

21 November 2008

Mrs S Sehmbi
Headteacher
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West Midlands
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Dear Mrs Sehmbi

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 12 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 pupils, scrutiny of departmental documentation, analysis of pupils' work and the 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 enter the school with attainment that is well below national expectation in D&T. They make good progress so that by the end of Key Stage 2 they achieve standards just below national expectations for their age. Some pupils make very good progress and achieve Level 5.
- The good support provided for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) enables them to make good progress. The effective use of staff that speak pupils' home language helps those pupils who do not speak English as a first language to make good progress.
- D&T work is very neatly presented. Great care is taken by pupils to do their best handwriting. Drawings are completed with care, shading is

done well and pupils can annotate their work. They are rightly very proud of the skills they develop and very much enjoy making things.

Quality of teaching and learning of D&T

The quality of teaching and learning overall is good.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and a lively and engaging manner. Pupils like their teachers and confidently answer questions. They always try to do their best. The effective use of talking partners helps pupils to think through their ideas and discuss what they are planning to do.
- The pace of learning is good. Concepts are appropriately challenging and pupils enjoy the intellectual challenge. Well established classroom routines enable pupils to move quickly and smoothly from one task to the next.
- Effective lesson planning ensures that teaching assistants are clear about their roles in supporting pupils and do them well. Small groups work together with an adult; this helps them stay on task and they are quickly moved on if they become stuck.
- Teachers are beginning to use classroom assessment to help inform them of pupils' progress. Questioning is used very effectively and improves pupils' thinking about their work. Teacher's comments on work do not always help pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work. Thus independent learning is slowed.

Quality of the D&T curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is based upon the qualifications and curriculum authority (QCA) schemes of work. Teachers annotate their planning to help develop ideas for future work. However, there is insufficient adaptation of projects to reflect more closely pupils' backgrounds.
- Teachers make appropriate use of pupils' prior learning in lessons. This enables pupils to see how the ideas and thinking met in previous work are linked to those in their lesson.

Leadership and management of D&T

Leadership and management of the subject are good.

- You and the senior team are very supportive of staff and value the learning provided in D&T. You are keen to see the subject develop further.
- The subject coordinator has a clear vision for the subject. She is knowledgeable and very keen. She has an accurate picture of the

subject's strengths and weaknesses which is reflected in the action plan.

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

- The schemes of work motivate both boys and girls. There is no difference in the quality of work produced by boys and girls. Teachers communicate high expectations to all pupils. A range of positive images of both genders support project work.
- All pupils felt valued at school. They liked the 'star' and 'phase praise' assemblies. They were rightly very proud of their achievements.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensure assessment practices are developed to increase pupils' capability in working independently
- develop schemes of work to ensure that the contexts of activities reflect the cultural backgrounds of 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

Michelle Parker
Her Majesty's Inspector