.

- Subject knowledge is good and lesson planning rigorously meets the needs and abilities of all groups of pupils including those with LDD. Excellent generic teaching skills are an outstanding feature which ensures D&T lessons have a very effective structure and move at an appropriate pace.
- Design skills are consistently taught across the year groups, making skills less so. Pupils are provided with very good individual support during D&T lessons which quickly makes them more confident and capable learners.
- Evidence recording design and make activities is routinely collected and forms an integral part of assessment practice. The school is monitoring individual progress in D&T more closely and using data on pupil progress to greater effect.

Quality of the D&T curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- Project work is characterised by stimulating and lively contexts which are linked with other subjects such as art and science very well. There is a strong focus on developing creativity which is well established. The school knows the new creative curriculum recently introduced is already further improving quality.
- The use of visits frequently enhances the curriculum. National schemes of work such as the QCA Units have evolved into project work such as designing and making a prayer garden and a new log for the school uniform.
- Key design skills are progressively developed and the curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of the national programmes of study.

Leadership and management of D&T

Leadership and management of the subject are good with outstanding features.

- The school accurately evaluates quality and effectiveness of Design and technology work. Subject performance is closely monitored and well evidenced through extensive records of work. An outstanding

feature is the school's capacity to ensure D&T thrives and develops, particularly the development of capability to create and innovate.

- D&T leadership is moving towards a collective team responsibility which is closely monitored by senior leaders and managers to make sure change impacts well on achievement in D&T.

The extent to which inequality and stereotyping are tackled in D&T

The school is very effective in making sure there are no gaps in performance between boys and girls and all other groups of pupils including those with LDD.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- more progressive development of making skills
- monitoring individual progress in D&T more closely.

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

As explained in the previous letter, 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