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Mr J O'Brien
Headteacher
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Dear Mr O'Brien

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 23 February 2009 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 seven lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall.

- Pupils enter school with skills that are above average for their age. Progress is satisfactory. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards are above national expectations.
- Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils in lessons. This is because teachers have high expectations of them and they are given good support in lessons to complete their work. Group work is used well to ensure that no pupil falls behind. Peer support is good. However, higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged by the work to ensure they make better progress.

- There is no difference in the progress of boys and girls. This is because teachers ensure that work appeals to and interests both boys and girls equally.

Quality of teaching and learning of D&T

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.

- Teachers plan lessons well to interest pupils and they have good pace. Practical activities are taught well and pupils are encouraged to problem solve and share their expertise effectively with others. For example teachers ask pupils to explain their thinking and how they solved the problems they encountered in their work. This helps them to make all to make progress in lessons. Questioning is used well to probe pupils' understanding of the work and to ensure they know what to do next. However, teachers' written comments on work do not always make clear to pupils what they have done well and what they could do to improve their work. Sometimes teaching moves on to a new activity at the expense of ensuring a high quality finish to the previous project.
- Pupils are rightly very proud of their models and use technical vocabulary well to explain how they made them. Pupils said that they enjoyed D&T because they used their own ideas, their models worked and the activities were fun.

Quality of the D&T curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum meets requirements. New projects are being developed which have injected renewed enthusiasm for designing and making. Progression is satisfactory across units of work. Clear links are made to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. There is an appropriate breadth in the curriculum which ensures pupils use systems and control and do food work. Opportunities are missed to use National Curriculum levels to support teachers in planning challenging tasks and activities to ensure higher attaining pupils make better progress.

Leadership and management of D&T

Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory.

- You and your coordinator share an enthusiasm for the subject. You understand its strengths and the areas for development in D&T. You appreciate how much pupils enjoy the work and the opportunities for practical learning which the area provides. You respond promptly to feedback from pupils and take their views into consideration when

planning activities which help to increase pupils' enjoyment of the subject.

- The coordinator has a clear vision for developing pupils' creativity through D&T work and has begun to implement improvements to the curriculum.

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

- The school has begun to review and update all its D&T projects to more closely reflect the society in which the pupils live. Teachers appropriately challenge stereotypical views and avoid gender bias.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that greater challenge is provided for higher attaining pupils by providing them with clear criteria for demonstrating success in more challenging design and make activities
- tackling the inconsistencies in marking to ensure all pupils know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work
- improving the quality of finished work by ensuring that prior learning is built upon and pupils are more accurate in their making.

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