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7 October 2009

Mrs J McBride  
Headteacher  
The Willows CofE Primary School  
The Willows North  
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Dear Mrs McBride

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Design and technology

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during the visit by Philip Mann HMI and myself, on 28 September 2009, to look at work in design and technology (D&T).

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on how the school promotes awareness and relevance of D&T to pupils and their parents, and the extent to which their views contribute to the school's evaluation of 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 three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

Achievement in D&T

Pupils' achievement and standards in D&T are satisfactory.

- Children's experiences in the Early Years Foundation Stage enable them to acquire skills in using scissors, and to understand basic rules of safety and food hygiene.
- Pupils' attainment in D&T, by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, is in line with expectations for their age. The school has established a useful portfolio of

standards of pupils' work. This demonstrates that they are acquiring an adequate range of technical skills in working with materials and can evaluate what they like and dislike about the products they make. Most pupils enjoy and are excited by the opportunity to acquire and develop skills to solve practical problems.

- Achievement in D&T lessons is satisfactory. Class teachers are beginning to identify pupils who do not do as well as expected and a small number who do better than expected. In one lesson, pupils made good progress in developing workplace skills, through undertaking specific job roles, conducting focused analysis of products and by working to timed deadlines.

#### Quality of teaching in D&T

The quality of teaching is satisfactory.

- Class teachers manage lessons well and use a wide range of teaching styles effectively, to promote pupils' skills of investigation and evaluation.
- In all of the lessons seen pupils' behaviour is good. In some lessons pupils demonstrate a mature approach to working together in teams, and their application of health and safety rules underpins the satisfactory progress they make in their personal and social development.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective help and support in lessons and they make satisfactory progress. Teachers are beginning to differentiate activities to challenge more able pupils.
- The school is at an early stage in assessing pupils' progress and attainment in D&T. Plans to develop further are promising. Opportunities for staff to share common expectations for high attainment and swift progress would usefully aid development.

#### Quality of the curriculum in D&T

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The D&T curriculum is successfully enriched through the involvement of engineers and other adults. They help to promote pupils' learning about mechanisms, systems and control and structures. Pupils are at early stages in developing awareness of how products work and in acquiring skills in using hand tools.
- Learning through cross-curricular topics is developing. However, some of the knowledge, understanding and skills of D&T are not clearly mapped to support this development.

#### Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

- The subject leader demonstrates satisfactory subject knowledge and planning for health and safety is secure. She has a clear understanding of the purpose of the subject but this is not fully explained to all pupils, some

of whom confuse their artwork with designing and making. Plans to improve assessment are a promising development.

- Access to continuing professional development courses, to update subject leadership and teachers' knowledge and confidence, is limited.

The school satisfactorily promotes awareness and relevance of D&T to pupils and parents

- Pupils consider D&T is relevant to careers such as making cars. Where there is a clear purpose to their designing and making, they are able to relate their work to meeting the needs of people who use their products. But this is inconsistent and some pupils are confused about the purpose of some of their designing and making activities.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring all pupils clearly understand the purpose of designing and making
- clearly mapping D&T in the curriculum and ensuring staff share common expectations of pupils' progress to support assessment further.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop D&T in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Gina White  
Her Majesty's Inspector