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Mr R Twells
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Twells

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Design and Technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 07 November 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 and analysis of pupils' work.

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

Achievement and standards in D&T

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- Standards are broadly in line with age related expectations. Achievement is satisfactory; and in some classes at Key Stage 1 and early Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress in their technical skills which they apply in a range of materials.
- In these classes pupils use basic tools well and work safely. They make good decisions in response to the increasing range of choices they are presented with and consider how to make their products work better. Pupils find some of the physical aspects of D&T and the creation and development of ideas challenging.

- D&T makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils enjoy their work hugely and see relevance in the thinking and planning they do in D&T to a wide range of subjects.

Quality of teaching and learning of D&T

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

- Pupils annotate drawings and model well and in so doing emphasise how they want their products to work. A consistent approach is being taken to teachers' questioning and to developing pupils' independence in knowing the sequence of steps to take to produce successful products.
- Resources for D&T and the quality of accommodation are good and especially so in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) satisfactorily. Teachers use ICT well within their teaching to support lessons and to develop resources.
- Systems for assessment are at early stages. Recording what pupils can do is stronger in the Foundation Stage but this is not brought together enough across all year groups to identify how well pupils are developing and applying their understanding and knowledge in D&T or where the gaps are.

Quality of the D&T curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- Enrichment and enhancement of the D&T curriculum through planned trips and visits significantly extends the materials and skills pupils acquire and provides a good range of different contexts for learning.
- Opportunities for all pupils to develop practical knowledge and skills with food and the focus on health and hygiene are well embedded in the wider work of the school. Opportunities for very young pupils to work alongside chefs to learn how to make pizza and to collaborate to produce them quickly are impressive.
- Staff are currently modifying the curriculum and selecting units of work from a range of sources to develop and build a D&T curriculum to meet the requirements. However in some year groups the curriculum duplicates skills rather than taking them on to the next step through units of work that progressively challenge all pupils.

Leadership and management of D&T

Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory.

- The subject has strong support from senior leaders who value the opportunities it provides for pupils to shine in designing and making

products. The use of visits and visitors are a well established feature of the school's work and the drive for this stems from the work of senior leaders.

- Subject leadership provides effective support for teachers to ensure D&T activities are well organised. Strengths and areas for improvement are known but self evaluation does not focus strongly and deeply enough on pupils' progress and achievement across the school. This is because assessment and subject monitoring and evaluation practices do not provide a clear enough overview across the school.
- Health and safety is secure and pupils' attitudes to it are well developed.

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

- No gender differences or stereotyping were evident during the visit.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- sharpening monitoring and evaluation procedures to provide a clear picture of pupils' progress and achievement in D&T
- ensuring pupils have a range of strategies to develop design ideas
- providing training to help teachers develop their understanding of how to develop units of work that progressively challenge all pupils.

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