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Mrs A Jefferies
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Jefferies

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Design and Technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on Thursday 18 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 in D&T

Achievement is good and standards are average.

- Pupils D&T skills are well below average when they start at the school. Many find it difficult to use basic equipment such as pencils and scissors with precision and accuracy. Children make good progress and their capability to innovate is well developed across the year groups.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in D&T as they move through the school and standards are average at the end of Year 6. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of D&T is secure and they use materials, tools, and components effectively to design and make a good range of projects.

- Children understand how to evaluate their designs and they routinely produce new and effective solutions. The school is aware of aspects of the subject that can be further developed, for example allowing pupils to use more advanced tool and equipment. Pupils are enthusiastic about D&T work and they thoroughly enjoy the subject.

Quality of teaching and learning of D&T

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

- Lessons are well planned and the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good across the year groups. Pupils of all abilities including the well above average proportion with learning difficulties learn equally as well. This is because classes are well managed to make sure this happens.
- All staff work exceptionally well together as a team to deliver D&T and this is an outstanding feature. Subject knowledge is good. The school is aware of gaps and is taking action to make further improvements.
- Individual D&T capability is routinely assessed and national curriculum levels recorded. The implications of providing pupils with this information are being explored. Data on how well individual pupils are making progress in D&T is analysed and, as a result, differentiation for the gifted and talented is being introduced.

Quality of the D&T curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good with outstanding features.

- The needs and interest of learners are well met with a good range of D&T activities. The careful linking of subjects together with the excellent way the curriculum is enriched, for example the sustained use of visits by a professional chef when pupils are engaged in food work is an outstanding feature.
- The D&T curriculum has recently been revised and the development of new projects is well advanced. Visitors are frequently used to bring design tasks to life. Key design skills such as research and product analysis are well covered and stimulating contexts set the scene for design work.
- The involvement of parents, carers, and support staff is very good, for example parents attend classes at the school where they design and make jewellery. The school is aware the more progressive use of tools and other practical equipment within the curriculum is an area to develop.

Leadership and management of D&T

Leadership and management of the subject is outstanding.

- Monitoring and self-evaluation of D&T at all levels including the governing body is accurate. The nature and purpose of D&T is well understood and leaders value the subject highly. Self evaluation is well supported by high quality records and examples of pupils work. The management capacity to make sure D&T grows and develops is excellent and recent changes are already improving achievement in the subject.

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

There are no gaps between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve equally as well.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- more challenging work for the most capable pupils
- the progressive use of more advanced tools, components, and equipment.

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