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Mr Z Mohamed
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Dear Mr Mohamed

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Design and Technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 14 October 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 students' work and observation of three lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards overall are good.

- Pupils achieve above average expectations for their age and make good progress in acquiring and using subject language. Pupils know and understand a wide range of specialist terms such as levers, cams and prototype. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are confident in using tools and equipment safely, solving problems and taking decisions. Most pupils use practical skills satisfactorily to make working models and describe in detail how they made their products.
- Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are enthusiastic learners, willingly discuss their work, share their ideas with partners and act responsibly and safely in lessons.

Quality of teaching and learning of D&T

The quality of teaching and learning overall is good.

- Teaching is lively and pupils have an enthusiasm for learning. Teachers use subject language and questioning techniques effectively to ensure pupils understand activities. The consistent emphasis on discussion and sharing of ideas with partners supports pupils at early stages of learning English. Pupils gain much from this strategy: they say it helps them to develop and refine their ideas. Some pupils are beginning to develop unusual ideas and apply them to design and make moving vehicles, bags and bridges.
- In some lessons teachers lack sufficient depth and breadth of subject knowledge to extend pupils' learning and to challenge the most able learners.
- Assessment of pupils D&T capability is under-developed. Pupils' work is discussed and commented upon but teachers do not make sufficient use of such information to guide their next steps when planning lessons to ensure common misconceptions and gaps in pupils' knowledge of D&T are addressed.

Quality of the D&T curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The curriculum meets requirements; opportunities to cook and to use electronic components, structures and mechanisms are firmly embedded. Pupils work in a wide range of contexts to solve problems, often designing products for family members and different clients. Pupils research, test and evaluate their products in an integrated way and older pupils are beginning to work independently to design and make.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the relevance of D&T to their lives. This is underpinned through visits and opportunities to apply their designing and making skills to solve real problems such as redesigning parts of the school grounds.
- Some pupils respond with unusual ideas, although not all staff recognise this creative thinking or know how to support more pupils to do this.

Leadership and management of D&T

Leadership and management of the subject are good.

- You provide effective support for the subject; school systems to regularly review D&T effectively informs self-evaluation and underpins significant curriculum development.

- Good use is made of the subject leader's expertise to support teachers in using tools and equipment confidently and safely and to inform curriculum development. However, monitoring and evaluation, whilst rooted in informal approaches, is not sufficiently systematic to identify where some teachers need further support to make learning challenging for all learners.

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

- Boys achieve as well as girls in D&T. Boys are confident learners and often come up with unusual ideas. Learning strategies place a strong emphasis on practical approaches to solving problems, enabling pupils to find out through trial and error and this supports their good achievement.
- There is no evidence of stereotyping taking place in D&T.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing teachers' subject knowledge to ensure all learners, particularly the most able, are suitably challenged
- ensuring monitoring and evaluation are rigorously embedded to identify the impact of curriculum changes and to inform further developments
- extending assessment processes to enable teachers to better identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses and to use the information more precisely to meet individual needs.

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

Gina White
Her Majesty's Inspector
Subject Adviser for Design and Technology