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Mr L Young
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Dear Mr Young

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 3 June 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 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 lower than national expectations and make good progress because of the successful work the school does to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. This enables pupils to achieve in D&T in line with national expectations.
- Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They cooperate and work in teams and in pairs in a mature and supportive fashion. They listen well to instructions and discuss sensibly, taking turns and being respectful of each others' views. Pupils are justly proud of their work and talk confidently and maturely about how they made items and the problems they had to solve in making them. They enjoy D&T and like

being able to work on projects for extended periods of time because they can think better about their work.

Quality of teaching and learning of D&T

The quality of teaching and learning overall is satisfactory.

- Teachers' plan work well together and this ensures that all classes learn similar things. However, teachers have weak areas of subject knowledge in D&T and this sometimes leads to confusion such as in their understanding of the difference between 'strength' and 'stability' when discussing and making structures. No time is wasted as pupils change to different activities. They are encouraged to work independently.
- Questioning is used well to probe pupils' understanding and this helps them to explain their thinking.
- Teachers effectively manage challenging behaviour and ensure that all pupils are engaged with learning. Pupils whose first language is not English are very well supported and included in all lessons so that all pupils join in well and are able to complete activities. Good discussion opportunities support pupils in developing their speaking and listening skills. However, the lack of design criteria when making limits the challenge for the higher attaining pupils.
- Pupils take great care with the presentation of their work: their handwriting is neat; pictures are labelled clearly and explain how they are going to make something. Practical work is finished to a good standard.

Quality of the D&T curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- Strong cross-curricular links help pupils to understand the purpose of D&T and give them a real reason for designing and making. The topic based approach provides more time for pupils to carry out practical activities and thus they make more progress in developing their understanding of how to do things. This increases the opportunities for D&T. Timetable blocking supports this well.
- The school is beginning to adapt National schemes of work to ensure that cross curricular opportunities promote consolidation of pupils' D&T knowledge and understanding. However, because National Curriculum levels are not matched against D&T schemes of work it is not always clear that opportunities are provided to challenge pupils appropriately to ensure progression.
- The effective links in D&T with literacy, numeracy and science reinforce pupils' learning well and improves their understanding of ideas such as how to write instructions and the importance of accuracy in measuring.

Leadership and management of D&T

Leadership and management of the subject are good.

- You both value D&T and appreciate how it is used to support pupils' learning in other subjects.
- The coordinator has a clear vision for the subject and her judgements in lesson observations are accurate. She is keen to develop the subject further and has appropriate plans in place.
- Resources are appropriate and managed well to ensure all pupils can access learning materials. Health and safety procedures are in place and are regularly updated.

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

- The school has begun to share its vision for D&T through the newly introduced 'stay and play' in reception. Response from parents is very positive and the school is appropriately looking at developing this further.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensure that greater challenge is provided for higher attaining pupils by providing them with clear design criteria for making and evaluating
- ensure that national curriculum levels are mapped against schemes of work so that all pupils can be challenged appropriately
- improve all teachers' subject knowledge in D&T.

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