

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Ms S Widgery
Headteacher
East Oxford Primary School
Union Street
Oxford
OX4 1JP

Dear Ms Widgery

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: design and technology (D&T)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 10 November 2009 to look at work in 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 included: interviews with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; observation of two lessons and; observations in the Early Years Foundation Stage unit.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

Achievement in D&T

Achievement is satisfactory.

- A good range of suitable activities in the teaching areas for the Early Years Foundation Stage unit allows children from low starting points to develop their use of simple tools. For instance, children endeavour to use scissors and a variety of techniques to join paper and card together. Older Reception children, under close supervision, use small hammers carefully to drive nails into pieces of wood to represent a robot they have previously

designed. Such activities provide a good starting point for further work in D&T.

- Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in a range of D&T-related activities to reach broadly expected outcomes for pupils at the end of Year 6. The progress of more able pupils is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of carefully targeted adult support.
- The subject provides good opportunities for pupils to fully use their well-developed personal and social skills. For instance, pupils in Year 6 can work effectively in small groups to investigate the use of gear mechanisms. Pupils demonstrate good levels of knowledge about healthy eating through their food technology work and handling simple tools safely. Pupils speak with enthusiasm when talking through their ideas and this supports the development of their speaking and listening skills effectively.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching is satisfactory.

- All teaching is at least satisfactory with some good practice observed in Key Stage 1, where lessons are planned carefully, resources are organised well and adults provide effective levels of support to pupils. Subject knowledge is satisfactory and questions are used confidently to check pupils' understanding and challenge their thinking further.
- The assessment of pupils' progress is weak. It is satisfactory for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage classes where staff make ongoing observations of significant learning in D&T-related skills. There are no whole-school procedures for recording pupils' progress in the rest of the school. However, plans to implement the assessment of pupils' skills at the end of each unit are a promising development.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- Appropriate balance is provided through a satisfactory range of D&T activities across the school. Each unit of work provides suitable activities for pupils to develop and communicate their ideas and make products that can be evaluated to identify how they might be improved. Limited use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance the quality of D&T provision and this limits the progress that more able pupils can make. However, the participation of pupils in projects such as improving the playground and attending the 'Forest School' provides good levels of enrichment in many D&T-related activities for a good proportion of pupils.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory.

- Greater priority is now being given to D&T. The coordinator, in partnership with the curriculum coordinator, demonstrates a clear vision for the planning and integration of D&T within a more creative and dynamic learning programme, firmly rooted in the progression of skills in D&T. The monitoring of standards within the subject is at an early stage of development. However, the school planning structure shows a determination to tackle this.

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

Parents have few opportunities to know about and support their children's learning in D&T. The forthcoming open day scheduled later this term is a positive development. Pupils value opportunities to participate in D&T activities because it gives relevance to their learning, but currently their views have not been sought in any formal way to identify areas for further improvement in D&T.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that the range of planned activities provide:
 - clear progression of skills in D&T
 - good levels of challenge for more able pupils
 - opportunities for the use of information and communication technology
- implementing an assessment process that:
 - records the progress that pupils make in D&T effectively
 - supports planning for the next stages in their learning
- ensuring that self-evaluation is used to:
 - monitor the quality of provision effectively
 - identify areas for further improvement to pupils' outcomes
 - actively seek the views of pupils and parents to raise their levels of awareness about D&T and its relevance.

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

Philip Mann
Her Majesty's Inspector