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26 March 2010

Mrs E Penn  
Headteacher  
St James Church of England Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Penn

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 16 March 2010 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 observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory with good features.

Achievement in D&T

Pupils' achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- A range of activities in Nursery and Reception classes provides a useful start to the development of children's basic making skills. For example, children enjoy and are supervised well in using tools such as hammers and nails.
- Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress and reach the levels expected for their age by the end of Year 6. Their enjoyment and capability in D&T are developed well through activities that ensure pupils

are clear about the needs of users and are able to plan how to make their products. For example, pupils in Year 1 demonstrate that they are aware of making their playground rides safe and are learning how to make them stable.

- D&T contributes well to pupils' personal development. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good. They are well motivated and proud of their D&T work. Pupils think about how their products might work and enjoy the variety of D&T activities. Some pupils are beginning to develop enterprise skills and learn how to present their design ideas to an audience.

#### Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is satisfactory.

- Teachers manage lessons and resources effectively. There is a clear purpose to designing and making activities. Very good use is made of strategies such as small group work and collaborative discussion. For example, Year 6 pupils identified questions to pose to others as they made their 'Dragons' Den' presentations.
- Recording and evaluation of pupils' progress are not sufficiently rigorous or used consistently or regularly enough to inform teachers' planning of the next steps to accelerate learning.

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

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

- A broad range of experiences are planned well to provide relevant D&T activities and to meet pupils' needs. Excellent use is made of stories to provide a meaningful focus and inspiration for pupils' designing and making activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in other year groups throughout the school. Cross-curricular work is developing purposefully and provides meaningful links. For example, pupils' work in D&T provides relevance to their literacy work.
- The school has begun to produce plans for activities. While these detail what pupils will do, some are less clear about what pupils will learn, and consequently, are not as useful to teachers as they might be to inform assessment.

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

Leadership and management in D&T are satisfactory.

- D&T is led well by an experienced coordinator. She has a clear overview of the curriculum. Strengths and weaknesses are known and class teachers', parents' and pupils' views inform plans. However, systems to assess and monitor pupils' progress are underdeveloped. Records and data are not used sufficiently to evaluate standards in the subject or to identify where improvements might aid pupils' progress as they move through the school.

- A collaborative approach with senior leaders has led to developments in curriculum provision. Recent training opportunities are being used well to challenge ideas for curriculum development. Health and safety are clearly planned and taught. Pupils are developing good attitudes and respect for health and safety rules.

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.

- A clear vision for D&T is emerging. Communication is good and parents are well informed each term about what their children will be studying in D&T. Consequently, parents and pupils are positive about D&T and see its relevance to life skills and work.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- implement a system to assess, monitor and evaluate pupils' progress in D&T
- ensure records of pupils' progress and areas for improvement in D&T are shared between class teachers and acted upon as pupils move through the school.

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

As I explained previously, 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