

26 March 2009

Mrs J Roach  
Headteacher  
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Handsworth  
Birmingham  
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Dear Mrs Roach

### Ofsted survey inspection programme – Design and Technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 17 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

Achievement is good and standards are average.

- Pupils start in the foundation stage with very low levels of skill and capability in D&T. For example only one pupil in a group of six in Class 1 could cut effectively with scissors when making models of owls. Pupils make good progress and, as a result, many cut precisely and accurately in Class 2 when designing and making models of rockets based on a story from the book 'Whatever next'.
- Pupils continue to make good progress and achieve well at Key Stages 1 and 2. Standards of D&T work by the time they leave in Year 6 are average and rising with a strong emphasis on developing creative thinking. The intake comes from a rich and diverse range of communities and all groups of pupils achieve equally as well including

those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and English as an additional language.

- D&T work is effectively matched to pupils' interest and needs. The school is aware more use of systems and control components will further enhance interest and develop new capabilities in the subject. Pupils are enthusiastic ambassadors for D&T. They speak with enthusiasm about what they learn and the subject is making a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

### Quality of teaching and learning of D&T

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

- D&T capability is consistently developed through the teaching across Key Stages 1 and 2. Teacher's subject knowledge is good and the school is extending it through professional development. For example, all members of staff attended a one day D&T course at Birmingham City University arranged at the request of the school.
- Very good individual support by all staff during D&T lessons helps pupils to become more capable and confident. D&T work is assessed against national curriculum levels and staff informally moderate judgements. The school is planning to monitor individual progress more closely to speed up progress even more through analysis of assessment data.

### Quality of the D&T curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The school recognised the D&T curriculum needed revision five years ago and introduced national schemes of work based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) units. They are now adapting the schemes in project work which involves other subjects, and they are well planned to meet the needs of the national curriculum.
- Systems and control components are less evident in D&T work and the school plans further professional development to increase subject knowledge. Design and make projects are characterised by stimulating contexts which meet the interest of pupils well. Creative design skills such as research and innovation are thoroughly covered.

### Leadership and management of D&T

Leadership and management of the subject are good

- The school accurately evaluates the performance of the subject. Leaders and managers at all levels value D&T and are determined to raise achievement. Capacity to ensure the subject continues to grow

and develop is good. A strong team ethos exists and the willingness to continue professional development is a feature. The nature of D&T is understood and careful monitoring of the subject's performance is making sure D&T continues to move forward.

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

There is no evidence of any gaps between the performance of boys, girls, or any other groups of pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and English as an additional language.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- increasing the use of systems and control components in project work
- speeding up progress even more through analysis of assessment data.

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