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Mr P Copley
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Copley

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Design and Technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 21 October 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.

Achievement and standards in D&T

Achievement is good and standards are above average.

- Attainment on entry in the reception class fluctuates from below average to average. There is a significant proportion of pupils who start at the school with limited practical skills. They find it difficult to use basic equipment such as scissors and pencils with accuracy and precision. They make good progress in their D&T work as they move through the school. All groups of pupils including those with learning difficulties and English as an additional language make equally good progress, for example in Year 6 when designing and making felt images of exotic fruit.

- The focus on developing technical language and practical skills is a strength of the work and pupils understand how to apply skills such as running and hem stitches well. The school knows the development of design skills to an equally high standard is an area to develop.
- D&T is making a good contribution to pupils' personal development and well being. They are enthusiastic about the subject and value learning D&T knowledge and skills.

Quality of teaching and learning of D&T

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

- Pupils from a wide range of different backgrounds and abilities are challenged by the D&T work they are given and they respond well. D&T teaching benefits from the confidence and class control by staff across the year groups and this helps pupils develop their capability in the subject.
- The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good across Key Stages 1 and 2. As a result, pupils are engrossed in their D&T work for long periods of time. The balance between teaching inputs to improve subject knowledge and learning through practical work is good. Teaching assistants are well deployed during D&T activities and this helps to maintain the pace of learning.
- D&T work is assessed and progress tracked against other national curriculum subjects. Pupils have a clear picture of what they can do to improve their work.

Quality of the D&T curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- National schemes are effectively aligned with school topics such as the Ancient Greeks to maintain pupils' interest. A good range of tools and materials is used and pupils demonstrate a sound working knowledge of systems and control, for example using a laptop to control a motorised model of a clown's face in Year 6.
- The school is aware the coverage of key design skills such as research and analysis is an area to develop. The right action is being taken to make programmes and activities across the year groups more consistent.

Leadership and management of D&T

Leadership and management of the subject are good.

- Good planning, organisation and management are evident at all levels. The school evaluation of how well the subject is doing is accurate and well supported through examples of past and current work.

- The performance of the subject is carefully monitored and includes lesson observations by senior managers and the coordinator. A strong team ethos and rigorous coordination ensures D&T has the capacity to thrive and improve.

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

The school is very effective in tackling inequality and stereotyping in the subject and there are no gaps in performance between the different groups of pupils from a wide range of backgrounds.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- the progressive development of design skills and capability.

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