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Mrs R Shaw
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Shaw

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Design and Technology

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 02 July 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: observations of six lessons, discussions with groups of pupils, interviews with teachers, scrutiny of pupils' work and the analysis of relevant school documents.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards overall are good.

- Children in the Reception class make a good start to the development of their D&T skills. They are encouraged to use their own ideas and demonstrate good perseverance when learning difficult skills. For example, children were trying hard to use split pins to create moving parts to a picture.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils' progress is good and by the end of Year 6 the standards they reach are above the expectations for their age. Important aspects of these high standards are the well-developed skills of design and evaluation that they demonstrate. For example, the work in Year 4 on pop-up mummification books showed that pupils had researched, investigated techniques to solve problems, created

prototypes and regularly modified their designs before embarking on the finished products, which were of a very high standard.

- In D&T lessons pupils demonstrate that they have excellent behaviour and attitudes to their work. They are encouraged to be creative and independent which they really appreciate and because of this they thoroughly enjoy D&T lessons. As one pupil reported 'I enjoy everything to do with D&T it is so amazing.'

Quality of teaching and learning of D&T

The quality of teaching and learning overall are good.

- Overall, teaching is good, but there are some outstanding elements. For example, in some lessons teachers use questioning skills expertly to help pupils to evaluate their work or to solve problems. Another strength of the teaching is the responsibility given to pupils to use their own ideas when devising their products and then to select from a very wide range of materials. Teachers carefully guide pupils in their work so as not to undermine their creativity and independence.
- Teaching assistants work very well with pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that they are able to fully access the D&T lessons. They do this very sensitively and skilfully enabling pupils to use their own ideas and skills which fosters their self esteem and confidence.
- Assessment procedures are used conscientiously to evaluate the quality of the pupils' work. They are not used sufficiently to plan work for a few pupils as they do not specifically match their needs. For example, some able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to enable them to produce work of a higher standard.
- Self-evaluation procedures and personal targets are used very effectively so that pupils demonstrate that they understand the next steps they need to take in D&T lessons to improve their work.

Quality of the D&T curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding.

- The school has developed a highly innovative curriculum in which D&T plays an important part.
- A major strength is the cross-curricular links that are established with other subjects. These benefit pupils in a number of ways. They very successfully motivate and engage pupils in projects that they perceive as meaningful and are related to other subjects and aspects of their work. For example, Year 5 pupils are thoroughly enjoying creating Victorian vehicles linked to their history work. This topic demands very accurate measuring.
- The school offers a good range of visits, after-school clubs, visitors and skilled volunteers to enrich the pupils' experience of D&T activities.

- Pupils' good information and communication technology (ICT) skills are well used particularly in the investigation and design stages of their work. For example, the Year 5 pupils' imaginative 'Spore project'. Bright and attractive displays celebrate the high quality of pupils' D&T work.

Leadership and management of D&T

Leadership and management of the subject are good.

- Teachers have successfully ensured that the quality of provision and achievement remains high even though they are experiencing some changes in leadership.
- The subject coordinator has ensured high standards by moderating and evaluating pupils' work and teachers' assessments. In addition she has led curriculum initiatives and the development of assessment procedures that are used consistently in all lessons. However, few opportunities are provided to evaluate the learning in lessons or to share the excellent practice that exists in the school, which explains the variation in the quality of some teaching.

The extent to which the school promotes awareness and relevance of D&T to pupils, parents and carers

- School leaders have successfully established a shared appreciation amongst pupils, parents and staff of the importance of D&T to pupils' education and well-being. As one parent reports: 'The school seems very supportive of hands on learning and allows children to use their natural flair and their passion to build their skills on a regular basis.'

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- using assessment information more effectively when planning lessons to ensure it meets the needs of all groups of pupils and challenges the more able to raise their standards further
- improving teaching so that it is consistently outstanding by sharing the best practice that exists in the school.

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

Tim Bristow
Her Majesty's Inspector