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Mr S Springett
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Springett

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Design and Technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 3 March 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 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 and standards overall are good.

- The broad range of experiences in the Foundation Stage provides a good base to support the development of children's designing and making skills.
- By the end of Year 2 most pupils acquire good technical vocabulary such as structure, axle and can describe basic movement. They begin to think and work as designers: for example when investigating the purpose and function of fairground rides. Pupils are beginning to recognise properties of materials and to identify moving parts on their models and in their drawings. With support pupils think about and recognise shapes from earlier work in maths but are at early stages in knowing how to strengthen and make stable structures.

- Pupils make good progress in lessons and good progress from their starting points to reach standards in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6.
- Personal development is good: pupils enjoy D&T and in seeing their ideas taking shape. This benefits their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils say they are learning from mistakes to improve their ideas.

Quality of teaching and learning of D&T

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

- Teachers make good use of research and investigation skills to extend their knowledge of the D&T projects they teach. Lessons are well planned; particularly the sequence of learning and this supports and promotes the good progress pupils make. Teachers make excellent use of information technology resources and visits to support learning. Challenges and competitions are used effectively. Teachers' very good questioning skills encourage pupils to exercise reasoning and thinking skills. Pupils are excited by lessons and have good attitudes to learning.
- Plans are in hand to develop formal assessment and tracking of the progress pupils are making in D&T. Opportunities to develop teachers' understanding of progression in D&T would usefully support this development. Pupils are confident that their good work is recognised and rewarded.

Quality of the D&T curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities across the curriculum to develop and extend D&T skills such as evaluation and construction. They enjoy the opportunity to work together with their families on home and school D&T projects. Extra-curricular activities, such as cooking club, are encouraging pupils' interest although they are not yet confident to cook without help.
- Pupils see D&T as relevant to life skills and to future careers.

Leadership and management of D&T

Leadership and management of the subject are good.

- Your good support and positive attitude to D&T is well demonstrated in the good use of resources and especially in the recent acquisition of broadband content.
- Improvement plans draw effectively upon monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice. However opportunities to track the progress of individuals and groups of pupils in D&T are at very early stages.

- Opportunities for pupils to engage in real projects, work with a range of materials and professionals and to work safely are very good features of D&T provision.

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

- The school is aware of its responsibilities and no stereotyping or inequality was noted during the visit.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- exploring ways of tracking the progress of individuals and groups in D&T
- developing teachers' understanding of progression in D&T to support assessment.

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