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Mr A Symonds
Headteacher
Richard Taylor Church of England
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Bilton Lane
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Dear Mr Symonds,

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: design and technology

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 10 December 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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and the observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is good.

Achievement in D&T

Pupils' achievement in D&T is good.

- Children start in the Foundation Stage with expected skills and capability in D&T. They learn through a good range of activities such as making masks and Christmas decorations. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school and achievement is good across all groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A significant proportion reaches standards that are above expectations for their age.

- There is a strong emphasis on developing subject knowledge and technical skills. In Year 2, for example, pupils freely used terms such as pulley and crank handle when designing and making toy fishing rods for a game. The school is aware that systems and control work could be further developed through more use of information and communication technology (ICT) equipment. Pupils are absorbed for long periods of time when engaged in designing and making activities. They enjoy practical work and value learning how to develop their D&T skills.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching is good.

- Teachers use a good range of techniques to develop D&T skills when investigating and evaluating products. The needs of all different groups of pupils are met well as a result of good lesson planning and catering for individual need.
- Schemes of work are constructed well to develop D&T capability over time and teachers' subject expertise is secure. D&T work is assessed, recorded, and the information used to plan the next stages of learning. D&T activities are used regularly to provide evidence on pupil and class performance.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

The quality of the curriculum in D&T is good.

- Programmes are coordinated and planned well to meet pupils' needs and interests. The D&T curriculum builds on national units of work linked with topics in other subjects. The school uses every opportunity to provide real contexts for D&T learning. For example, pupils have helped to design and make a peace garden in the school grounds working closely with professionals from the Royal Horticultural Society. Plans are in place to extend curriculum links with a local secondary school to share best practice and improve transition.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are good.

- The purpose of D&T is understood and the subject is continuing to develop because you and your staff intervene to make the right improvements. Subject performance is evaluated accurately and the analysis is helping to identify further areas to develop. The vision to move the subject forward and make sure all pupils achieve highly in D&T is shared by all leaders and managers.

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

Awareness and relevance of D&T to pupils and parents are good.

- Pupils are highly supportive of D&T work, as one said 'D&T gives you the freedom to think differently'. They find the subject captivating and interesting. Another pupil said 'the best thing is using your imagination, and seeing your design work properly'. The school shares its vision for D&T with parents through portfolios of work and projects, such as the peace garden, where parents were involved on the committee steering the project.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing the use of ICT to support learning, particularly in systems and control.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop design and technology 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

Paul Hancock
Her Majesty's Inspector